

SACOG Region Farmworker Data

The SACOG region is home to a very productive and vibrant agricultural economy. In order for agricultural production to remain an integral piece of local economies, it must be sustained by agricultural workers.

State housing element law requires localities to analyze the special housing needs of farmworkers, as well as other specified groups. The analysis of farmworkers should include the following:

- A quantification of the total number of persons and households, including tenure, where possible.
- A quantification and qualitative description of the need, including a description of the potential housing problems faced by farmworkers, a description of any existing resources, and an assessment of unmet needs.
- Identification of potential program or policy options and resources to address the need.

As jurisdictions around the state prepare for updating their Housing Elements (HE), this analysis would logically start with a quantification of the number of farmworkers in each jurisdiction in the SACOG region. This quantification of workers could then be translated into the housing demand of such workers. However, as SACOG has attempted to gather and provide reliable data on the number of farmworkers in the region, it has become quite clear that the data available is limited, dated, and questionable in terms of reliability.

One source of data comes from the United States Department of Agricultural (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). The USDA conducts a Census of Agriculture inclusive of each state and county every five years. The Census of Agriculture is the most comprehensive, complete, and uniform count of the number of farms and ranches and of the people who operate them, for each county in the nation. Data collected important for HE purposes includes farm labor categorized by number of farms, total workers, workers working less than 150 days, and workers working more than 150 days. The latest Census of Agriculture for which we have data comes from the 2007 Census. Although another California census was conducted in 2012, this data has not yet been released for public use.

Table 1 summarizes the USDA Agricultural Census of farm labor for the SACOG counties. The two most notable problems with this USDA data source are that it is somewhat dated, and it only provides county-level data. The agricultural census provides an overall count of farm labor in the region as it stood five years ago, and as such it should be noted if used in any HE update by jurisdictions.

Table 1

Jurisdiction	2007 Census of Agriculture California			
	Farms	Total Workers	Workers >150 days	Workers <150 days
El Dorado County	299	1,521	316	1,205
Placer County	246	1,496	356	1,140
Sacramento County	354	4,745	2,286	2,459
Sutter County	559	6,079	1,659	4,420
Yolo County	368	3,953	2,025	1,928
Yuba County	238	2,364	513	1,851
Region Total	2,064	20,158	7,155	13,003

Source: 2007 Census of Agriculture-County Data, USDA NASS

The other source of farm labor data recently released by the U.S. Census Bureau comes from the 2007-2011 American Community Survey (ACS) data. The ACS replaced the “long form” sample method which was used from 1940 to 2000. This data source is the most recent estimate of agricultural workers currently available.

The jurisdiction-level estimates requested by California’s Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), although lacking in the USDA data, are available in the ACS data for “Farming, fishing and forestry occupations.” This level of data makes it possible for the jurisdictions with large agricultural production to better estimate the housing needs for their farm labor population. However, possible constraints with this data are that:

- Estimates of workers are not exclusive to farm labor, and include fishing and forestry occupation estimates.
- The ACS is a survey, and each estimate includes a margin of error that indicates the reliability that the Census has for each individual estimate.

Table 2 below compares the estimates of workers from the ACS data to the 2007 USDA Census of Agriculture workers at the County level. The estimate of workers regionally who work less than 150 days is within 18 percent of the ACS estimate.

Table 2

Comparison of 2011 ACS and 2007 USDA Farm Labor				
	2011 ACS	2007 USDA	# Difference	% Difference
El Dorado County	302	316	14	4%
Placer County	265	356	91	26%
Sacramento County	2,190	2,286	96	4%
Sutter County	2,472	1,659	813	49%
Yolo County	2,430	2,025	405	20%
Yuba County	761	513	248	48%
Region Total	8,420	7,155	1265	18%

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture and 2007-2011 ACS

SACOG staff recommends that jurisdictions in the region utilize the ACS data as the best available source of information for HE updates, since it provides the most recent estimate of farm labor, and estimates are provided at a jurisdictional level. Table 3 on the following page summarizes the ACS data for the region including city and county estimates of the occupation category of farming, fishing, and forestry workers.

Table 3

2007-2011 ACS (Table C24010)		
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations		
	Estimate	MOE
El Dorado County Total	302	124
Placerville	9	96
South Lake Tahoe	63	111
El Dorado County unincorporated	230	
Placer County Total	265	110
Auburn	0	
Colfax	0	
Lincoln	27	100
Loomis	0	
Rocklin	52	111
Roseville	42	41
Placer County unincorporated	144	
Sacramento County Total	2,190	360
Citrus Heights	131	127
Elk Grove	122	75
Folsom	0	
Galt	298	141
Isleton	14	96
Rancho Cordova	54	107
Sacramento	740	207
Sacramento County unincorporated	831	
Sutter County Total	2,472	488
Live Oak	267	131
Yuba City	1,523	368
Sutter County unincorporated	682	
Yolo County Total	2,430	457
Davis	105	74
West Sacramento	209	109
Winters	266	161
Woodland	1,025	317
Yolo County unincorporated	825	
Yuba County Total	761	195
Marysville	79	119
Wheatland	5	96
Yuba County unincorporated	677	
Region Total	8,420	801

Source: 2007-2011 ACS