Agricultural Wage and Practice Surveys: 2016 results publication

June 7, 2017

Brief summary

The Employment Security Department (ESD) has completed its analysis of responses to the 2016 Agricultural Wage and Practice Surveys. Results have been submitted to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), which has made its final determination as to the prevailing wages and practices in temporary agricultural employment contracts in Washington state. DOL posted its findings to the Agricultural Online Wage Library (AOWL) on May 25, 2017.

Background

DOL requires ESD to conduct surveys to help establish prevailing wages and practices in temporary agricultural employment contracts, including H-2A guest worker contracts. The guidelines to conduct these surveys are contained in DOL's Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) Handbooks 385 and 398.

ESD's Workforce Information and Technology Services (WITS, formerly LMPA) division has conducted an agricultural wage and practice employer survey every year since 2015, surveying for all occupations and activities for which employers have requested temporary workers through the agricultural recruitment system. Prior to 2015, LMPA conducted an agricultural wage and practice survey on a biennial basis for select commodities.

In spring 2016, WITS began modifications to the annual employer survey. In addition, in line with DOL and ETA Handbook 385 guidance, WITS developed a worker agricultural wage and practice survey, and established a preliminary methodology for comparing employer and worker survey responses.

WITS completed its analysis and prepared a formal submission for DOL in spring 2017. After a two-month consultation period, DOL has set and posted prevailing wages for Washington state.

Publication of survey findings

The 2016 prevailing wage rates (below) were published to the AOWL on May 25, 2017. Please note that there are no prevailing or normal and common practice findings. Estimates for Cripps Pink apple harvesting were refined during the consultation process, resulting in a "no findings" for both wages and employment practices. All other results remain the same as in the March 27, 2017 briefing.

Crop	Activity	Prevailing wage rate	Unit	Hourly earnings guarantee	Dimension
Apples (all)	Farm laborer	$12.69	Hourly	N/A	N/A
Apples (all)	Tree pruning	$12.69	Hourly	N/A	N/A
Apples (all)	Tree training	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Apples/Braeburn	Harvesting	$22	Bin	$12.69	47"x47"x24.5"
Apples/Cameo	Harvesting	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Apples/Cripps Pink	Harvesting	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Apples/Fuji	Harvesting	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Apples/Fuji	Tree thinning	$12.75	Hourly	N/A	N/A
Apples/Gala	Harvesting	$23	Bin	$12.69	47"x47"x24.5"
Apples/Gala	Tree thinning	$12.69	Hourly	N/A	N/A
Apples/Ginger Gold	Harvesting	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Apples/Golden	Harvesting	$26	Bin	$12.75	46"x43"x25.5"
Apples/Golden Supreme	Harvesting	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Apples/Granny	Harvesting	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Apples/Granny	Tree thinning	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Apples/Honeycrisp	Harvesting	$15	Hourly	N/A	N/A
Apples/Honeycrisp	Tree thinning	$12.69	Hourly	N/A	N/A
Apples/Jazz	Harvesting	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Apples/Jonagold	Harvesting	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Apples/Pacific Rose	Harvesting	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Apples/Pacific Rose	Tree thinning	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Apples/Red Delicious	Harvesting	$20	Bin	$12.69	N/A
Apples/Red Delicious	Tree thinning	$12.69	Hourly	N/A	N/A
Apples/Scifresh	Harvesting	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Apples/Scilate	Harvesting	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Apples/Sirose	Harvesting	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Apricots (all)	Harvesting	$12	Hourly	N/A	N/A
Apricots (all)	Tree thinning	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Asparagus (all)	Harvesting	$0.27	Pound	$12.00	N/A
Blueberries (all)	Packing	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Blueberries (non-organic)	Harvesting	$0.50	Pound	$9.47	N/A
Cherries (all)	Tree pruning	$10	Hourly	N/A	N/A
Cherries (all)	Tree thinning	$12.69	Hourly	N/A	N/A
Cherries/Dark Red	Harvesting	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cherries/Red	Harvesting	$3	Bucket	$12.69	15 pounds
Cherries/Skeena	Harvesting	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cherries/Sweetheart	Harvesting	$5.50	Lug	$12.69	30 pounds
Cherries/Yellow	Harvesting	$6	Lug	$9.47	20 pounds
Grapes (all)	Laborer	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grapes (non-wine)	Harvesting	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Grapes (wine)	Harvesting	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hops (all)	Baling	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hops (all)	Truck driving	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hops (non-organic)	Harvesting	$14	Hourly	N/A	N/A
Pears (all)	Tree pruning	$10	Hourly	N/A	N/A
Pears (all)	Tree thinning	$12.69	Hourly	N/A	N/A
Pears/Bartlett	Harvesting	$22	Bin	$12.69	47"x47"x24.5"
Pears/Bosc	Harvesting	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pears/Comice	Harvesting	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pears/D'anjou	Harvesting	$26.50	Bin	$12.69	47"x47"x24.5"
Pears/Forelle	Harvesting	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pears/Starkrimson	Harvesting	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Plums (all)	Harvesting	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vegetables (all)	Harvesting	No findings	N/A	N/A	N/A

Next Steps

2017 survey administration

WITS continues to work on the 2017 employer and worker surveys. The worker survey is with the University of Washington's Survey Research Division (UW-SRD) for programming and testing prior to survey administration. After a conversation with the Washington State Fruit Commission, survey administration for the worker survey has been moved back approximately one month to better align with this year's peak harvest. WITS and UW-SRD anticipate collecting data for the worker survey from late July 2017 through November 2017, with cherry harvest data collection from late July through mid-September, and apple harvest data collection from mid-September through November.

In addition, WITS is preparing an employer survey draft to be available for stakeholder feedback in early July 2017. We are closely following guidance from DOL's ETA Handbooks 385 and 398, and UW-SRD as we develop the draft.

Contact

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