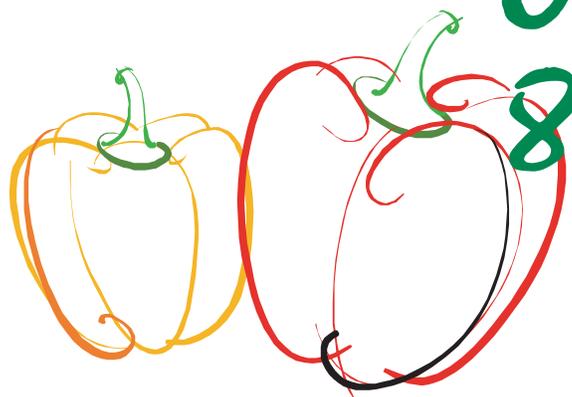




California's Agricultural Employment

2008

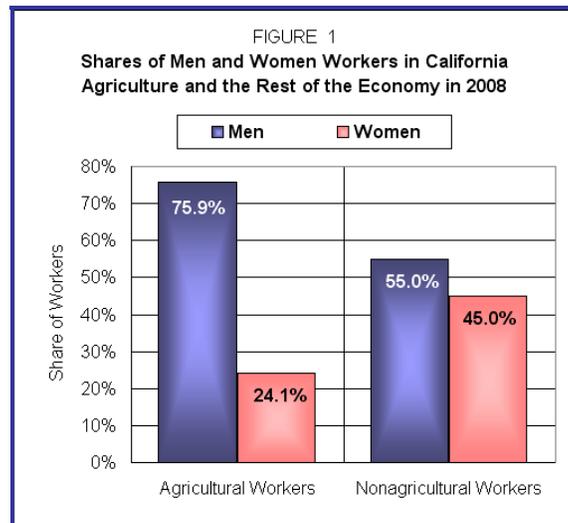


PROFILE OF CALIFORNIA'S AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE IN 2008

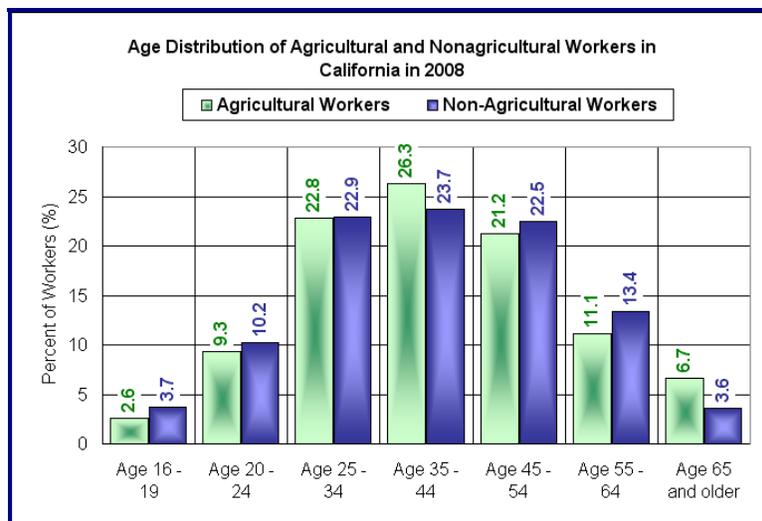
According to the Current Population Survey (CPS) of households, there were 372,600 persons in California's agricultural labor force in 2008. This report analyzes CPS data to describe the demographic and economic characteristics of California's agricultural workers in 2008.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF AGRICULTURAL WORKERS IN 2008

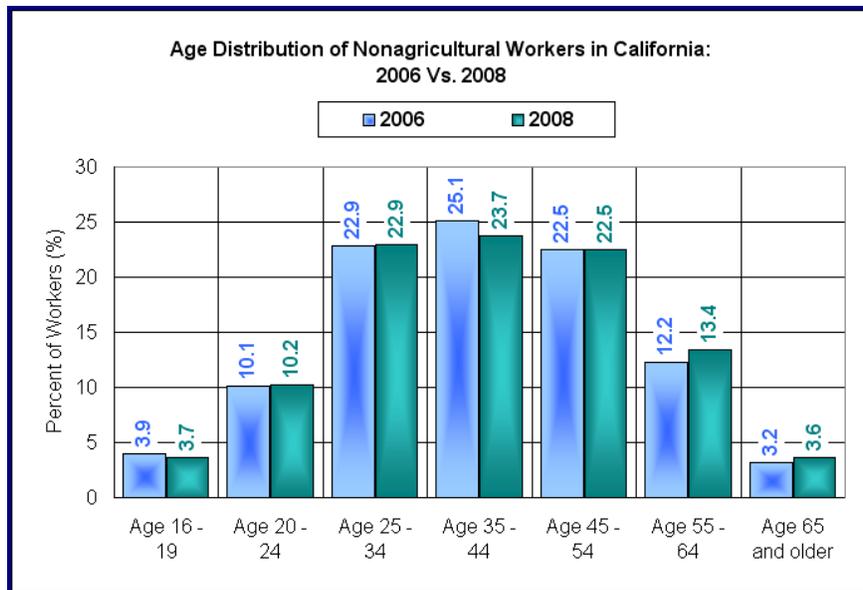
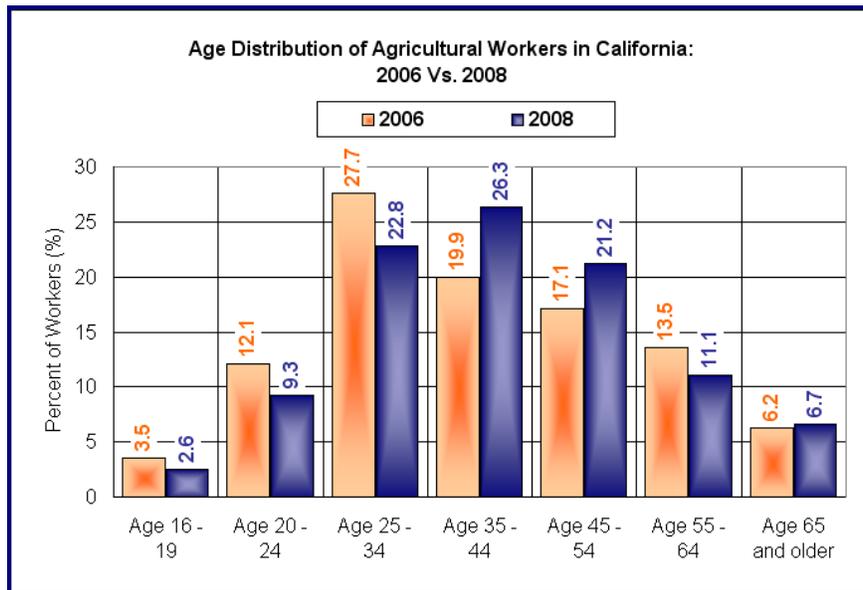
- As seen in Figure 1, over three-quarters (75.9 percent) of California's agricultural labor force were men compared to 55.0 percent of the nonagricultural labor force. In contrast, women made up 45.0 percent of the nonagricultural labor force but less than a quarter (24.1 percent) of the agricultural labor force.



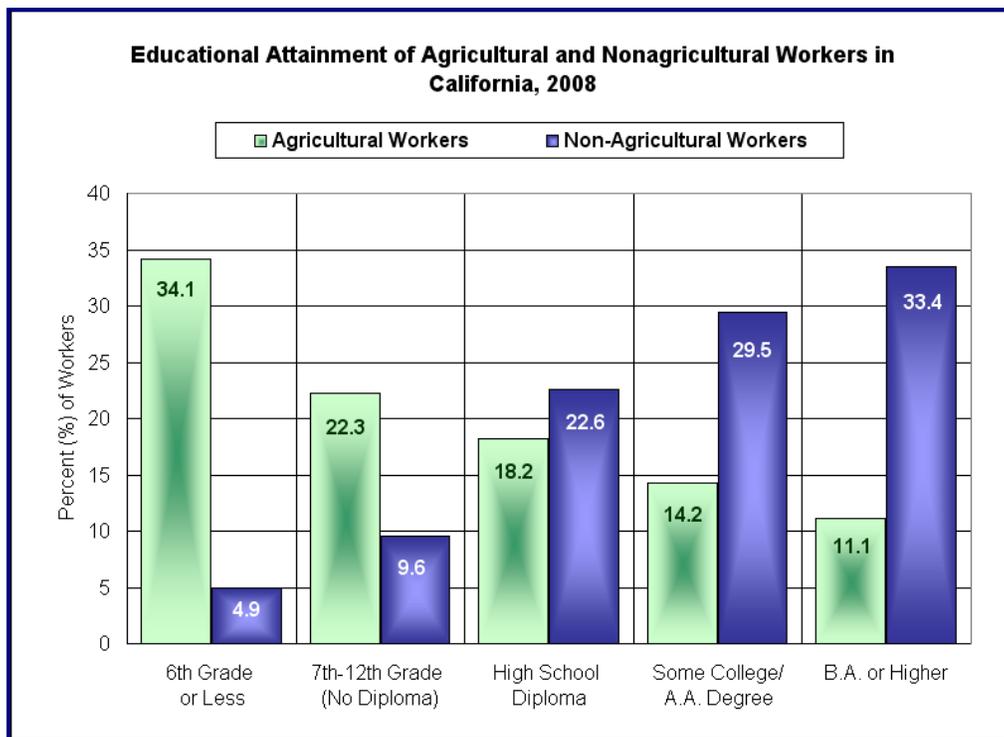
- In 2008, construction (91.3 percent male), natural resources and mining (86.3 percent male), and transportation and utilities (78.8 percent male) were the only California industry sectors with more male-dominated labor forces than agriculture.
- Overall, the age distribution of California's agricultural workers was quite similar to that of nonagricultural workers in 2008. However, there were subtle differences between the two groups, as seen in Figure 2.



- Youths age 16 to 24 made up a smaller share of agricultural workers than nonagricultural workers (11.8 vs. 13.9 percent). Workers between the ages of 25 and 44 comprised 49.1 percent of the agricultural workforce, compared to 46.6 percent of nonagricultural workers. Workers between the ages of 45 and 64 comprised 35.9 percent of the nonagricultural work force, compared to 32.3 percent of the agricultural workforce. However, a higher share of agricultural workers were age 65 and over than nonagricultural workers (6.7 vs. 3.6 percent).
- The age profile of California's agricultural workers appears to have changed between 2006 and 2008. In 2006, over two-fifths (43.3 percent) of agricultural workers were less than 35 years of age. In 2008, only about one out of every three (34.7 percent) of agricultural workers was similarly aged. The share of agricultural workers between the ages of 35 and 54 grew from 37.0 percent in 2006 to 47.5 percent in 2008. In contrast to agriculture, the age profile of workers in the nonagricultural sector of the economy barely changed from 2006 to 2008.



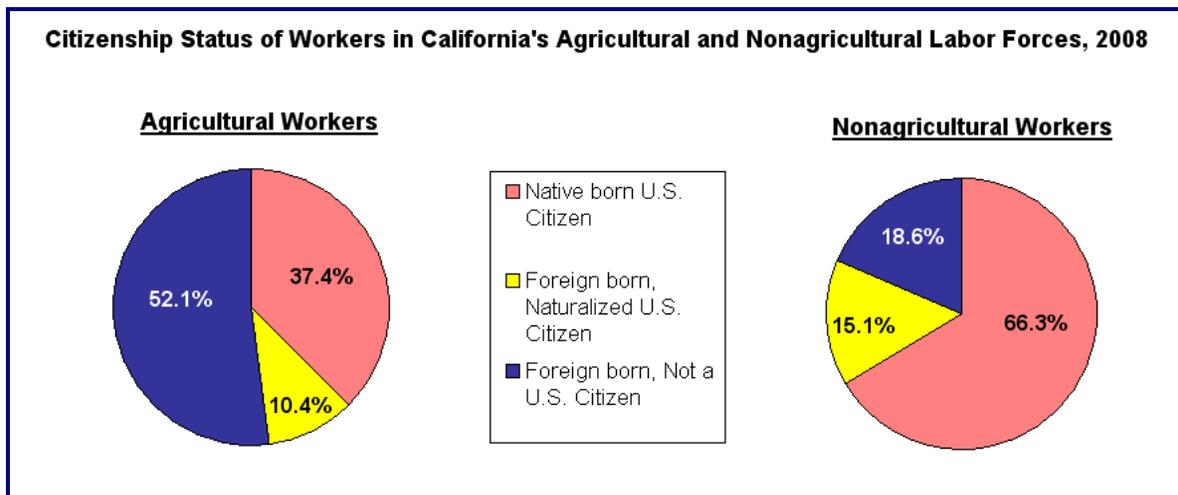
- Hispanics made up more than two-thirds (67.9 percent) of California's agricultural labor force, but only one-third (33.5 percent) of the state's nonagricultural labor force in 2008.
- Nearly all (95.2 percent) of California's Hispanic agricultural workers identified Mexico as their country of origin. This compares to 82.0 percent of the Hispanic nonagricultural workforce.
- In 2006, the most recent year for which CPS spoken language data are available, nearly half (49.4 percent) of California's agricultural workforce identified Spanish as their only spoken language. In contrast, less than one out of every ten (9.3 percent) nonagricultural workers spoke only Spanish.
- In 2008, Asians made up 12.6 percent of California's nonagricultural labor force, but only 1.3 percent of the agricultural workforce. Blacks made up 6.1 percent of workers in the nonagricultural workforce, but only 1.0 percent of agricultural workers.
- Agricultural workers tended to be less educated than nonagricultural workers. In 2008, nearly three-fifths (56.4 percent) of agricultural workers had not completed high school, compared to 14.5 percent of nonagricultural workers. In contrast, over three-fifths (62.9 percent) of nonagricultural workers had attended at least some college after high school, and one-third had attained a bachelor's degree or higher. Among agricultural workers, one-quarter (25.4 percent) had attended at least some college after high school and only one out of every nine (11.1 percent) had attained a bachelor's degree or higher.



- Over one-third (34.1 percent) of California's agricultural workers had a sixth grade education or less. Nearly half (49.0 percent) had a ninth grade education or less. Comparable percentages in the nonagricultural workforce were 4.9 and 8.6 percent, respectively. In fact, the proportion of agricultural workers with a sixth grade education or less (34.1) was similar to the proportion of nonagricultural workers who had attained a bachelor's degree or higher (33.4 percent).

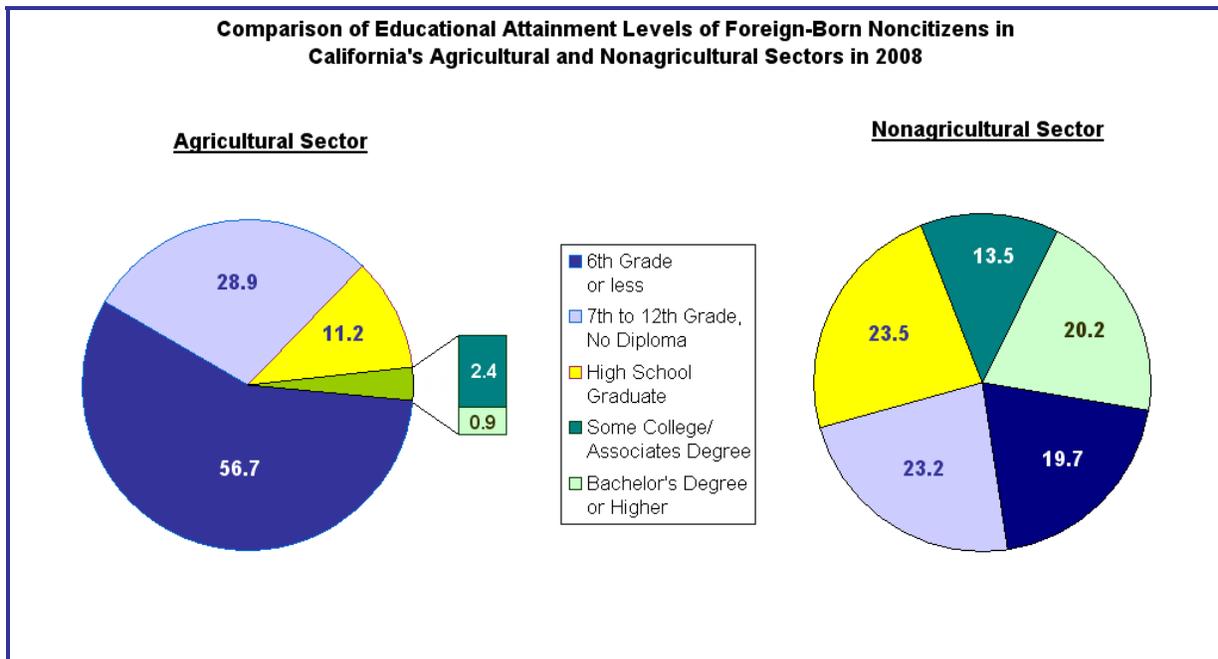
EMPLOYMENT AND CITIZENSHIP STATUS

- Immigrants play a prominent role in California's agricultural labor force. Over half (52.1 percent) of California's agricultural labor force was classified as "foreign-born, not a U.S. citizen," compared to less than one-fifth (18.6 percent) of the nonagricultural labor force. In contrast, two-thirds of workers in California nonagricultural labor force were classified as a "native-born U.S. citizens," compared to less than two-fifths (37.4 percent) of the agricultural labor force. Foreign-born naturalized U.S. citizens made up 15.1 and 10.4 percent of the nonagricultural and agricultural labor forces, respectively.

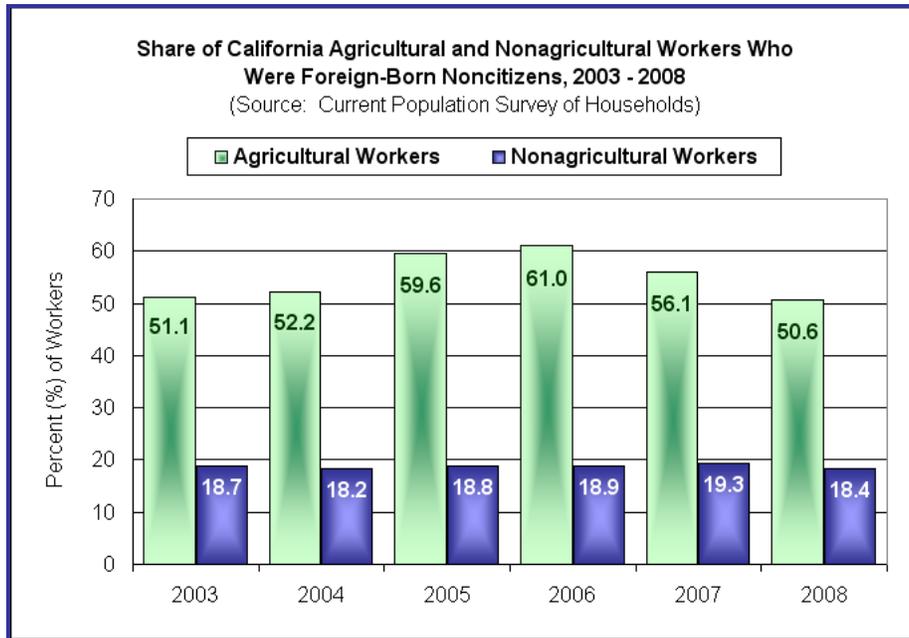


- Foreign-born noncitizens in the agricultural labor force tended to be younger and more poorly educated than either native-born U.S. citizens or foreign-born naturalized citizens.
- In 2008, seven out of every ten of the foreign born noncitizens in the agricultural labor force was less than 45 years of age, compared to a little less than half (48.9 percent) of foreign-born naturalized citizens, and slightly more than half (51.4 percent) of native-born U.S. citizens. Three-fifths of the foreign-born noncitizens in the agricultural labor force were age 25 to 44, compared to a little more than two-fifths (43.8 percent) of naturalized U.S. citizens, and less than two-fifths (37.8 percent) of native-born U.S. citizens.
- One-quarter (24.5 percent) of the native-born U.S. citizens in the agricultural labor force was age 55 or older, as were a little more than one-fifth (22.9 percent) of naturalized U.S. citizens. In contrast, only one out of every eight (12.0 percent) foreign-born noncitizens in the agricultural labor force was 55 or older.
- Nearly all (97.7 percent) foreign-born noncitizens in the agricultural labor force identified themselves as being Hispanic, as did over four-fifths (83.2 percent) of foreign-born naturalized U.S. citizens. In contrast, a little more than one-fifth (22.0 percent) of native-born U.S. citizens in agricultural said they were Hispanic.
- The large majority (85.5 percent) of foreign-born noncitizens in California's agricultural labor force had not graduated from high school. Four-fifths (79.2 percent) had a ninth grade education or less and over half (56.7 percent) had a sixth-grade education or less. Only one in nine (11.2 percent) had graduated from high school. Fewer than one out of twenty-five (3.3 percent) foreign-born noncitizens in the agricultural labor force had at least some education after high school. Less than one percent (0.9 percent) had a bachelor's degree or higher.

- Foreign-born naturalized U.S. citizens working in agriculture tended to be somewhat better educated than foreign-born noncitizens. A little more than two-thirds (68.8 percent) had not graduated from high school; 57.3 percent had a ninth grade education or less; and over a third (35.3 percent) had a sixth grade education or less. A little less than one-third (31.2 percent) had attained a high school diploma or higher. One out of every seven (13.6 percent) naturalized citizen agricultural workers had attended some school beyond high school.
- In sharp contrast, only one out of eight (12.4 percent) native-born U.S. citizens working in agriculture had not graduated high school. About three out every ten (28.2 percent) had received a high school diploma. Nearly three-fifths (59.4 percent) of native-born agricultural workers who were native-born U.S. citizens had attended at least some school after high school. Nearly three out of every ten (28.2 percent) had attained a bachelor's degree or higher and one out of every eleven (9.3 percent) had attained more than a bachelor's degree.
- The foreign-born noncitizens in California's agricultural labor force also tended to be less well educated than foreign-born noncitizens in the nonagricultural labor force. Nearly three-fifths of foreign-born noncitizen agricultural workers had a sixth grade education or less compared to less than one-quarter of those in nonagricultural industries. Whereas 85.5 percent of foreign-born noncitizens in agriculture had not completed high school, less than half (47 percent) of those in nonagricultural industries had done so.
- Over one-third (33.7 percent) of the foreign-born noncitizens in the nonagricultural labor force had attended at least some college after high school, compared to just 3.3 percent of those in agriculture. One-fifth of foreign-born noncitizens in the nonagricultural sector had attained a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to less than 1 percent of those in agriculture.



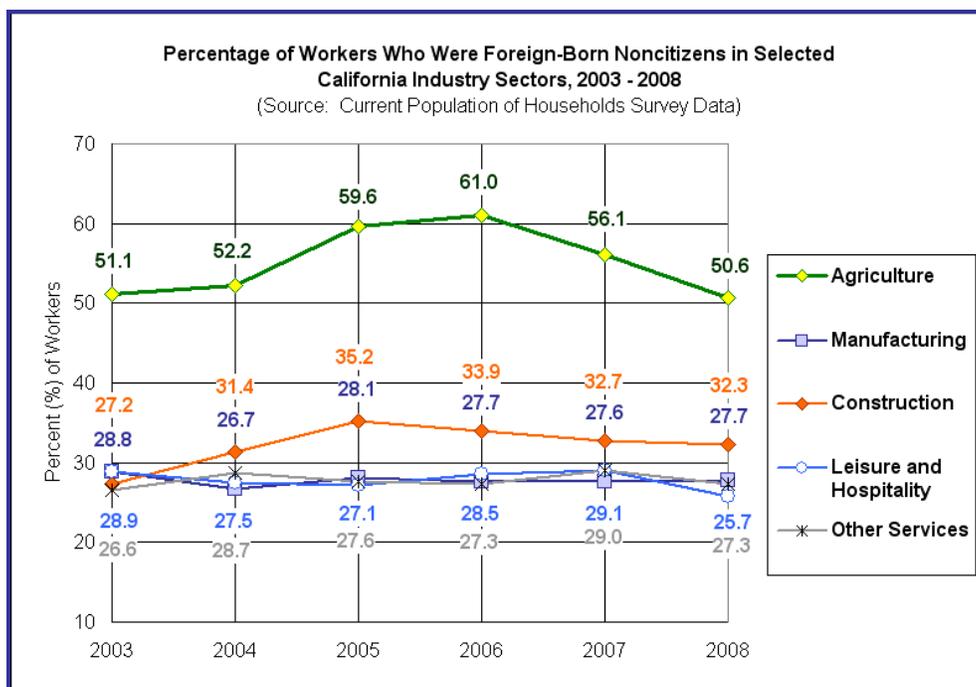
- Looking at employed workers only, the share of foreign-born noncitizens among California's agricultural workers has risen and fallen with the economy in recent years. When the economy was in a housing-driven expansion, the share of foreign-born noncitizens in California's rose from 51.1 in 2003 to a peak of 61.0 percent in 2006. After the housing bubble burst in 2006 and the economy fell into recession, the share of foreign-born noncitizens fell from 61.0 percent in 2006 to 56.1 percent in 2007 and 50.6 percent in 2008.



- In contrast to agricultural, there was no comparable increase and decrease in the proportion of foreign-born noncitizens in the nonagricultural workforce. From 2003 through 2008 their share ranged from a low of 18.2 percent in 2004 to a high of 19.3 percent in 2007.
- Agriculture typically employs a higher share of foreign-born noncitizen workers than any other California industry sector. In 2008, over half (50.6 percent) of employed California agricultural workers were foreign-born noncitizens. Construction (32.4 percent) had the second highest share foreign-born noncitizens in its workforce. Foreign-born noncitizens comprised more than a quarter of all workers in three additional California industry sectors in 2008: manufacturing (27.2 percent), other services (27.3 percent), and leisure and hospitality (25.7 percent).
- The share of foreign-born noncitizens in the agriculture appears to be correlated with events in California's construction industry. From 2003 through 2005, while the residential housing market was booming, California's construction industry added 335,500 workers—a 30.0 percent increase. Over the same period, the share of foreign-born noncitizens among California agricultural workers grew from 51.1 to 61.0 percent, presumably to fill the void left by agricultural workers taking higher paying jobs in construction.
- California's housing bubble burst in early 2006 and construction and mortgage banking industries began shedding jobs. However, when expressed on an annual average basis, construction employment continued expand in 2007, but at the much reduced pace of just 20,100 workers (1.4 percent). In 2008, as problems in housing and real estate deepened and spread into the larger economy, California construction employment fell by 169,500 workers (11.5 percent).
- As employment losses in California's construction industry mounted, the share of foreign-born noncitizens in California's agricultural workforce fell from 61.0 percent in 2006 to 56.1 percent in 2007 and 50.6 percent in 2008. Displaced construction workers returning to agriculture likely played a key role in this decrease.



- The data suggest that the employment of foreign-born noncitizens stabilizes California's labor supply--increasing when labor markets are tight and available workers are in short supply, and falling when workers are plentiful in more difficult economic times. Other factors such as increased border controls and enforcement of immigration rules and rising agricultural wages due to minimum wage increases may also have contributed to the declining share of foreign-born noncitizens in California agriculture. However, stepped up enforcement of border and immigration controls and minimum wage hikes affected all California industry sectors, but agriculture experienced the largest decline in the share of foreign-born noncitizens in its workforce of any industry sector.



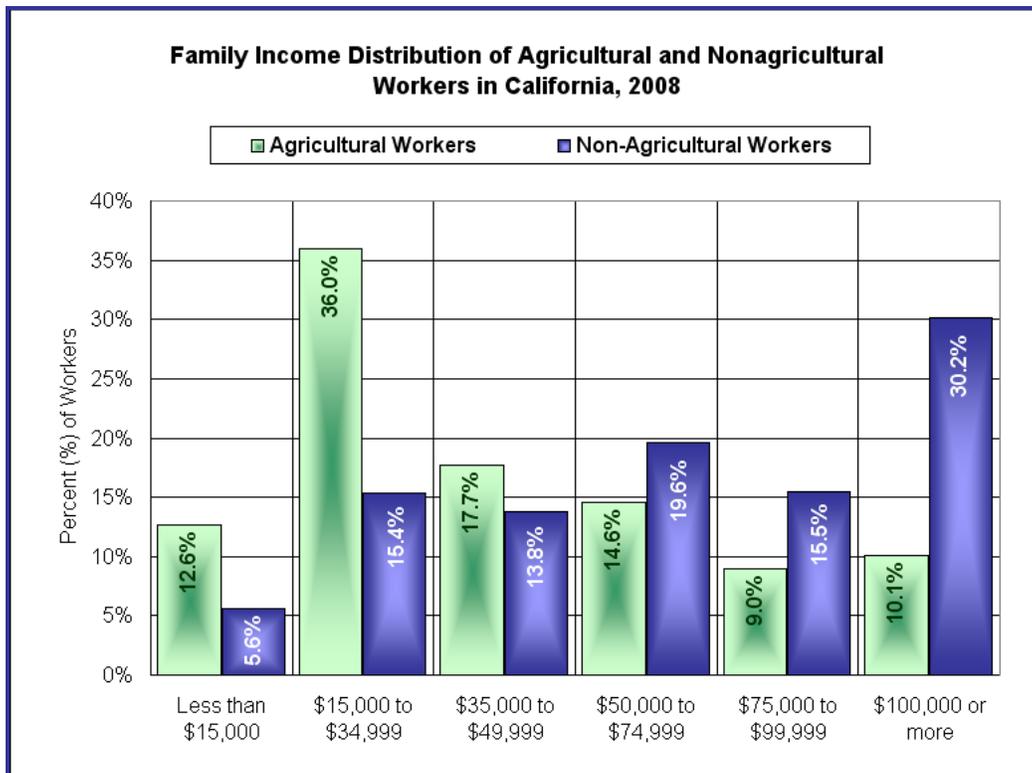
CHARACTERISTICS OF WORK

- The unemployment rate among agricultural workers was 14.0 percent in 2008, up from 8.5 percent in 2007 and 10.9 percent in 2006. The unemployment rate among nonagricultural workers was 6.4 percent in 2008, up from 4.7 percent in 2007, and 4.3 percent in 2006.¹
- In 2008, a larger percentage of agricultural workers (86.9 percent) worked full-time hours than did nonagricultural workers (81.3 percent). However, agricultural work tends to be highly seasonal.
- Whereas 4.6 percent of nonagricultural workers worked more than one job in 2008, only 1.7 percent of agricultural workers did so.
- Over three-fifths (62.7 percent) of agricultural workers worked in farming, fishing, and forestry occupations, and a little more than one-quarter (21.6 percent) worked in management, professional, and related occupations. Transportation and material moving occupations, and service occupations accounted for 5.5 and 4.1 percent of agricultural workers, respectively.
- The vast majority (87.9 percent) of foreign-born agricultural workers who were not U.S. citizens worked in farming, fisheries, and forestry occupations. Their second largest occupational category was transportation and material moving occupations at 4.7 percent. Only 2.9 percent of foreign-born noncitizens working in agriculture worked in management, professional, and related occupations.
- Seven out of ten (70.3 percent) naturalized U.S. citizens working in agriculture worked in farming, fisheries, and forestry occupations, one in eight (12.4 percent) worked in management, and financial occupations, and about one in 12 (8.5 percent) worked in transportation and material moving occupations.
- In sharp contrast, agricultural workers who were native-born U.S. citizens had much greater occupational diversity than foreign-born agricultural workers. Half (50.3 percent) worked in management, professional, and related occupations. Only one-quarter (25.5 percent) worked in farming, fisheries, and forestry occupations. The remaining workers were well represented across several occupational groups.

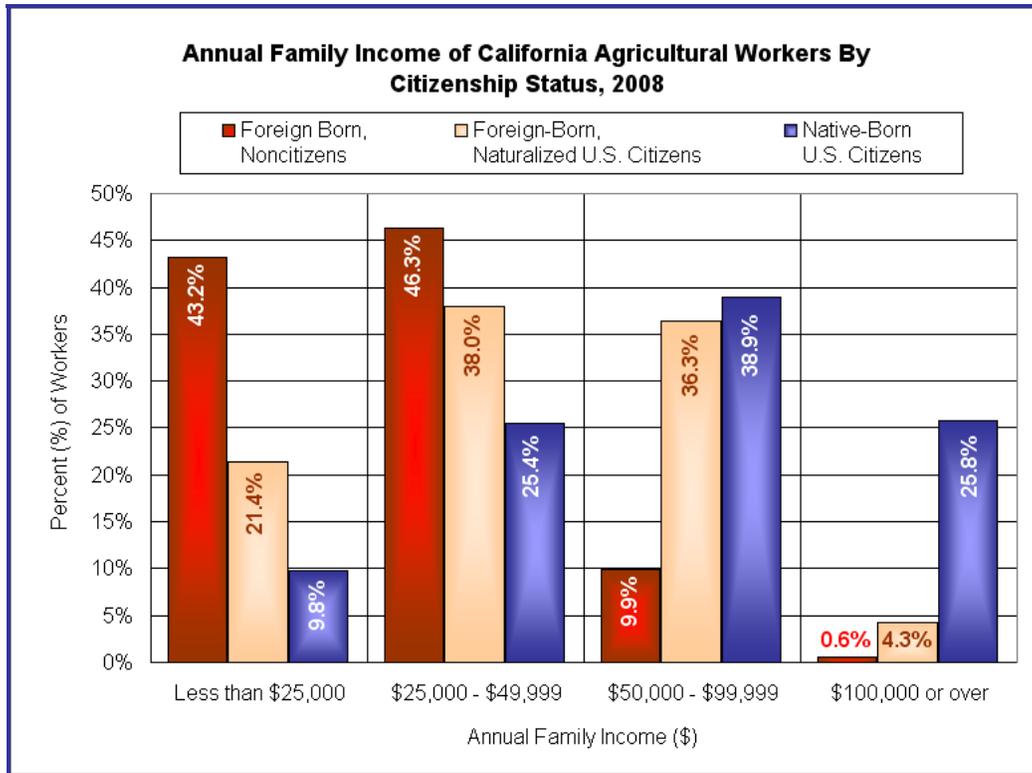
ANNUAL FAMILY INCOME

- The Current Population Survey of Households provides two measures of income and earnings: annual family income and wages (hourly and weekly). This section uses annual family income to compare the earnings of agricultural and nonagricultural workers.
- In 2008, nearly half (48.6 percent) of California's agricultural workers reported annual family income of less than \$35,000. One out of every eight agricultural workers reported annual family income of less than \$15,000. In contrast, a little over one out of every five (21.0 percent) nonagricultural workers reported annual family income of less than \$35,000, and only about one in 20 (5.6 percent) reported annual family income of less than \$15,000.

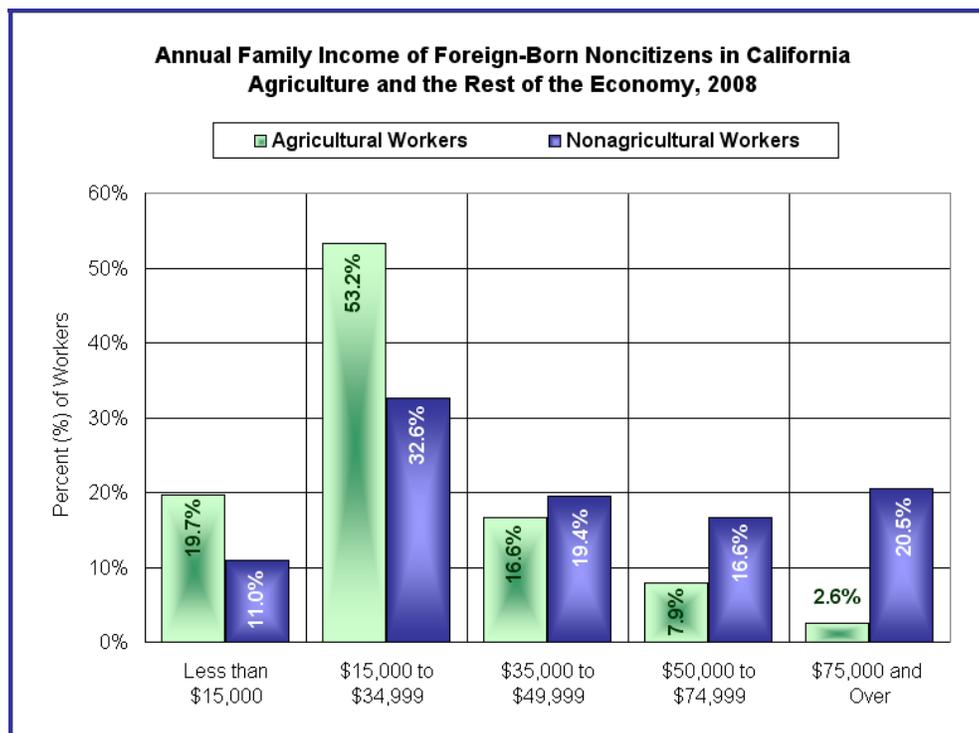
¹ By April 2009, the unemployment rate among agricultural and nonagricultural workers had risen to 18.6 and 7.8 percent, respectively. These data are expressed as a 12 month average of CPS data.



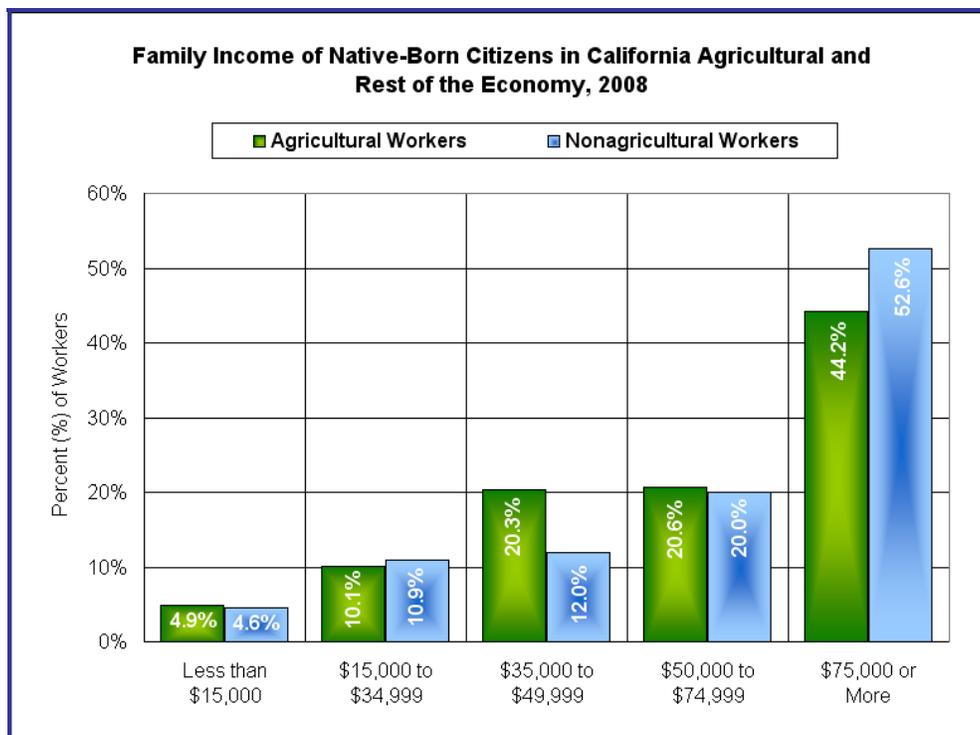
- One-third of agricultural workers reported annual family income of \$50,000 or more in 2008, compared to nearly two-thirds (65.3 percent) of nonagricultural workers. Whereas fewer than one-fifth (19.1 percent) of agricultural workers reported annual family income of \$75,000 or more, close to half (45.7 percent) of nonagricultural workers did so. Three out of every ten (30.2 percent) of nonagricultural workers reported family income of \$100,000 or more, compared to just one out of ten (10.1 percent) agricultural workers.
- Foreign-born noncitizen agricultural workers reported the lowest annual family income of any citizenship group, while native-born U.S. workers reported the highest. Foreign-born naturalized citizens tended to occupy the middle ground.
- In 2008, over two-fifths (43.2 percent) of foreign-born noncitizen agricultural workers reported annual family income of less than \$25,000, compared to a little over one-fifth (21.4 percent) of naturalized citizens, and one-tenth (9.8 percent) of native-born citizens.
- Nine out of every 10 (89.5 percent) foreign-born noncitizen workers in California agriculture reported annual family income of less than \$50,000 in 2008, compared to about three-fifths (59.4 percent) of naturalized workers, and a little over one-third (35.2 percent) of native-born citizens.
- Nearly two-thirds (64.7 percent) of agricultural workers who were native-born U.S. citizen and two-fifths (40.6 percent) naturalized citizens reported family income of more than \$50,000. Whereas over one-quarter (25.8 percent) of native-born U.S. citizens reported annual family incomes of \$100,000 or more, only one out of every 25 (4.3 percent) naturalized agricultural workers did so.



- Foreign-born noncitizens working in agriculture also tended to earn less than foreign-born noncitizens working outside of agriculture. In 2008, nearly three-quarters (72.9 percent) of foreign-born noncitizen agricultural workers reported annual family income of less than \$35,000. One-fifth (19.7 percent) reported annual family income of less than \$15,000.



- In contrast, well over half (56.5 percent) of the foreign-born noncitizens working outside of agriculture reported annual family income of \$35,000 or more in 2008. Over one-third (37.1 percent) reported annual family income of \$50,000 or more, compared to one-tenth (10.5 percent) of those working in agriculture. One-fifth (20.5 percent) of the foreign-born noncitizens working outside agriculture reported annual family income of \$75,000 or more, compared to just 2.6 percent of those working in agriculture.
- The annual family income profile of native-born U.S. citizen agricultural workers paralleled that of citizen workers in the rest of the economy more closely. About two-thirds (64.8 percent) of the native-born citizens in agriculture reported annual family income of \$50,000 or more in 2008, compared to about three-quarters (72.6 percent) of those in the rest of the economy. The difference was due to a higher percentage of nonagricultural workers who reported annual family income of \$75,000 or more (52.6 percent vs. 44.2 percent). The proportion of native-born citizen workers who reported annual family income of less than \$35,000 was similar in agriculture and the rest of the economy (15.0 vs. 15.5 percent).

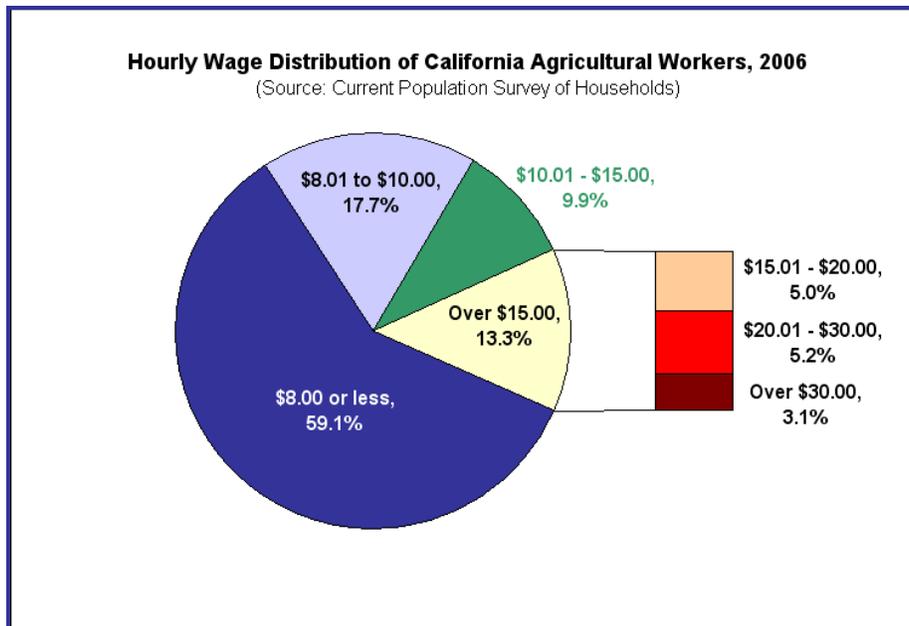
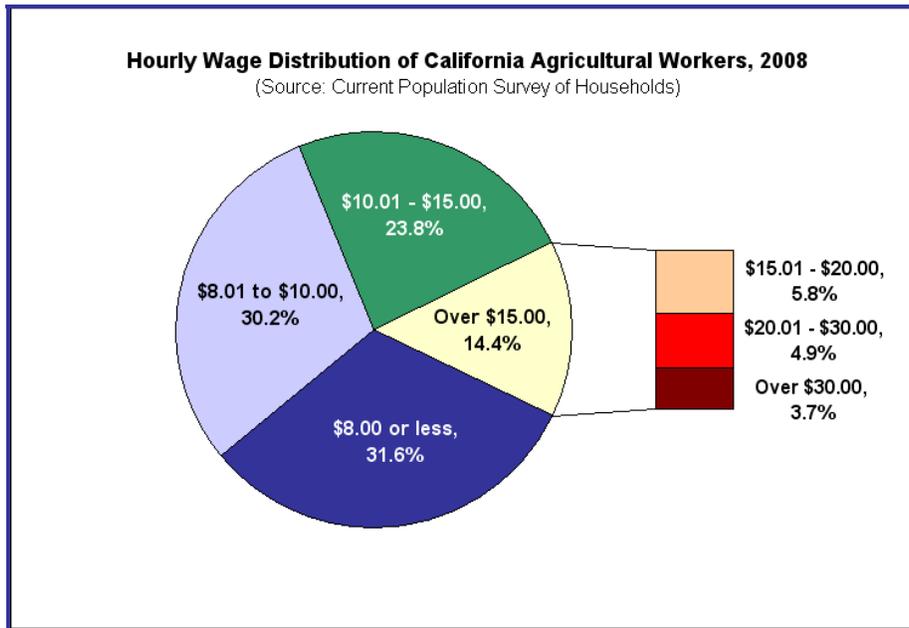


AGRICULTURAL WAGES²

- In 2008, over three-fifths (61.8 percent) of California’s agricultural workers earned \$10 an hour or less. An additional one-quarter (23.8 percent) earned between \$10.01 and \$15 an hour. Only about one out of every seven (14.4 percent) agricultural workers earned more than \$15 an hour, and about one in twelve (8.6 percent) earned more than \$20 an hour.
- Between 2006 and 2008, the minimum wage in California rose from \$6.75 an hour to \$8 an hour. Although a higher percentage of California’s agricultural workers earned the minimum wage in

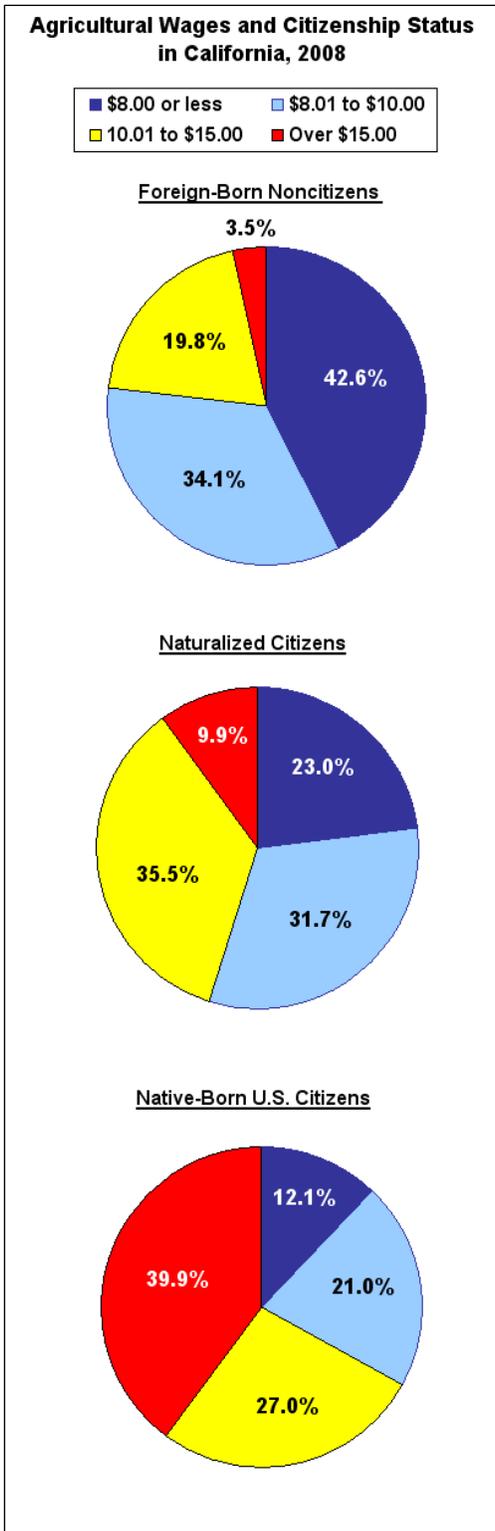
² The hourly wage totals include workers not paid on an hourly wage. An hourly wage for these workers was imputed from their reported weekly earnings and usual number of hours worked each week.

2008 than in 2006, the minimum wage increase appears to have boosted agricultural wage scales overall.



- In 2008, nearly one-third (31.6 percent) of California's agricultural workers earned the minimum wage of \$8 an hour or less. In 2006, less than one-quarter (23.3 percent) of California's agricultural workers earned the minimum wage of \$6.75 or less. Nearly three-fifths (59.1 percent) of agricultural workers earned \$8 or less in 2006.
- In 2006, only about one-quarter (23.2 percent) of California agricultural workers earned more than \$10 an hour. In 2008, nearly two-fifths (38.2 percent) did so. The share of agricultural workers earning between \$10.01 and \$15 an hour rose from 9.9 percent in 2006 to 23.8 percent in 2008.

- However, the share of higher wage earning agricultural workers was comparatively stable between 2006 and 2008. The share of agricultural workers earning over \$15 an hour rising from 13.3 percent in 2006 to just 14.4 percent in 2008. The share of agricultural workers earning \$20 or more an hour rose from 8.3 percent in 2006 to just 8.6 percent in 2008.



- The wages of foreign-born noncitizen agricultural workers tended to be lower than those of either naturalized citizens or native-born citizens. Three-quarters of the agricultural workers who were foreign-born noncitizens earned \$10 or less an hour in 2008. Over two-fifths (42.6 percent) earned \$8 or less an hour. Whereas 19.8 percent of foreign-born noncitizen workers earned between \$10.01 and \$15 an hour, only 3.5 percent earned more than \$15 an hour.
- While over half (54.7 percent) of the foreign-born naturalized U.S. citizens working in agriculture earned \$10 an hour or less in 2008, fewer than one-quarter (23.0 percent) earned the minimum wage of \$8 an hour or less. Over one-third (35.5 percent) earned between \$10.01 and \$15 an hour, and one-tenth (9.9 percent) earned over \$15 an hour.
- In contrast, two-fifths (39.9 percent) of the native-born citizens working in agriculture earned more than \$15 an hour in 2008, and two-thirds (66.9 percent) earned more than \$10 an hour. Only about one in eight (12.1 percent) earned the minimum wage or less.
- Native-born U.S. citizens comprised over three-quarters (76.6 percent) of California agricultural workers who earned more than \$15 an hour or more.
- Nearly three-quarters (73.6 percent) of the California agricultural workers who earned the minimum wage of \$8 an hour or less were foreign-born workers who were not U.S. citizens.
- Reflecting the educational attainment characteristics of California's immigrant agricultural workforce, over two-fifths (44.5 percent) of the minimum wage earners in California agricultural had a sixth grade education or less in 2008. An additional one-third (33.8 percent) had more than a sixth grade education, but had not graduated from high school.
- In contrast, nearly nine out of every ten (87.5 percent) agricultural workers who earned more than \$15 an hour had attained at least a high school diploma. Over one-third (36.0 percent) had attained a bachelor's degree or higher.

- Farm laborers tended to be the lowest paid agricultural workers. In 2008, nearly nine out of every ten (86.1 percent) of California agricultural workers who earned \$10 an hour or less worked in farming, fishing, and forestry occupations. Similarly, 86.8 percent of minimum wage agricultural workers were in farming, fishing, and forestry occupations. The next largest occupational groups among agricultural workers earning \$10 or less were transportation and material moving, and service occupations at 4.7 and 3.5 percent, respectively.
- The highest agricultural wages were distributed across several occupational categories. While over one-quarter (27.7 percent) the agricultural workers who earned more than \$15 an hour worked in agricultural farming, fishing, and forestry occupations, a nearly identical share (27.5 percent) worked in management, business, and financial occupations. Three additional occupational groups accounted for more than 10 percent of agricultural workers who earned more than \$15 an hour in 2008: service occupations (13.2 percent); installation, maintenance, and repair occupations (11.9 percent); and professional and related occupations (11.4 percent).