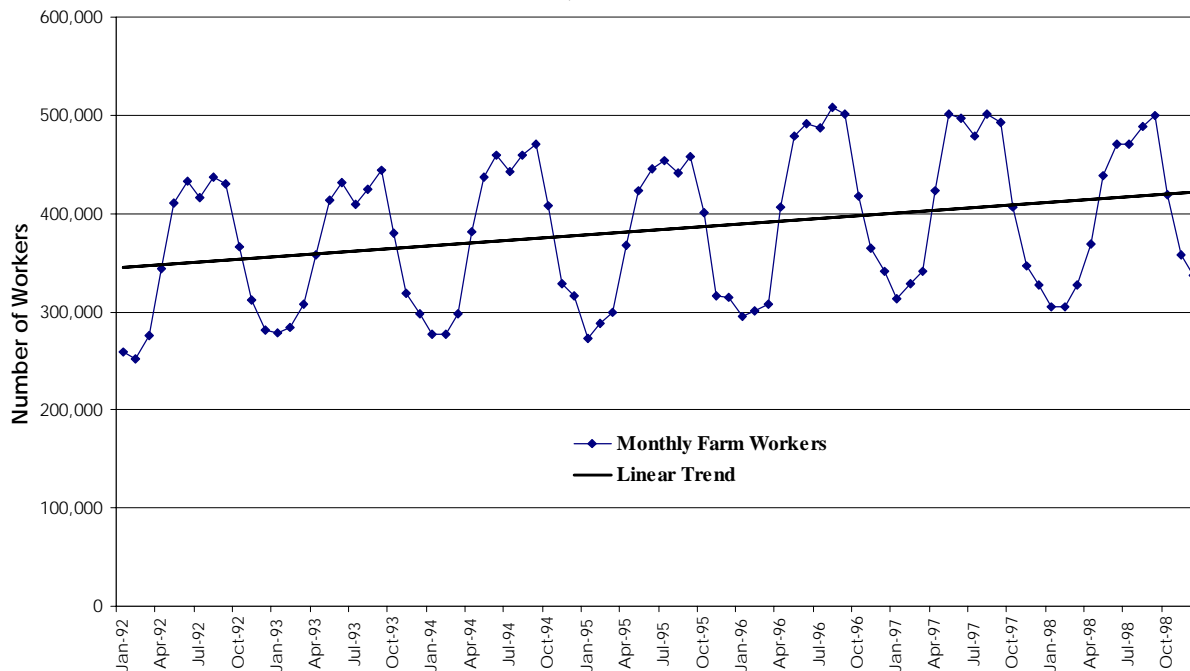


## II.2 Hired Farm Labor

**I**n 1997, the Central Valley had about 58% of California's 549,265 hired farm laborers, according to census data. Most worked in the San Joaquin Valley. Monthly data in Figure 18 (California Employment Development Department (EDD)) displays the cyclical nature of the farm labor employment market, and an upward trend in average annual employment between 1992 and 1998. The higher employment total for the *Census of Agriculture* data in 1997 (549,265 compared to EDD's monthly high of about 500,000) suggests that different definitions or sampling methods are employed in the two data sources.

FIGURE 18  
**California Hired Farm Workers, 1992-1998**



Source: Martin, Philip, *California Agriculture*, from California Employment Development Department Statistics.

TABLE 18  
**Hired Farm Workers by Region, 1997**

	Sacramento Valley	San Joaquin Valley	Central Valley*	California
Farms with Hired Workers	5,130	14,947	20,077	36,450
Total Hired Workers	57,657	264,575	322,232	549,265
Workers Hired 150 Days or More	16,308	80,469	96,777	186,358
Workers Hired Less than 150 Days	41,349	184,106	225,455	362,907
Payroll (\$1,000)	313,519	1,383,042	1,696,561	3,392,577

\*Central Valley is the sum of the San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys.

Source: USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, *1997 Census of Agriculture*.

- The California agricultural labor market is characterized by (1) an almost entirely foreign-born (mostly Hispanic) workforce, and (2) relatively low annual average earnings compared to other occupations. Low earnings are the result of relatively low hourly wages and less than full-time employment.

TABLE 19

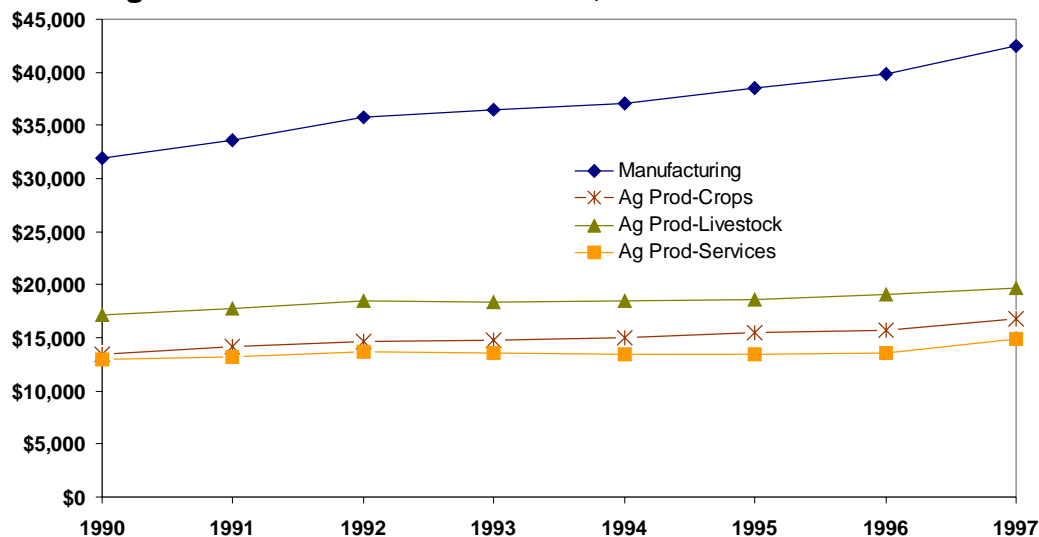
**Characteristics of California Crop Workers, 1995-97**

	Percent of Workers
Foreign Born	95
Male	82
Under 34	63
Married	61
Family in United States	60
In United States Less than 5 Years	53
2 to 4 Farm Jobs per Year	53
Unauthorized	42

Source: Martin, Philip, and J. Edward Taylor, "For California Farmworkers, Future Holds Little Prospect for Change," *California Agriculture* 2000.

FIGURE 19

**Average Annual Earnings by California Manufacturing and Agricultural Production Workers, 1990-1997**



Note: Agricultural Production Services includes establishments primarily engaged in performing soil preparation services, crop services, veterinary services, other animal services, farm labor and management services, and landscape and horticultural services for others on a contract or fee basis.

Sources:

1. RAND California, Average Industry Wages, online data, 2000.
2. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, online data, 2000.