

Farm & Rural Communities



Carol Morgan

Multiple Jobholding Among Rural Workers

During the 1980's the multiple jobholding rate for the nation increased significantly from 4.9 percent of the work force in 1980 to 6.2 percent in 1989. Since 1989, the overall multiple jobholding rate has held steady at around 6.2 percent. In rural areas, however, the rate remains higher than in urban areas, although the nearly 8-percent rate of the late 1980's has fallen in the 1990's. In 1996, 1.7 million rural workers held two or more jobs, a rate of 7.1 percent.

While farming remains important as a source of jobs and income in many rural areas, it is no longer the dominant rural industry, and even for the remaining farm households, the nonfarm rural economy is a critical source of employment and income. The largest share of rural jobs and recent employment growth has occurred in the service sector, mirroring the urban employment picture. Rural workers are employed in a wide range of occupations related to recreation, retirement, and natural amenities, as well as in the financial, insurance, real estate, telecommunications, and retail industries.

About one in five rural workers employed in *farming, forestry, and fishing* held more than one job in 1996. Some of these workers were farmers who held off-farm jobs. Others were workers who took seasonal farm jobs in addition to their primary employment. Among rural workers who held more than one job, the largest percentage of second jobs was in farming, forestry, and fishing occupations (19 percent). Farming was the most common second job for moonlighters in blue-collar occupations including protective service (20 percent), precision production and craft (42 percent), machine operation and assembly (23 percent), and transportation (37 percent), and among handlers, cleaners, helpers, and laborers (33 percent).

Professional specialty occupations accounted for 13 percent of second jobs held by rural workers, and rural workers whose primary occupations were in professional specialty fields were the most likely to hold more than one job. Many of these occupations have flexible work schedules, or regular time off, allowing workers to take on other jobs.

Rural elementary and secondary school teachers were the most likely to hold a second job, with a rate of 12 percent. Teachers also accounted for the largest absolute number of rural multiple jobholders. Other professional specialty

occupations such as health assessment and treatment (9 percent), technicians (11 percent), and college and university teachers (10 percent) had high multiple jobholding rates, as did rural workers in administrative support (8 percent), technicians (11 percent), and police and firefighters (10 percent).

Many of the second jobs held by rural workers were in *services and sales occupations* (18 and 15 percent). About 37 percent of rural moonlighters were self-employed in their second job, with the largest share in service industries. In contrast, only about 15 percent of workers who held a single job were self-employed.

Most rural workers took a second job in the same occupation as their primary job, or in a related field, but many second jobs were seasonal or low-paying jobs that supplemented earnings to meet basic living expenses. Workers most often claim financial reasons for holding two or more jobs. About 44 percent of rural workers with more than one job in 1989 and 42 percent in 1991 held multiple jobs to meet household expenses or to pay off debts. Evidence suggests financial reasons have remained a primary motivation. Rural workers whose median weekly earnings were in the lowest fifth had the highest multiple jobholding rate (8 percent) in 1996.

The Current Population Survey

This analysis draws on data from the 1996 Current Population Survey (CPS), a monthly survey of households conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The CPS provides detailed information on the labor force, employment, unemployment, and demographic characteristics of the rural and urban population.

The CPS derives estimates based on interviews of about 47,000 households that are representative of the U.S. civilian noninstitutional population 16 years of age and over. Labor force activity is based on respondents' activity during the third week of each month. *Primary job* is defined as the job at which the respondent worked the most hours. As a result of these survey specifications, farm work may be recorded as a *secondary job* if more hours were devoted to an off-farm occupation during the survey week, even when the worker would identify him/herself as a farmer.

Estimates of the basic demographic statistics in this article are based on the full CPS monthly samples, while detailed information on occupations is based on surveys of a quarter-sample of respondents each month. Because of changes in the CPS during 1994-95, the 1996 survey marks the first time since 1993 that annual rural and urban data have been available, and the first time since 1991 that multiple jobholding data have been collected.

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The Demographics of Multiple Jobholding

The greater the educational levels a rural worker reported, the greater the likelihood that the worker held a second job. Only 4 percent of high school dropouts held multiple jobs, compared with 10 percent of workers with a 4-year college degree. Workers with high levels of education may find it easier to get a second job because they have more specialized knowledge and skills that are in demand.

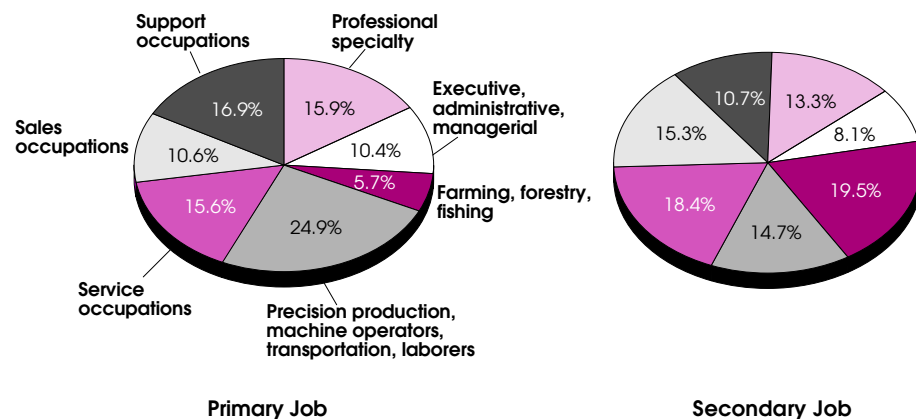
Although workers with more education may have financial reasons for moonlighting, nonfinancial reasons may strongly affect their decision to work a second job. For example, a second job may provide experience needed to enhance a worker's primary occupation. In addition, workers with higher levels of education may have more flexible schedules that permit taking a second job. For example, occupations like teaching and nursing that demand relatively high levels of education and have relatively flexible schedules also have high rates of moonlighting.

The multiple jobholding rate was the same for rural men and women—7 percent. Men outnumbered women slightly in the absolute number of multiple jobholders, comprising 54 percent of all rural multiple jobholders. Married men were more likely than single men to be multiple jobholders, while married women were less likely to work at a second job than single women.

While the multiple jobholding rate for rural men and women was virtually the same, their work schedules were not. About 83 percent of rural men who worked more than one job in 1996 usually worked full-time on their primary jobs and part-time on their secondary jobs. About 14 percent of rural men worked part-time in both primary and secondary jobs, while about 5 percent worked full-time in both jobs. In contrast, only 55 percent of rural female multiple jobholders worked full-time in their primary jobs and part-time in their secondary jobs. About 42 percent held multiple part-time jobs.

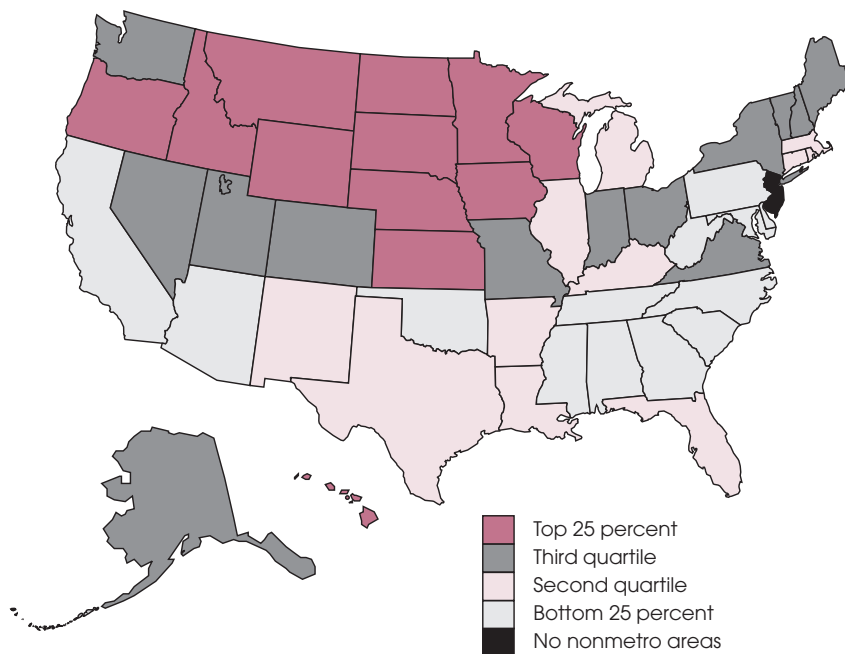
Middle-aged rural workers, 45 to 54 years, had the highest multiple jobholding rate of any age group, at 8 percent. The

The Most Common Second Jobs Among Rural Residents Are in Farming-Forestry-Fishing Category



Source: 1996 Current Population Survey, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. Economic Research Service, USDA

Rural Multiple Jobholding Rate Is Highest in the North Central Region



Source: 1996 Current Population Survey, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. Economic Research Service, USDA

multiple jobholding rate increased with each working-age group, up to ages 45-54: 6 percent for teens, 7 percent for workers age 20-24 and 25-34, and 8 percent for ages 35-44. The rate declined

after age 54. In urban areas, in contrast, workers age 45-54 had the lowest multiple jobholding rate—6 percent—and those age 20-24 the highest—7 percent.


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The moonlighting rate for rural whites was 7.5 percent, followed by blacks at 5 percent and Hispanics at 4 percent. But blacks worked an average of 51 hours per week at their multiple jobs, compared with just over 50 hours for Hispanics and just under 50 hours for whites, paralleling the pattern found in urban areas.

In the North Central region, rural multiple jobholding rates were higher across all major occupational and demographic categories. A high proportion of lower

paying jobs and a large number of jobs in farming, forestry, and fishing in these states likely contributed to the high multiple jobholding rate. Net outmigration and low unemployment rates in many rural areas in these states have also provided more opportunity for workers to take a second job. The highest rates of multiple jobholding in this region were in Minnesota and Wisconsin (both 12 percent); Nebraska, Montana, and Kansas (11 percent each); and Iowa and South Dakota (10 percent each).

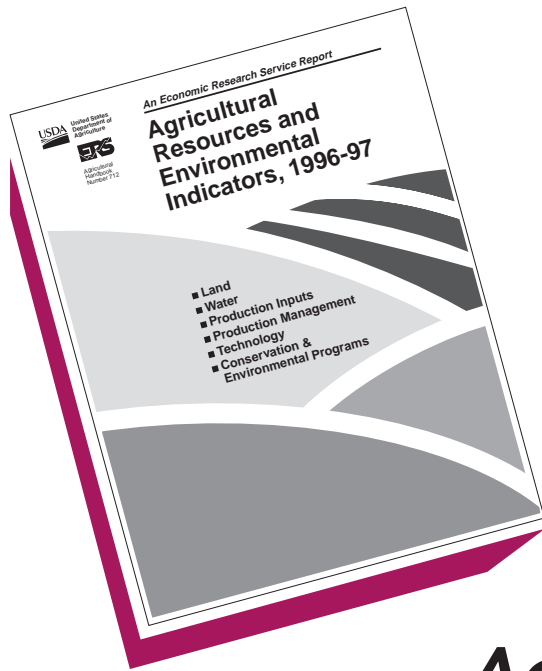
The states with the lowest rates of rural multiple jobholding were in the South and Southwest. South Carolina and Arizona had the lowest rate at 3 percent, followed by Tennessee and Georgia at 4 percent. High immigration and unemployment rates in these states, relative to other regions, may have helped keep the multiple jobholding rates low.

Timothy S. Parker (202) 694-5435
tparker@econ.ag.gov 

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