

§ 780.313

crops such as cotton, tobacco, grains, fruits, and vegetables. The term would not include harvesting operations performed by an employee with an electrically powered mechanical device, such as a "blueberry picking tool." "Hand-harvesting" refers only to soil-grown crops and does not include any operation involving animals, such as shearing or lambing of sheep and catching chickens. Hand-harvesting is defined as manually gathering or severing the crop from the soil, stems, or roots at its growing position in the fields. Included are integral related operations, closely related geographically and in point of time, which are performed before the transportation to concentration points on the farm.

For example:

(1) Employees who take tobacco leaves from the pickers and string them on poles by hand qualify as "hand harvest laborers" because the stringing operation is performed in the field almost simultaneously with the picking and before transportation to the concentration point on the farm (drying shed).

(2) The picking up of tomatoes by hand after hand pulling from the vines is "hand-harvesting," as it is performed where the crop is severed and prior to its transportation to the packing shed.

(b) The definition is limited to harvesting, and the performance by the hand harvester of any nonharvesting operation in the same workweek would cause the loss of the section 13(a)(6)(C) exemption.

For example:

(1) Employees who wrap tomatoes in a packing shed would not qualify, as the wrapping is a nonharvesting operation. (*Schultz v. Durrence* (S.D. Ga.) 63 CCH. Lab. Cas. 32,387; 19 W.H. Cases 747.)

(2) Employees who hand pick small undesirable fruit prior to harvesting in order to insure a better crop would not qualify for the exemption. This is a preharvest culling operation performed as a part of the cultivation and growing operations not harvesting.

(3) Employees who chop cotton, since this is a nonharvesting operation.

§ 780.313 Piece rate basis.

The exemption provides that the employee must be paid on a piece-rate basis. To be exempt the employee must be compensated solely on piece rates during the workweek. The exemption does not apply in any workweek in which the employee is compensated on

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any other basis. For example, if an employee is compensated on an hourly rate for part of the week and on a piece rate for part of the week, the exemption would not be available. Also, if any pieceworker who is otherwise subject to the minimum wage provisions of the Act does not meet all the requirements set forth in this section he must be paid at least the minimum wage for each hour worked in a particular workweek, regardless of the fact he is paid on piece rate unless he is exempted by some other provision of the Act.

§ 780.314 Operations customarily * * * paid on a piece rate basis * * *.

A significant test of the exemption is that the hand harvest operation "has been, and is customarily and generally recognized as having been, paid on a piece rate basis in the region of employment." The legislative history is silent on who must customarily and generally recognize the hand harvest operation as having been paid on a piece rate basis. However, considering the context in which the term is used, such recognition must be on the part of agricultural employers and employees and other individuals in the region of employment who are familiar with farming operations and practices in the region and the method of compensation utilized in such operations and practices.

§ 780.315 Local hand harvest laborers.

(a) A requirement of the exemption is that an employee must commute each day from his permanent residence to the farm where he is employed. Thus, the exemption does not apply to a migrant worker who travels to different areas of the country during the harvesting seasons. This would be true even though the worker may remain in the area for a considerable period of time. On the other hand, if a migrant worker actually changes his place of residence and thereafter commutes daily from his permanent residence, the exemption applies from the date of the change of residence if the other tests are met.

(b) The fact that a worker may live on the farm where the operations are performed would not be a reason for