



Recidivism and Employment of Agribusiness Workers: FY2018 Releases

RESEARCH - EVALUATION UNIT

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Introduction

In FY2018, 207 state responsible (SR) inmates were released who held Agribusiness jobs during their release term of incarceration.¹ VADOC's Agribusiness program provides inmates with various training opportunities, while also providing food to the inmate population to help reduce the Department's food costs. Inmates participating in the program can work in food production, saw mill operations, row crop operations, swine operations, or on the beef and dairy cattle farm. This report assesses the impact of Agribusiness employment on job attainment and recidivism after release from SR incarceration. FY2018 was chosen as the year to analyze because it is the most recent year for which a three-year follow-up is available with mature data.

Agribusiness Worker Characteristics

Of the 207 Agribusiness workers released in FY2018, the vast majority were male (82%). The racial composition of the workers was 59% White, 40% Black and 1% Asian or Pacific Islander. The average age at release was 38.6 years old and the largest percentage of releases were between the ages of 30 and 39 years old at release (38%).

Demographic factors such as gender and age are known predictors of recidivism. Males and females had near equal recidivism rates (18.8% and 18.9%, respectively). Inmates who were White had a higher recidivism rate (24.4%) than inmates who were Black (10.8%). Inmates who were under the age of 30 at release had the highest recidivism rate of any age group at 29.7%. Inmates who were 50 years or older when released had the lowest recidivism rates of any age group (6.3%).

At 18.8%, Agribusiness workers had a lower recidivism rate compared to all FY2018 SR releases (20.6%).² However, when compared to the recidivism rates for all inmates released from VADOC facilities in FY2018, the Agribusiness participant recidivism rate is slightly higher (18.1% and 18.8%, respectively). There was not a statistically significant difference in recidivism rates among FY2018 SR releases who were employed by the Agribusiness program and those who were not.

Employment After Release

According to Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) data,³ 82% of Agribusiness workers released in FY2018 were employed during the three-year follow-up period.⁴ The recidivism rate of those who were employed after release is lower than those who did not find employment after release (17.8% and 23.7%, respectively); however, this difference was not statistically significant. Of the 169 Agribusiness workers who were employed following release, the average wages earned per quarter was \$5,220.05 (median of \$4,581.27).

FY2018 Agribusiness Releases: Demographic Characteristics, Recidivism Rates, and Employment						
	Agribusiness*		Recidivists**		Employed After Release**	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Overall	207	100%	39	18.8%	169	82%
Gender						
Male	170	82%	32	18.8%	137	81%
Female	37	18%	7	18.9%	32	86%
Race						
White	123	59%	30	24.4%	102	83%
Black	83	40%	9	10.8%	66	80%
Asian or Pacific Islander	1	1%	0	0.0%	1	100%
Age at Release						
Under 30	37	18%	11	29.7%	30	81%
30-39	79	38%	14	17.7%	69	87%
40-49	59	29%	12	20.3%	46	78%
50+	32	15%	2	6.3%	24	75%
Age at Release (Mean)	38.6					
Age at Release (Median)	37.0					
*Percentages in the Agribusiness column will total 100% as they are calculated out of the total number of Agribusiness workers.						
**Percentages in the Recidivists and Employed After Release columns were calculated out of the total number within each specific category.						

¹ Due to the small sample size, results should be interpreted with caution.

² [VADOC Research-Evaluation Unit \(2023\): FY2018 State Responsible Releases.](#)

³ Only Virginia employers who are subject to tax provisions of the unemployment compensation laws are included in the data; freelance/under the table employment and employment records from outside of Virginia are not included; <https://www.vec.virginia.gov/employers/>.

⁴ The follow-up period was from the quarter/year the inmate was released through 12 additional quarters or through the quarter/year the inmate recidivated.

Employment After Release (Continued)

On average, it took these inmates just over one quarter (1.2) to find employment.⁵ Those who were employed sustained employment for approximately 56% of the time they were at liberty (54% median) and averaged 3 employers during that time.

A slightly larger percentage of females were able to find employment after release than males (86% and 81%, respectively). Both White inmates and Black inmates obtained employment after release at almost equal rates (83% and 80%, respectively). Inmates between the ages of 30 and 39 years old when released were the most likely to find employment (87%). After 39 years of age at release, there is a decreasing trend in age and finding employment.

Of those who found employment after release, the largest percentage of Agribusiness workers first employment after release was in the HVAC/Construction/Contractors/Supplies industry (22%), followed by the Food Service industry (20%). Only 7 Agribusiness workers found employment in the Agriculture industry after release (4%).

Crime Type

Crime type represents the most serious offense from the FY2018 release term of incarceration. Inmates whose crime type was property/public order had a higher recidivism rate (24.8%) than inmates with drug-related (10.8%) or violent (16.2%) crime types. Inmates whose most serious offense was drug-related had the highest rates of employment (89%) followed by those whose most serious offense was violent or property/public order (78%).

FY2018 Agribusiness Releases: Recidivism Rates and Employment by Crime Type and Previous SR Incarcerations						
	Agribusiness*		Recidivists**		Employed After Release**	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Overall	207	100%	39	18.8%	169	82%
Crime Type						
Violent	37	18%	6	16.2%	29	78%
Property/Public Order	105	51%	26	24.8%	82	78%
Drug	65	31%	7	10.8%	58	89%
Previous SR Incarcerations						
No previous SR terms	92	44%	11	12.0%	79	86%
1 previous SR term	55	27%	16	29.1%	44	80%
2 previous SR terms	35	17%	6	17.1%	27	77%
3 or more previous SR terms	25	12%	6	24.0%	19	76%

*Percentages in the Agribusiness column will total 100% as they are calculated out of the total number of Agribusiness workers.
 **Percentages in the Recidivists and Employed After Release columns were calculated out of the total number within each specific category.

Incarceration History

Inmates who had one prior SR incarceration had the highest recidivism rate (29.1%), while those with no previous SR incarcerations had the lowest recidivism rate (12.0%). As the number of previous SR incarcerations increased, the percentage of Agribusiness workers that were able to find employment after release decreased.

⁵ Time to employment was calculated as the difference between employment quarter/year and release quarter/year.

Employment Statistics: FY2018 Agribusiness Releases		
	Mean	Median
Quarterly Wages	\$5,220.05	\$4,581.27
Time to Employment	1.2 Quarters	1.0 Quarter
Percent Employed*	56%	54%
Number of Employers	3	2

*Percent of eligible quarters an individual was employed while at liberty.

FY2018 Agribusiness Releases Employed After Release: Company Type		
	Employed After Release	
	Total	Percent
Employment Rate	169	82%
Company Type*		
HVAC/Construction/Contractors/Supplies	37	22%
Food Service	34	20%
Staffing/Job Placement Agency	29	17%
Distribution/Transportation/Moving/Storage	17	10%
Stores/Markets	13	8%
Cleaning/Hotels	10	6%
Agriculture	7	4%
Other	22	13%

*VEC records of the first job the Agribusiness worker earned wages from upon release from SR incarceration were used to classify company type. Company types were coded based on the legal company name found in the VEC data.

COMPAS Risk and Needs Assessment

The COMPAS Risk and Needs Assessment tool is used by the VADOC to determine the risks of general and violent recidivism as well as criminogenic needs. In terms of risk of general recidivism, those who scored 'Medium' had the highest recidivism rates (27.4%), but the lowest percentage of employment post-release (76%). Comparatively, those who scored 'Medium' on the risk of violent recidivism scale also had the highest recidivism rates (26.3%) among the three categories. The highest percentage of employment among the risk of violent recidivism categories was among those who scored 'Medium' (84%).

Inmates who scored 'Highly Probable' on the COMPAS substance abuse needs scale had the highest recidivism rate at 21.3% compared to those who scored 'Unlikely' (15.8%) or 'Probable' (14.3%). Employment rates among the three groups were comparable (82%, 83%, and 81%, respectively).

FY2018 Agribusiness Releases: Recidivism Rates and Employment by COMPAS Scores						
	Agribusiness*		Recidivists**		Employed After Release**	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Overall	207	100%	39	18.8%	169	82%
COMPAS Risk of General Recidivism						
Low	62	29%	6	9.7%	53	85%
Medium	84	41%	23	27.4%	64	76%
High	61	30%	10	16.4%	52	85%
COMPAS Risk of Violent Recidivism						
Low	115	56%	16	13.9%	94	82%
Medium	57	27%	15	26.3%	48	84%
High	35	17%	8	22.9%	27	77%
COMPAS Substance Abuse Needs Score						
Unlikely	38	19%	6	15.8%	31	82%
Probable	42	20%	6	14.3%	35	83%
Highly Probable	127	61%	27	21.3%	103	81%
*Percentages in the Agribusiness column will total 100% as they are calculated out of the total number of Agribusiness workers.						
**Percentages in the Recidivists and Employed After Release columns were calculated out of the total number within each specific category.						

Conclusions

This report examined the recidivism and job attainment rates of Agribusiness workers who were released from SR incarceration in FY2018. Agribusiness workers achieved a lower recidivism rate than Virginia's overall recidivism rate and a high rate of job attainment. These preliminary findings suggest Agribusiness participation may support successful reentry by promoting both job attainment and employment stability.

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