



# Recidivism and Employment of Agribusiness Workers: FY21 Releases

RESEARCH - EVALUATION UNIT

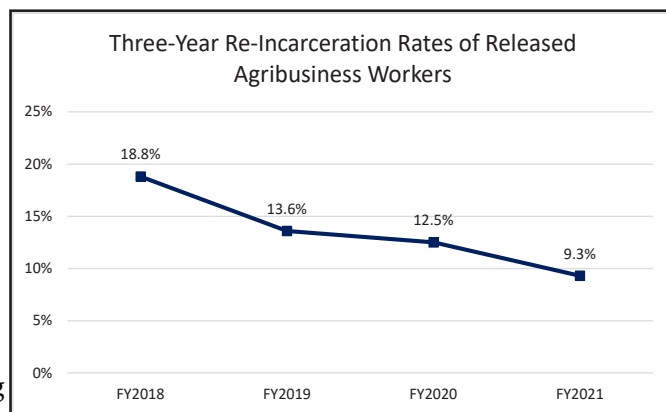
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## Introduction

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 as well as recidivism and employment trends of Agribusiness releases between FY18 and FY21. In FY21, 193 state responsible (SR) inmates were released who held Agribusiness jobs during their release term of incarceration.<sup>1</sup> FY21 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.

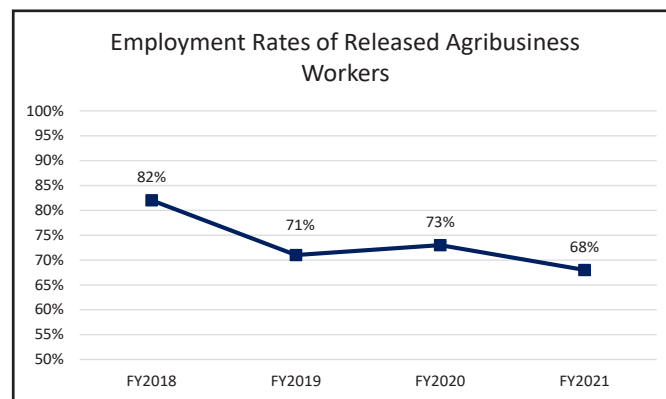
## Agribusiness Trends

The recidivism rate of released Agribusiness workers has steadily decreased from 18.8% in FY18 to 9.3% in FY21. Agribusiness workers have consistently had lower recidivism rates than the overall SR release cohort for their respective years. The employment rate of released Agribusiness workers has shown a slight decrease across the three years. In FY18, 82% of Agribusiness workers found employment post-release while 68% of FY21 Agribusiness workers found post-release employment. This is the lowest rate of post-release employment since Agribusiness began. The lower rates of employment among the FY19, FY20, and FY21 Agribusiness releases may be partially attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent hiring freezes across multiple industries during that time.



## Agribusiness Worker Characteristics

Of the 193 Agribusiness workers released in FY21, the vast majority were male (89%). The racial composition of the workers was 71% White and 30% Black. The average age at release was 41.0 years old and the largest percentage of releases were between the ages of 30 and 39 years old at release (39%).



Demographic factors such as gender and age are known predictors of recidivism.<sup>2</sup> Males had a slightly higher recidivism rate than females (9.4% and 9.1%, respectively). Inmates who were White had a higher recidivism rate (12.5%) than inmates who were Black (1.8%). As the age of released inmates increased, the recidivism rate decreased. Inmates who were over 50 years old when released had the lowest recidivism rates of any age group (2.6%).

At 9.3%, Agribusiness workers had a lower recidivism rate compared to all FY21 SR releases (18.8%). When compared to

<sup>1</sup> Due to the small population size, results should be interpreted with caution.

<sup>2</sup> VADOC Research-Evaluation Unit (2025): FY2021 State Responsible Releases

the recidivism rates for all inmates released from SR incarceration in FY21, the Agribusiness participant recidivism rate was lower than those who did not participate (9.3% and 19.0%, respectively).

### Employment After Release

For this study, participants were counted as employed only if their wages were reportable to the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC). Unreported wages could have been employed in another state or with an employer not subject to the unemployment compensation laws.<sup>3</sup> According to VEC data, 68% of Agribusiness workers released in FY21 were employed during the three-year follow-up period.<sup>4</sup> Agribusiness workers had a higher employment rate than the overall FY21 SR release cohort (59%). Unlike previous years, the recidivism rate of those who were employed after release was higher than those who did not find employment after release (10.6% and 6.6%, respectively); this difference was not statistically significant. Of the 132 Agribusiness workers who were employed following release, the average wages earned per quarter was \$7,957.98 (median of \$7,368.86).

On average, it took these inmates over one quarter (1.5) to find employment (median of 1 quarter). Those who were employed sustained employment for approximately 54% of the time they were at liberty (median of 54%) and averaged three different employers during the follow-up period (median of 2).

Inmates who found employment and were employed less than 47% of the time they were at liberty during the follow-up period had the highest recidivism rate of 16.1%, which is lower than the re-incarceration rate of the same population in the overall FY21 cohort (21.6%). For those who found employment, recidivism rates decreased as the percentage of time employed increased. Those who were employed for greater than 77% of the time they were at liberty during the follow-up period had the lowest recidivism rate (5.1%), which is almost identical to the same population in the FY21 cohort (5.2%). Overall, Agribusiness participants had lower recidivism rates than the overall FY21 cohort.

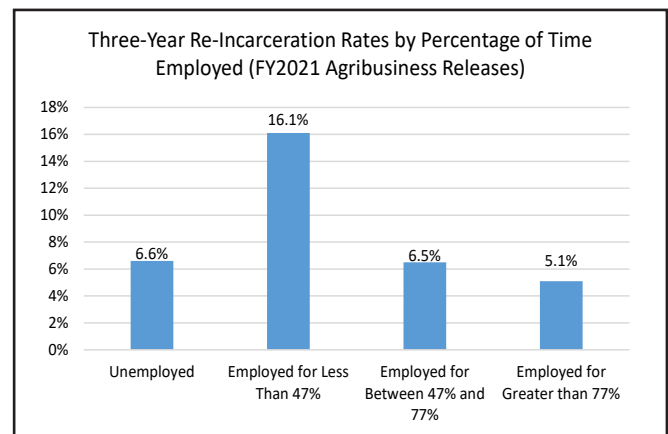
Female inmates obtained employment after release at a higher rate than males (82% and 67%, respectively). A larger percentage of White inmates were able to find employment after release than Black inmates (77% and 65%, respectively).

	Agribusiness*		Recidivists**		Employed After Release**	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
<b>Overall</b>	193	100%	18	9.3%	132	68%
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	171	89%	16	9.4%	114	67%
Female	22	11%	2	9.1%	18	82%
<b>Race</b>						
White	136	71%	17	12.5%	88	65%
Black	57	30%	1	1.8%	44	77%
<b>Age at Release</b>						
Under 30	17	9%	3	17.6%	11	65%
30-39	76	39%	8	10.5%	59	78%
40-49	62	32%	6	9.7%	42	68%
50+	38	20%	1	2.6%	20	53%
<b>Age at Release (Mean)</b>	<b>41.0</b>					
<b>Age at Release (Median)</b>	<b>40.9</b>					

\*Percentages in the Agribusiness column may total 99% to 101% due to rounding, 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.

	Mean	Median
<b>Quarterly Wages</b>	\$7,957.98	\$7,368.86
<b>Time to Employment*</b>	1.5 Quarters	1.0 Quarters
<b>Percent Employed**</b>	54%	54%
<b>Number of Employers</b>	3	2

\*Time to employment was calculated as the difference between employment quarter/year and release quarter/year.  
 \*\*Percent of eligible quarters an individual was employed while at liberty.



<sup>3</sup> 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/>.

<sup>4</sup> 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. The COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted employment during the FY21 follow-up periods due to shut-downs and restrictions.

The majority of inmates between 30-39 years old at release found employment (78%). The rate of employment increased between those under 30 and those between 30-39 years old and then decreased consistently for releases over the age of 40.

Of those who found employment after release, the largest percentage of Agribusiness workers' first employment after release was in Manufacturing (27%), followed by the Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services (22%), and Accommodation and Food Services, Construction, and Retail Trade industries (10%).

### Crime Type

Crime type represents the most serious offense from the FY21 release term of incarceration. Inmates whose crime type was property/public order had a higher recidivism rate (10.6%) than inmates with drug-related (9.0%) or violent (6.7%) crime types. Inmates whose most serious offense was property/public order had the highest rates of employment (73%) followed by those whose most serious offense was violent (70%) or drug-related (63%).

### SR Incarceration History

Inmates who had one prior SR incarceration had the highest recidivism rate (13.3%), while those with no previous SR incarcerations had the lowest recidivism rate (5.4%). Except for those with three or more prior SR incarcerations, as the number of previous SR incarcerations increased, the percentage of Agribusiness workers that were able to find employment after release increased. However, the rates should be interpreted with caution due to the small population size.

### COMPAS<sup>5</sup> 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 'High' had the highest recidivism rates (17.9%). Those who scored 'High' had the highest percentage employed post-release (77%). Comparatively, those who scored 'Medium' on the risk of violent recidivism scale had the highest recidivism rates (13.7%) among the three categories. The highest

Employment Rate	Employed After Release	
	Total	Percent
	132	68%
<b>Industry Type*</b>		
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1	1%
Utilities	1	1%
Construction	13	10%
Manufacturing	36	27%
Wholesale Trade	7	5%
Retail Trade	13	10%
Transportation and Warehousing	6	5%
Information	1	1%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	2	2%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2	2%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	29	22%
Health Care and Social Assistance	2	2%
Accommodation and Food Services	13	10%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	4	3%
Public Administration	1	1%
No Industry Code	1	1%

\*VEC records of the first job the Agribusiness worker earned wages from upon release from SR incarceration were used to classify industry type. Industry type categories were created based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).

Overall	Agribusiness*		Recidivists**		Employed After Release**	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
	193	100%	18	9.3%	132	68%
<b>Crime Type</b>						
Violent	30	16%	2	6.7%	21	70%
Property/Public Order	85	44%	9	10.6%	62	73%
Drug	78	40%	7	9.0%	49	63%
<b>Previous SR Incarcerations</b>						
No previous SR terms	74	38%	4	5.4%	45	61%
1 previous SR term	60	31%	8	13.3%	45	75%
2 previous SR terms	35	18%	3	8.6%	28	80%
3 or more previous SR terms	24	12%	3	12.5%	14	58%

\*Percentages in the Agribusiness column may total 99% to 101% due to rounding, 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.

Overall	Agribusiness**		Recidivists***		Employed After Release***	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
	193	100%	18	9.3%	132	68%
<b>COMPAS Risk of General Recidivism</b>						
Low	54	28%	5	9.3%	29	54%
Medium	83	43%	3	3.6%	60	72%
High	56	29%	10	17.9%	43	77%
<b>COMPAS Risk of Violent Recidivism</b>						
Low	96	50%	6	6.3%	60	63%
Medium	73	38%	10	13.7%	50	69%
High	24	12%	2	8.3%	22	92%
<b>COMPAS Substance Abuse Needs Score</b>						
Unlikely	29	15%	1	3.4%	15	52%
Probable	63	33%	8	12.7%	47	75%
Highly Probable	101	52%	9	8.9%	70	69%

\*The last COMPAS assessment during the release term of incarceration was used.  
 \*\*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.

percentage of employment among the risk of violent recidivism categories was among those who scored 'High' (92%). Inmates who scored 'Probable' on the COMPAS substance abuse needs scale had the highest recidivism rate at 12.7% compared to those who scored 'Unlikely' (3.4%) or 'Highly Probable' (8.9%).

## Conclusions

This report examined the recidivism and job attainment rates of Agribusiness workers who were released from SR incarceration in FY21. Agribusiness workers achieved a lower recidivism rate and a higher post-release employment rate than Virginia's overall release cohort, though the difference in recidivism was not significant due to the small number of Agribusiness workers. These preliminary findings suggest Agribusiness participation may support successful re-entry by promoting both job attainment and employment stability.

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