

EU FARM STRUCTURE SURVEY

2003

NORTHERN IRELAND

REPORT ON

AGRICULTURAL LABOUR FORCE,

FARM DIVERSIFICATION,

AND

CONTRACTOR USE

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EU FARM STRUCTURE SURVEY 2003

NORTHERN IRELAND

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FOREWORD

Statistics on agricultural employment are collected each year in the June Agricultural & Horticultural Census and are published in the annual *Statistical Review of Northern Ireland Agriculture* (DARD). However, EU legislation requires the collection of more detailed information, on a comparable basis throughout the European Union, every two or three years. This exercise is known as the EU Farm Structure Survey.

This report presents the Northern Ireland data collected for that purpose in 2003. It contains comparisons with the results of the 1993, 1995, 1997 and 2000 surveys in Northern Ireland as well as some additional information not required by the EU, such as the use of agricultural contractors, which is of interest to policy makers in Northern Ireland.

Some of the data collected in 2003 has been sent to Eurostat (the Statistical Office of the EU) and, along with similar data from all other regions of the Union, will be used in the preparation of an EU report on the 2003 EU Structure Survey.

The most useful aspect of the EU Structure Survey is that it provides, at 2 or 3 year intervals, information, not elsewhere available, on the age structure of farmers, the time they spend on farm work and whether or not they do any other paid work. Eurostat introduces new items for each survey and in 2000 included for the first time questions on farm diversification which now provide a useful new series.

The results of the 2000 EU Farm Structure Survey for each of the EU Member States may be viewed at

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/Public/datashop/print-catalogue/EN?catalogue=Eurostat&product=KS-52-03-756-3A-N-EN>

Extracts of particular interest to Northern Ireland are reproduced in Annex 3 of this report, comparing Northern Ireland with the average situation in the EU and each of the 15 Member States.

Further analyses of the Northern Ireland database may be obtained from Sheila Magee on 028-90524427. A charge may be levied for this, depending on the amount of work involved.

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March 2004

SUMMARY OF KEY STATISTICS

Labour force

- 58,100 persons contributed to the work on farms in the 12 months ending February 2003.
- The total labour input on farms in Northern Ireland equated to 33,300 Annual Work Units (full time job equivalents).
- Occupiers and their family members provided 89% of the labour input.

Business status

- The majority of farms are family owned and managed; fewer than 100 farm businesses out of the total of 28,213 were owned by an institution or limited liability company.
- On 99% of farms, the principal occupier or a member of his or her family was the manager (the person most responsible for day-to-day management) .
- Only 1% of managers were neither the occupier or a member of the occupier's family.

Gender

- Female workers accounted for 26% of the workforce and 16% of the labour input (Annual Work Units) on farms.
- 7% of farms were managed by females.

Age

- The median age of farmers was slightly higher in 2003 than in 2000; 50% of farmers were aged 55 or over in 2003, compared with 48% in 2000.
- There were fewer farmers aged under 35 in 2003 than in 2000; there were 7% in 2003 and 9% in 2000; the under 45 percentages were 27% in 2003 and 28% in 2000.
- The ages of farmers differed for each business size; on Very Small farms, 31% were aged 65 or more, compared with 12% on Medium and Large farms.
- The ages of all workers were not collected in the 2003 survey. In 2000, 23% of the workers were under 35 and 17% were 65 or over.

Work-time

- 40% of the farmers and workers worked 30 hours or more per week on the farms (i.e. full-time).
- On 67% of farms, the total labour input (AWU) amounted to 30 hours or more per week.

Other gainful activities

- The proportion of farmers who had other work was higher, at 34%, in 2003 compared with 29% in 2000 and 19% in 1993.
- For those farmers under 65 the proportion who had other work was 44% in 2003.
- On 43% of all farms, and for 55% of those where the farmer was aged under 65, either the farmer or spouse or both had other work in 2003.

- On 74% of the Very Small farms, either the farmer was 65 or over (state pensionable age) or he/she had other work.

Farm diversification

- 11% of farms had some diversification activity (as defined in the Structure Survey), including 4% of farms which undertook agricultural contracting.
- 8% of farms had diversification other than agricultural contracting or haulage, compared with 16.6% in England.

Use of agricultural contractors

- 81% of farms used agricultural contractors during the previous year, compared with 75% in 2000.
- 67% of farms used agricultural contractors for hay or silage making.

EU FARM STRUCTURE SURVEY 2003

NORTHERN IRELAND

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE SURVEY

In each country of the European Union (EU), a major agricultural statistical survey, known as the EU Farm Structure Survey¹, is conducted every ten years to coincide with a World Census of Agriculture organised by FAO, and in the intervening years, three, less detailed, Surveys are held. A major survey was held in 2000 followed by a sample survey in 2003. The main items covered are crop areas, livestock numbers, numbers and details of the farm labour force and, since 2000, the incidence of farm diversification.

The 2000 census survey was conducted on all 7 million agricultural holdings in the EU15 and also some of the Candidate Countries, bringing its total scope above 10 million holdings. Because it covers such a diversity of farming climates, practices and management and ownership structures, the harmonised set of questions is not always relevant for individual countries. Consequently Eurostat² allow some countries to disregard some questions as being either non-existent or non significant (e.g. areas of citrus fruits in the UK).

Partly funded by the EU³, each Member State collects the data, anonymises the records and sends them to Eurostat where they are entered into the huge Eurofarm database. Analyses are made and key statistics published in a survey Report⁴ and on Eurostat's NewCronos data system. Subsequently the statistics are used by the EU to monitor changes, particularly in farm structure and the numbers of farm workers, and to model the impact of external developments or policy proposals.

¹ Each Member State is required to do this by Council Regulation No 571/88.

² The Statistical Office of the European Community.

³ DARD will receive around €140,000 for the 2003 survey.

⁴ See "Farm Structure 1999/2000 Survey", Eurostat 2003.

1.2 METHODOLOGY IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Northern Ireland data for the 2003 Survey came from three sources:

- the June 2003 Agricultural Census
- administrative sources
- a special survey in February 2003 to collect the information not available elsewhere.

The main information on crop areas and livestock numbers was collected in the June Agricultural Census. A limited amount of information was obtained from administrative sources, notably on areas of organic farming⁵ and agri-forestry set-aside. To complete the data for the Structure Survey, a special survey⁶ was conducted in February/March 2003, to obtain information mainly about the farm labour force and farm diversification.

A few additional questions, not required by the Structure Survey but of interest locally, were included in the Northern Ireland special survey. To address a gap in available data, the obligatory Structure Survey question on the use of agricultural contractors (person-days work done) was expanded in the Northern Ireland survey to provide information on the main activities for which contractors were used. Also the categories of farm diversification activities for which information was collected differed from those required by the EU. This facilitated a meaningful analysis of NI data as well as international comparisons.

The results of the June 2003 Agricultural Census were published on 20th November 2003⁷. This report includes the results of the special survey along with comparable statistics from the four previous surveys held in 1993, 1995, 1997 and 2000. However, because of changes made to the method of determining the population of farm businesses⁸, caution should be exercised in interpreting changes between the 1993 to 1997 surveys and those conducted in 2000 and 2003.

1.3 THE SURVEY POPULATION

For the purpose of the Structure Survey, a farm is defined (Article 5 of Council Regulation 571/88) as:

a single unit, both technically and economically, which has single management and which produces agricultural products

The Northern Ireland population of farms which met this definition in the June 2003 census and which was represented in the 2003 Structure Survey, totaled **28,281 farms**⁹.

⁵ For statistical information on organic farming in NI and the whole of the UK see <http://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/statnot/orguk.pdf>

⁶ The legislation under which the June census is conducted could not be used to collect the additional information required by the EU. New legislation is being introduced in 2004 so that in future all the information can be collected in one survey.

⁷ “The Agricultural Census in Northern Ireland: Results for June 2003”, DARD 2003.

⁸ See Annex 1.

⁹ The special survey was issued to a sample of the active farms in the June 2002 survey but only those which were still active in 2003 were included in the final data file.

1.4 THE RAISING FRAMEWORK

Although termed the June “census”, this was a sample survey in which 23,800 farms were surveyed with a response of 14,825 (62%). The sample excluded the Very Small farms which had been surveyed and made a return in 2002¹⁰. When the 2002 returns for these 6,146 farms were added to those for 2003 there was an effective response rate of 74% of the 2003 population of 28,281 farms. Estimates were made for the non-respondents based on their most recent return and available administrative data, notably from the cattle tracing system, IACS and the data available on crop and livestock grants.

Sampling and non-response were handled differently for the special survey than was the case for the June Census. A sample of 11,778 farms was selected from the June 2002 data file, stratified by business size and type, and included only those which had made a return in either of the two preceding years. Replies were received from 8,844 (75%) of whom 8,690 were still active in 2003 and were included in the final data file. A raising factor was set against the data from each of the respondents, based on the type and size of farm business in 2003.

1.5 TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

There are significant differences between the terms used in the labour force part of the Structure Survey and those used in the labour section of the annual June Agricultural and Horticultural Census. Full definitions of the former are contained in Commission Regulation 1444/2002.

The main differences are:

- the Structure Survey records the numbers of persons working on farms at any time during the preceding year whereas the census refers to a single date;
- the Structure Survey requires that, except for limited companies and institutions, one person is designated as the principal occupier whereas in the census there may be several “farmers and partners”;
- the total labour force counted in the Structure Survey excludes hired workers who are employed on a casual basis whereas in the census they are recorded if they are working on the holding on the census date.

The figures given in this report have been raised from sample results and individually rounded and so do not always add to the totals shown.

¹⁰ All farms with pigs, mushrooms or 1,000 or more poultry were included in the 2003 sample regardless of their business size.

2. THE TOTAL AGRICULTURAL LABOUR FORCE

Definitions

In this chapter persons in the labour force are classified either as

- occupier (one per farm)
- occupier's spouse
- other member of the occupier's family
- hired worker.

The definitions for the status of persons in the Structure Survey are especially complex, partly due to the variety of permutations of ownership and management status. In Chapters 3 and 4, statistics on management status are presented on Farmers (a sub-set of occupiers comprising those who are responsible for day to day management) and Managers (the persons responsible for day to day management, including both farmers and other managers).

It is recognised that the definitions are not entirely satisfactory because in some situations both ownership and management responsibilities may be shared by a number of equal partners, but Eurostat requires one person to be designated as the principal occupier and one as the principal manager. Moreover, some Member States distinguish further between businesses which are owned by families and those owned by several unrelated persons, the latter being termed "Group holdings" but there are too few of these in Northern Ireland to be significant and they have not been analysed separately from family groups.

Total persons

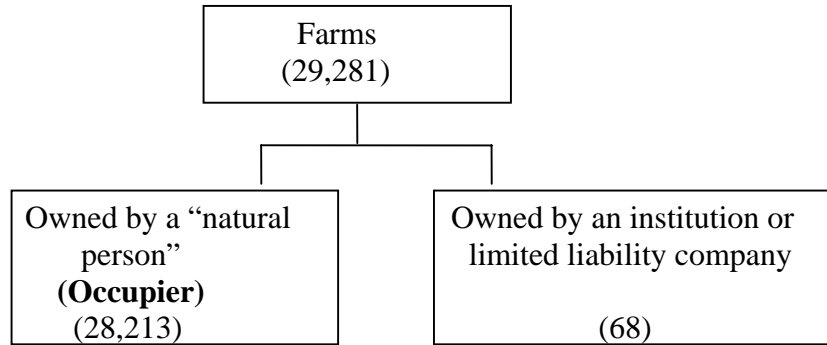
Based on the 2003 Structure Survey, the total labour force was estimated as **58,100 persons**; this includes all persons aged 16 and over who contributed to the work of the farms during the 12 month period up to March 2003 but excludes any hired workers engaged on a casual basis. The June 2003 Agricultural Census, which is the other main source of information on the labour input on farms, recorded 54,500 persons working on farms at the 1st June census date, including hired casual workers. The definitions in the two surveys differ but it appears that significantly more occupiers' spouses were recorded in the Structure Survey (10,550) than in the June census where 6,400 were recorded as spouses but others were recorded as business partners.

Occupiers, their spouses and other family members comprise 91% of the labour force, with only 9% being regular hired workers. The proportions differ by business size with regular hired workers making up 22% of those on the Medium and Large farms compared with 3% on the Very Small and 8% on the Small farms. During the period 1993 to 2003 there has been little change in the composition of the work force though occupiers' spouses have been more prominent in the last two surveys.

Business status

The occupier is the person who has “legal and financial responsibility for the farm” and is usually, though not always, the owner. The Structure Survey specifies that the occupier may be either:

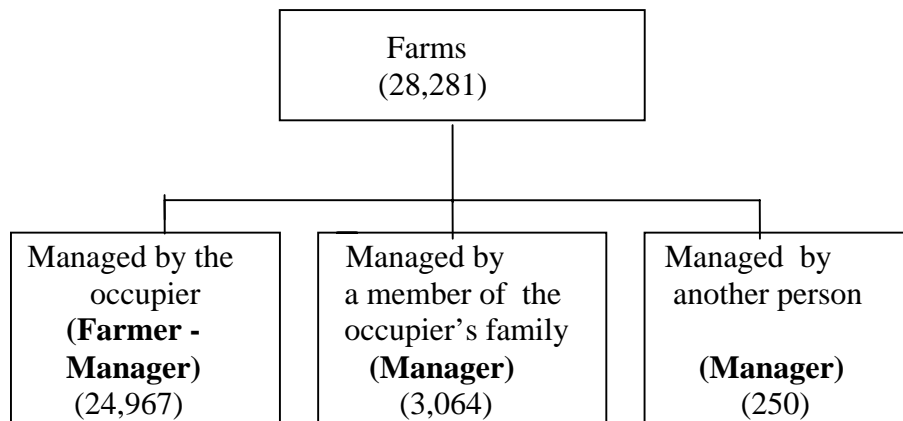
- a) a limited liability company or an institution, such as a school or hospital; or
- b) a “natural person”, meaning a private individual or individuals, including partnerships.



Where occupancy was shared, respondents were asked to identify the principal occupier and, if that responsibility was equally shared, the eldest partner was deemed to be the principal partner or occupier.

Management status

Respondents to the survey were asked to indicate who was responsible for the day to day running of the farm business. In most cases (89%), this person was the same as the occupier but on 3% of farms this role was filled by the occupier’s spouse, on 8% by another family member and on 1% (including farms owned by institutions) there was a hired or paid manager.



Gender

Seventy-four percent of workers were male and 26% female, with little difference in the male:female percentages on farms of different size. However the results of both the 2000 and 2003 surveys indicate an increasing proportion of females from earlier years when they made up only 22 or 23%.

Ages

In the 1995 and 2000 surveys information was collected on the ages of all the workers. This will be repeated in 2005 but in 2003 age data were sought only for the occupiers, their spouses and managers. For completeness, this report includes the results of the 1995 and 2000 surveys when the median age of all workers in both years was within the 45-49 years age band. There was a lower percentage of workers under 35 in 2000 than in 1995, 23% compared with 28%, but a lower percentage aged 65 or over, 17% compared with 19%.

Work-time

The questions on work-time in the Structure Survey are phrased in terms of the proportion of a full working year. In Northern Ireland, where the current Agricultural Wages Regulations relate to 39 hours, this was specified as “normally around 40 hours per week over a full year”. The results of this survey have been presented to be comparable with Labour Market Statistics in which employment of 30 hours per week or more is deemed to be “full-time”.

In the 2003 survey, 60% of the regular labour force worked part-time on the farms and 40% full-time, similar to 2000 but a marked change compared with 1993 when 51% of workers were part-time, increasing to 52% and 54% in 1995 and 1997 respectively. However some changes in the scope of the survey, details of which are given in detail in Annex 1, affected comparisons between 1997 and 2000.

Annual work units

To measure the total labour input, the stated work times were converted into Annual Work Units (AWU) on the basis of 1 AWU per person who works 100% of a full year, 0.875 for one who works over 75% but less than 100%, etc. Although the survey did not collect information on the number of hired workers employed on a casual or seasonal basis, the number of casual days worked is specified and these are converted to AWU on the basis of 225 days per AWU.

Based on farms where total labour input amounted to at least 0.75 AWU, 67% may be termed “full-time” compared with 65% in 2000.

LABOUR FORCE MEMBERS, NUMBERS AND STATUS

PERSONS BY STATUS AND BUSINESS SIZE	Business size				Business size			
	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All
Persons working on farms:	Persons				Percent			
* Occupiers	14,594	9,081	3,596	27,271	56	44	32	47
* Occupiers' spouses	4,432	4,128	1,993	10,553	17	20	18	18
* Occupiers' family	6,336	5,681	3,219	15,237	24	28	28	26
* Regular hired workers	920	1,569	2,540	5,028	3	8	22	9
Total persons	26,282	20,459	11,348	58,089	100	100	100	100

PERSONAL STATUS BY SURVEY DATE	1993	1995	1997	2000	2003
	Percent				
* Occupiers	50	49	50	48	47
* Occupiers' spouses	15	14	14	22	18
* Occupiers' family	26	28	28	23	26
* Regular hired workers	9	9	9	7	9
Total persons	100	100	100	100	100

BUSINESS STATUS BY BUSINESS SIZE	Business size				Business size			
	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All
Occupier is:	Farms				Percent			
* A natural person	15,175	9,355	3,683	28,213	100	100	99	100
* Company, school, etc	31	10	27	68	0	0	1	0
Total farms	15,206	9,365	3,710	28,281	100	100	100	100

MANAGEMENT STATUS BY BUSINESS SIZE	Business size				Business size			
	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All
Manager is:	Persons/Farms				Percent			
* The occupier	13,503	8,266	3,198	24,967	89	88	86	89
* Occupier's spouse	514	218	17	749	3	2	0	3
* Other family member	1,077	805	433	2,315	7	9	12	8
* Hired	112	76	62	250	1	1	2	1
Total farms	15,206	9,365	3,710	28,281	100	100	100	100

LABOUR FORCE : GENDER AND AGES

GENDER BY BUSINESS SIZE	Business size				Business size			
	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All
Person is:	Persons				Percent			
* Male	19,622	14,983	8,476	43,081	75	73	75	74
* Female	6,660	5,473	2,872	15,006	25	27	25	26
Total persons	26,282	20,456	11,348	58,087	100	100	100	100

GENDER BY PERSONAL STATUS	Occupier	Occupier's spouse	Other family member	Regular hired worker	All workers
Person is:	Persons				
* Male	25,223	888	12,835	4,135	43,081
* Female	2,046	9,665	2,402	893	15,006
Total persons	27,269	10,553	15,237	5,028	58,087

GENDER BY SURVEY DATE	1993	1995	1997	2000	2003
Person is:	Percent				
* Male	77	78	78	72	74
* Female	23	22	22	28	26
Total persons	100	100	100	100	100

AGES BY SURVEY DATE	1993	1995	1997	2000	2003
Age:	Percent				
* Under 25		12		9	
* 25-29		7		6	
* 30-34		9		8	
* 35-39	N.A.	8	N.A.	10	N.A.
* 40-44		8		11	
* 45-49		9		10	
* 50-54		10		11	
* 55-59		9		9	
* 60-64		9		9	
* 65 & over		19		17	
Total persons		100		100	

LABOUR FORCE: WORK-TIME

WORK-TIME BY BUSINESS SIZE	Business size				Business size			
	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All
	Persons				Percent			
Person's work-time as a proportion of a full working year								
* >0-<25%	11,920	6,044	2,279	20,243	45	30	20	35
* 25-<50%	5,364	2,886	869	9,118	20	14	8	16
* 50-<75%	2,558	1,920	799	5,276	10	9	7	9
Part-time	19,842	10,850	3,947	34,638	75	53	35	60
* 75-<100%	1,209	1,178	468	2,855	5	6	4	5
* 100%	5,232	8,429	6,933	20,595	20	41	61	35
Full-time	6,441	9,607	7,401	23,449	25	47	65	40
Total persons	26,282	20,456	11,348	58,087	100	100	100	100

WORK-TIME BY PERSONAL STATUS	Occupier	Occupier's spouse	Other family member	Regular hired worker	All workers
	Persons				
Person's work-time as a proportion of a full working year:					
* >0-<25%	5,946	5,529	6,608	2,161	20,243
* 25-<50%	4,231	2,036	2,268	583	9,118
* 50-<75%	2,615	871	1,329	461	5,276
Part-time	12,792	8,436	10,205	3,205	34,638
* 75-<100%	1,510	361	763	221	2,855
* 100%	12,967	1,756	4,269	1,603	20,595
Full-time	14,477	2,117	5,032	1,823	23,449
Total persons	27,269	10,553	15,237	5,028	58,087

WORK-TIME BY SURVEY DATE	1993	1995	1997	2000	2003
	All sizes, Percent				
Person's work-time as a proportion of a full working year:					
* >0-<25%	28	28	30	37	35
* 25-<50%	14	15	15	16	16
* 50-<75%	9	9	9	8	9
Part-time	51	52	54	61	60
* 75-<100%	4	5	4	4	5
* 100%	45	44	42	34	35
Full-time	49	48	46	39	40
Total persons	100	100	100	100	100

LABOUR FORCE: ANNUAL WORK UNITS

ANNUAL WORK UNITS BY BUSINESS SIZE AND PERSONAL STATUS	Business size				Business size			
	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All
AWU contributed by:	Annual Work Units				Percent			
* Occupiers	7,466	7,365	3,422	18,252	64	57	39	55
* Occupiers' spouses	1,433	1,667	971	4,071	12	13	11	12
* Other family	2,177	2,831	2,436	7,444	19	22	28	22
* Hired (regular)	315	633	1,625	2,573	3	5	18	8
* Hired (casual)	222	366	344	933	2	3	4	3
All persons	11,613	12,862	8,798	33,272	100	100	100	100

AWU BY BY SURVEY DATE	1993	1995	1997	2000	2003
AWU contributed by:	Percent				
* Occupiers	56	56	57	58	55
* Occupiers' spouses	12	11	10	15	12
* Other family	21	22	22	19	22
* Hired (regular)	8	8	7	7	8
* Hired (casual)	3	3	3	3	3
All persons	100	100	100	100	100
Total AWU	37,046	35,457	33,181	32,502	33,272

ANNUAL WORK UNITS BY BUSINESS SIZE AND GENDER	Business size				Business size			
	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All
AWU contributed by:	Annual Work Units				Percent			
* Males	9,548	10,443	7,022	27,013	84	84	83	84
* Females	1,842	2,053	1,432	5,327	16	16	17	16
Total AWU excluding hired casual	11,390	12,496	8,454	32,340	100	100	100	100

ANNUAL WORK UNITS PER FARM BY BUSINESS SIZE	Business size				Business size			
	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All
Total labour input AWU per farm	Farms				Percent			
* <0.25	2,975	254	13	3,242	20	3	0	11
* 0.25-<0.5	3,178	432	12	3,622	21	5	0	13
* 0.5-<0.75	1,908	610	15	2,533	13	7	0	9
"Part-time"	8,061	1,296	40	9,397	53	14	1	33
* 0.75-<1	1,537	699	37	2,273	10	7	1	8
* 1	2,158	1,746	307	4,211	14	19	8	15
* 1-<2	2,441	3,584	1,167	7,192	16	38	31	25
* 2-<3	848	1,552	1,281	3,681	6	17	35	13
* 3+	161	487	879	1,527	1	5	24	5
"Full-time"	7,145	8,068	3,671	18,884	47	86	99	67
Total farms	15,206	9,365	3,710	28,281	100	100	100	100

3. FARMERS

Definition

Farmers are a sub-set of the occupiers, comprising those who are responsible for the day-to-day management of the farm. The survey forms include instructions that where responsibility for the business is shared by more than one person, the senior partner should be designated as the farmer.

Gender

94% of farmers were male, 6% female.

Marital status

Although not then an EU requirement, a question on the marital status of farmers was included in the Northern Ireland survey for the first time in 2000 and Eurostat then made it a compulsory question to be asked in all Member States in 2003. The 2003 survey indicated that 28% of farmers in Northern Ireland had no spouse, ranging from 32% for those with Very Small businesses to 15% of those with Medium or Large businesses. Just over half (51%) of farmers' spouses contributed to the work of the farms.

Age

In previous years, information was sought on farmers' ages within 5 year age bands but for the 2003 survey this was changed to 10 year bands. The median age for farmers in Northern Ireland in 2003 was 55 years. This was slightly higher than in the 2000 survey which indicated that 48% of farmers were over 50 years of age whereas it was 50% in 2003. Those with Medium or Large farms were generally younger, 38% over 55, than those with Very Small or Small farms, where 54% and 48% respectively were of that age. The survey showed that there were 7% of farmers under 35 in 2003 compared with 9% in 2000. However it is stressed that these figures refer only to the principal farmer in each business rather than to all farmers.

Work-time

Overall 55% of farmers worked for at least 30 hours per week and have been termed "full-time", compared with 65% in 1993.

Other gainful activities

34% of farmers had some other gainful activity, on or off farm, the proportion having risen significantly from 19% in 1993, 21% in 1995, 23% in 1997 and 29% in 2000.

On 43% of farms either the farmer or spouse or both had another gainful activity, ranging from 49% of the Very Small farms to 28% of the Medium or Large farms. Since the age of the farmer is relevant to this distribution, separate analyses have been made for farms where the farmer is 65 or over and those where he/she is under 65. The latter indicates that 44% of farmers under 65 have other gainful activities and on 55% of such farms either the farmer or spouse does other work.

FARMERS: GENDER & MARITAL STATUS

FARMERS BY GENDER AND BUSINESS SIZE	Business size				Business size			
	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All
Farmer is:	Farmers				Percent			
* Male	12,444	7,958	3,163	23,565	92	96	99	94
* Female	1,059	308	35	1,402	8	4	1	6
Total farmers	13,503	8,266	3,198	24,967	100	100	100	100

FARMERS BY GENDER AND SURVEY DATE	1993	1995	1997	2000	2003
Farmer is:	All sizes, Percent				
* Male	93	94	94	94	94
* Female	7	6	6	6	6
Total farmers	100	100	100	100	100

FARMERS BY MARITAL STATUS AND BUSINESS SIZE	Business size				Business size			
	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All
Farmer has a spouse:	Farmers				Percent			
of whom:	9,170	6,114	2,724	18,008	68	74	85	72
* Works on the farm	3,739	3,697	1,781	9,217	28	45	56	37
* Does no work on the farm	5,431	2,417	942	8,790	40	29	29	35
Farmer has no spouse:	4,333	2,153	474	6,960	32	26	15	28
Total farmers	13,503	8,266	3,198	24,967	100	100	100	100

FARMERS: AGES

FARMERS BY AGE AND BUSINESS SIZE	Business size				Business size			
	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All
Farmer is aged:	Farmers				Percent			
* Under 25	88	68	10	166	1	1	0	1
* 25-34	821	541	187	1,549	6	7	6	6
* 35-44	2,387	1,692	853	4,932	18	20	27	20
* 45-54	2,892	2,002	933	5,827	21	24	29	23
* 55-64	3,133	2,181	822	6,136	23	26	26	25
* 65 & over	4,183	1,782	394	6,359	31	22	12	25
Total farmers	13,503	8,266	3,198	24,967	100	100	100	100

FARMERS BY AGE AND SURVEY DATE	1993	1995	1997	2000	2003
Farmer is aged:	All sizes, Percent				
* Under 25	1	1	0	1	1
* 25-34	9	7	7	8	6
* 35-44	16	17	17	19	20
* 45-54	23	23	24	24	23
* 55-64	25	25	25	24	25
* 65 & over	27	26	27	24	25
Total farmers	100	100	100	100	100

FARMERS BY AGE AND SURVEY DATE	1993	1995	1997	2000	2003
Farmer is aged:	All sizes, Percent				
* Under 25	1	1	0	1	
* 25-29	3	2	2	3	n.a.
* 30-34	6	5	5	5	at
* 35-39	7	8	7	8	this
* 40-44	9	9	10	11	level
* 45-49	11	11	11	11	
* 50-54	12	12	13	13	
* 55-59	12	12	13	12	
* 60-64	13	13	12	12	
* 65 & over	27	26	27	24	
Total farmers	100	100	100	100	

FARMERS: WORK-TIME

FARMERS BY WORK-TIME ON FARM AND BUSINESS SIZE	Business size				Business size			
	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All
	Farmers				Percent			
Farmer's work-time as a proportion of a full working year								
* >0-<25%	4,376	529	44	4,949	32	6	1	20
* 25-<50%	3,039	797	46	3,882	23	10	1	16
* 50-<75%	1,575	818	39	2,432	12	10	1	10
Part-time	8,990	2,144	129	11,263	67	26	4	45
* 75-<100%	728	611	74	1,413	5	7	2	6
* 100%	3,786	5,512	2,995	12,293	28	67	94	49
Full-time	4,514	6,123	3,069	13,705	33	74	96	55
Total farmers	13,503	8,266	3,198	24,967	100	100	100	100

FARMERS BY WORK-TIME ON FARM AND BY SURVEY DATE	1993	1995	1997	2000	2003
	All sizes, Percent				
Farmer's work-time as a proportion of a full working year					
* >0-<25%	16	14	18	23	20
* 25-<50%	11	12	12	15	16
* 50-<75%	8	9	9	9	10
Part-time	35	35	39	47	45
* 75-<100%	4	5	4	5	6
* 100%	61	60	57	48	49
Full-time	65	65	61	53	55
Total farmers	100	100	100	100	100

FARMERS: OTHER GAINFUL ACTIVITY

FARMERS' OTHER GAINFUL ACTIVITY BY BUSINESS SIZE	Business size				Business size			
	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All
Farmer's other gainful activity:	Farmers				Percent			
* No OGA	7,537	6,042	2,994	16,573	56	73	94	66
* With OGA	5,966	2,224	205	8,395	44	27	6	34
of whom:								
** OGA as major activity	4,792	1,269	53	6,114	35	15	2	24
** OGA as minor activity	1,174	955	152	2,281	9	12	5	9
Total farmers	13,503	8,266	3,199	24,967	100	100	100	100

FARMERS' OTHER GAINFUL ACTIVITY BY SURVEY DATE	1993	1995	1997	2000	2003
Farmer's other gainful activity:	Percent				
* No OGA	81	79	77	71	66
* With OGA	19	21	23	29	34
of whom:					
** OGA as major activity	13	14	16	23	24
** OGA as minor activity	5	7	7	6	9
Total farmers	100	100	100	100	100

FARMERS AND SPOUSE: OTHER GAINFUL ACTIVITY

ALL FARMERS	Business size				Business size			
	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All
Persons with other gainful activity:	Farms				Percent			
* Farmer	5,966	2,224	205	8,395	44	27	6	34
* Farmer's spouse	3,156	1,866	797	5,819	23	23	25	23
* Either/both	6,583	3,216	906	10,705	49	39	28	43
* Neither	6,920	5,050	2,293	14,263	51	61	72	57
Total farms	13,503	8,266	3,199	24,968	100	100	100	100

FARMERS AGED 65 & OVER	Business size				Business size			
	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All
Persons with other gainful activity:	Farms				Percent			
* Farmer	208	73	10	291	5	4	3	5
* Farmer's spouse	134	85	11	230	3	5	3	4
* Either/both	299	143	20	462	7	8	5	7
* Neither	3,884	1,638	375	5,897	93	92	95	93
Total farms	4,183	1,781	395	6,359	100	100	100	100

FARMERS AGED UNDER 65	Business size				Business size			
	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All
Persons with other gainful activity:	Farms				Percent			
* Farmer	5,758	2,151	195	8,104	62	33	7	44
* Farmer's spouse	3,022	1,781	786	5,589	32	27	28	30
* Either/both	6,284	3,073	886	10,243	67	47	32	55
* Neither	3,036	3,412	1,918	8,366	33	53	68	45
Total farms	9,320	6,485	2,804	18,609	100	100	100	100

4 MANAGERS (PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RUNNING OF THE FARM)

Definition

In Section 2 information was presented for all workers, including those described as Occupiers, i.e. those with the legal and financial responsibility for the farms, and Section 3 referred to the subset of the occupiers, termed Farmers, who were responsible for the day to day management. Where the occupier is not responsible for management of the farm, someone else has this role. Section 4 refers to all managers, i.e. the one person for each farm who has the main responsibility for the day to day running of the business. Because most of them (89%) are also farmers, information on this group is similar to that in Section 3.

Status

Northern Ireland farms are primarily family businesses, with only 1% of the managers being non-family. The occupiers were the managers of 89% of farms, with spouses the managers on 3% and other family members the managers on the remainder. The other family members were mainly from a younger generation, so that, as a group, managers are slightly younger than farmers.

Gender

The proportion of female managers in 2003, at 9%, was very similar to that recorded throughout the 1990s, though higher than the 6% of farmers who are female.

Age

In the 2003 survey, 30% of managers were under 45 and 23% were 65 or over. When compared with the 2000 survey there were slightly fewer managers under 45 and slightly more over 65.

Work-time

The work-time of managers was similar to that for farmers, with 46% working under 30 hours a week and being termed “part-time” and 54% “full-time”.

MANAGERS: IDENTITY, GENDER AND AGE

MANAGEMENT STATUS BY BUSINESS SIZE	Business size				Business size			
	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All
Manager is:	Farms				Percent			
* The occupier	13,503	8,266	3,198	24,967	89	88	86	89
* Occupier's spouse	514	218	17	749	3	2	0	3
* Other family member	1,077	805	433	2,315	7	9	12	8
* Hired	112	76	62	250	1	1	2	1
Total farms	15,206	9,365	3,710	28,281	100	100	100	100

MANAGERS BY GENDER AND BUSINESS SIZE	Business size				Business size			
	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All
Manager is:	Managers				Percent			
* Male	13,789	8,892	3,654	26,335	91	95	98	93
* Female	1,417	473	57	1,947	9	5	2	7
Total managers	15,206	9,365	3,710	28,281	100	100	100	100

MANAGERS BY GENDER AND SURVEY DATE	1993	1995	1997	2000	2003
Farmer is:	All sizes, Percent				
* Male	92	93	92	93	93
* Female	8	7	8	7	7
Total managers	100	100	100	100	100

MANAGERS BY AGE AND BUSINESS SIZE	Business size				Business size			
	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All
Manager is aged:	Managers				Percent			
* Under 25	203	140	37	380	1	1	1	1
* 25-34	1,202	840	351	2,393	8	9	9	8
* 35-44	2,865	2,097	1,096	6,058	19	22	30	21
* 45-54	3,301	2,194	984	6,479	22	23	27	23
* 55-64	3,330	2,261	839	6,430	22	24	23	23
* 65 & over	4,306	1,833	404	6,543	28	20	11	23
Total managers	15,206	9,365	3,710	28,281	100	100	100	100

MANAGERS: AGE AND WORK-TIME

MANAGERS BY AGE AND SURVEY DATE	1993	1995	1997	2000	2003
Manager is aged:	All sizes, Percent				
* Under 25	2	2	1	2	1
* 25-34	11	11	11	9	8
* 35-44	17	18	18	20	21
* 45-54	22	23	23	24	23
* 55-64	23	23	23	22	23
* 65 & over	25	24	24	22	23
Total managers	100	100	100	100	100

MANAGERS BY WORK-TIME ON FARM AND BUSINESS SIZE	Business size				Business size			
	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All
Manager's work-time as a proportion of a full working year	Managers				Percent			
* >0-<25%	4,920	631	52	5,603	32	7	1	20
* 25-<50%	3,470	951	51	4,472	23	10	1	16
* 50-<75%	1,803	991	61	2,855	12	11	2	10
Part-time	10,193	2,573	164	12,930	67	27	4	46
* 75-<100%	866	675	86	1,627	6	7	2	6
* 100%	4,148	6,116	3,460	13,724	27	65	93	49
Full-time	5,014	6,791	3,546	15,351	33	73	96	54
Total managers	15,206	9,365	3,710	28,281	100	100	100	100

MANAGERS BY WORK-TIME ON FARM AND SURVEY DATE	1993	1995	1997	2000	2003
Manager's work-time as a proportion of a full working year	All sizes, Percent				
* >0-<25%	16	14	18	23	20
* 25-<50%	11	13	13	15	16
* 50-<75%	9	9	9	9	10
Part-time	36	36	40	47	46
* 75-<100%	4	5	5	5	6
* 100%	60	59	56	47	49
Full-time	64	64	61	53	54
Total managers	100	100	100	100	100

5 DIVERSIFICATION

Definitions

Respondents were asked:

“Please tick a box beside any of the commercial activities listed which you run on this farm. Exclude mainstream farming, i.e. livestock breeding and rearing and crop production, and exclude activities run by persons who are not part of your farm business.”

The categories listed were as shown below. A separate box was provided for the recording of details so that office staff could check the correct classification.

Results

FARMS WITH DIVERSIFICATION BY BUSINESS SIZE	Business size				Business size			
	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All
* Agricultural contracting/ haulage	408	422	180	1,010	3	5	5	4
* Tourism	168	126	72	366	1	1	2	1
* Equine sport	276	92	40	408	2	1	1	1
* Other sport	93	53	28	173	1	1	1	1
* Direct sales	147	213	97	457	1	2	3	2
* Food processing	90	71	52	213	1	1	1	1
* Other commercial activities	470	247	87	804	3	3	2	3
Any diversification	1,414	1,118	484	3,016	9	12	13	11
<i>Of which:</i>								
<i>Someone occupied full-time</i>	<i>245</i>	<i>202</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>536</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>		<i>2</i>
Any diversification other than contracting/haulage	1,058	738	330	2,126	7	8	9	8
<i>Of which:</i>								
<i>Someone occupied full-time</i>	<i>187</i>	<i>140</i>	<i>69</i>	<i>396</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>
Total farms	15,206	9,365	3,710	28,281	100	100	100	100

Diversification can be defined in many different ways. In the EU Farm Structure Survey it includes agricultural contracting or haulage, and on this basis 11% of farms in Northern Ireland had diversified, ranging from 9% of those with Very Small businesses to 13% of those with Medium or Large farm businesses.

Agricultural contracting and haulage are part of the agricultural industry, i.e. payments are made from one farmer to another, and hence for the industry as a whole they are not classified as diversification. For further details of this debate see

<http://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/reports/divagri.pdf>

On this definition 8%¹¹ of Northern Ireland farms in 2003 had diversified. Comparable figures for England appear in <http://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/statnot/jundiv.pdf> and indicate that 16.6% of farms in England had one or more diversification activity other than contracting and haulage. These, included 5.4% relating to tourism, 7.6% sport and recreation, 3.3% direct sales, 1.0% food processing and 3.0% other activities.

Furthermore, diversification can range in importance from having a negligible impact on total income to the major source. To give an idea of its relevant importance, the 2003 Farm Structure Survey in Northern Ireland included a question on whether or not anyone was occupied full-time on the diversification enterprise. This indicated that on 2% of farms there was a major diversification, i.e. occupying someone full time.

Questions on diversification were introduced to the Farm Structure Survey in 2000 when they indicated that 8% of farms had diversified compared with the 11% in the 2003 survey.

FARMS WITH DIVERSIFICATION BY SURVEY DATE	Farms		% Farms	
	2000	2003	2000	2003
* Agricultural contracting/ haulage	1,044	1,010	3	4
* Tourism	294	366	1	1
* Equine sport	238	408	1	1
* Other sport	35	173	0	1
* Direct sales	367	457	1	2
* Food processing	105	213	0	1
* Other commercial activities	618	804	2	3
Any diversification	2,422	3,016	8	11
Any diversification other than contracting/ haulage	1,542	2,126	5	8
Total farms	29,890	28,281	100	100

In 2001/02 a major survey was carried out on 10% of Northern Ireland family farms, involving interviews rather than a postal enquiry and therefore provided more accurate data, bearing in mind the indistinct lines of demarcation between mainstream farming, on-farm diversification and off-farm employment. That survey suggested that 13% of farms had diversified, including contracting, and that a further 2% included horse breeding, mushroom production or other novel crops or livestock in their concept of diversification. Full details of that survey, including types of diversification, employment provided and its contribution to total income can be seen in the publication “Farmers and Farm Families in Northern Ireland” (DARD, 2002) or at <http://www.dardni.gov.uk/econs/spub0015.htm>

¹¹ Some contracting farms also had other forms of diversification.

6 USE OF AGRICULTURAL CONTRACTORS

Definitions

Respondents were asked:

“Did you employ contractors to carry out any work relating to crop or livestock production (not building) during the past 12 months? If yes, give the number of person-days worked by contractors and their staff? For which activities were they employed?”

Results

Over 80% of farms used contractors for some task(s), with the Very Small farms (77%) being slightly less likely to do so. Contract hay or silage making was the most common activity (67% of farms), followed by hedge cutting (53%) and spreading slurry/manure (41%). This involved 333,000 person days, the equivalent of almost 1,500 Annual Work Units.

Compared with 2000 the proportion of farmers who used contractors had grown from 75% to 81%, with particular growth in use for hedge cutting and field work.

FARMS USING CONTRACTORS BY BUSINESS SIZE	Business size				Business size			
	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All
Used agricultural contractors	Farms				Percent			
* Yes	11,744	7,949	3,181	22,874	77	85	86	81
* No	3,462	1,416	529	5,407	23	15	14	19
Total farms	15,206	9,365	3,710	28,281	100	100	100	100

Used agricultural contractors for:

* Hay/silage making	9,942	6,592	2,494	19,028	65	70	67	67
* Crop harvesting	766	918	714	2,398	5	10	19	8
* Spreading slurry/ manure/fertilisers/lime	5,722	4,146	1,755	11,623	38	44	47	41
* Other field work	1,850	1,578	800	4,228	12	17	22	15
* Milking	2	164	469	635	0	2	13	2
* Sheep shearing	1,901	2,271	507	4,679	13	24	14	17
* Other livestock work	810	653	238	1,701	5	7	6	6
* Hedge cutting	7,230	5,460	2,184	14,874	48	58	59	53

PERSON-DAYS OF CONTRACT WORK	Business size			
	Very Small	Small	Med/ Large	All
Total person-days	135,561	106,663	90,974	333,197
Days per farm (all farms)	9	11	25	12
Days per farm (using)	12	13	29	15

FARMS USING CONTRACTORS BY SURVEY DATE	Farms		Percent Farms	
	2000	2003	2000	2003
Used agricultural contractors				
* Yes	22296	22,874	75	81
* No	7594	5,407	25	19
Total farms	29890	28,281	100	100

Used agricultural contractors for:

* Hay/silage making	19,566	19,028	65	67
* Crop harvesting	2,227	2,398	7	8
* Spreading slurry/ manure/fertilisers/lime	10,854	11,623	36	41
* Other field work	3,035	4,228	10	15
* Milking	519	635	2	2
* Sheep shearing	4,345	4,679	15	17
* Other livestock work	1,362	1,701	5	6
* Hedge cutting	10,724	14,874	36	53

PERSON-DAYS OF CONTRACT WORK BY SURVEY DATE	2000	2003
Total person-days	268,859	333,197
Days per farm (all farms)	9	12
Days per farm (using)	12	15

ANNEX 1: COMPARISONS WITH EARLIER SURVEYS

Periodic Structure Surveys have been carried out in Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom since 1975, and during that time there have been changes in definitions, both of the population covered and the questions asked. Of particular significance was the change after 1990 to restrict the coverage to active farmers as opposed to land owners. Consequently, where comparisons with earlier surveys are made in this report, these cover only the surveys in 1993, 1995 and 1997.

In addition, a number of features affect the apparent trends between 2000 and 2003 and these three earlier surveys throughout the 1990s and these are noted below.

COVERAGE

After the 1997 survey was carried out, the statistical definition of a farm was changed and is now based on separate business status as applied under the Integrated Administration and Control system (IACS), having previously been based on land ownership. The census, as well as the Structure Survey, now covers **all active farm businesses having one hectare or more of farmed land, whether owned, leased or taken in conacre, and those with under one hectare having any cattle, sheep or pigs or with significant poultry or horticultural activity.** Access to IACS data identified a number of active farm businesses which had not previously been included in the census or structure surveys as well as some on the census list which had ceased operation.

Up to and including the 1997 Structure Survey, the population covered excluded “minor” holdings, i.e. those farming under 6 hectares of land and with a business size of less than €1,000 of SGM.

The combined effects of the change in definition, access to administrative data and the inclusion of the “minor” holdings led to 5,000 farms being added to the estimated farm population in 1997. This change was made after the Structure Survey in that year was carried out so that the effect of the register change impacts on comparisons between the 1997 and 2000 Surveys. For the most part the farms added to the register were Very Small businesses.

The coverage in the 2003 survey is fully comparable with that in 2000.

ANNEX 2: TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

For a detailed description of the terms and definitions used in the EU Structure Survey, see EU Commission Regulation 1444/2002. The main points are summarised below, along with indications of the main differences between the Structure Survey and June census agricultural labour statistics.

BUSINESS UNITS

Farms The term “farm” is used to denote a single unit both technically and economically, which has single management and the output of which is agricultural products (Annex II of 83/461/EEC contains a list of “agricultural products”). Such units may consist entirely of owned land, entirely of rented land or a combination of both.

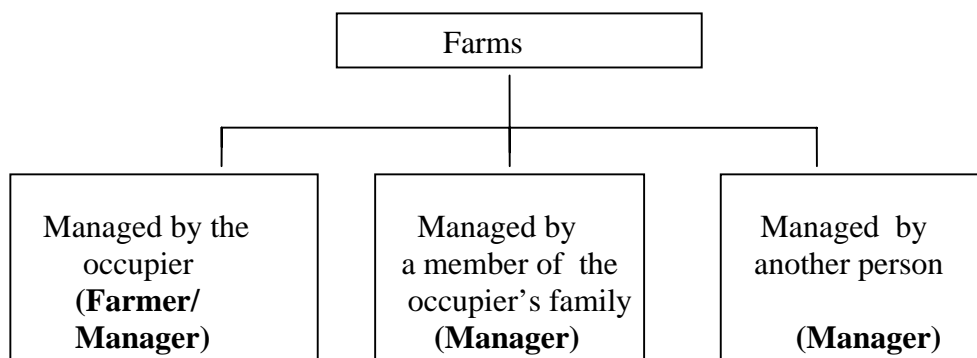
LABOUR FORCE

Numbers of persons The labour force includes those aged 16 or over who worked on the holding surveyed at any time during the 12 months prior to the date of the survey. The labour input of non-family workers who work on a casual or seasonal basis is measured by the number of days they work but the persons concerned are excluded from the head count. The agricultural census counts only those working on the actual census date and includes hired casual workers.

Occupier This is the person who is legally and financially responsible for the holding. Where occupancy is shared by more than one person, one of them is designated as “the occupier”. Occupiers are described as “natural persons” for the Structure Survey except in cases where a farm is owned by an institution such as a school, hospital, etc. or by a limited liability company.

Manager This is the person responsible for the day-to-day running of the farm. One person per farm is deemed to be the manager.

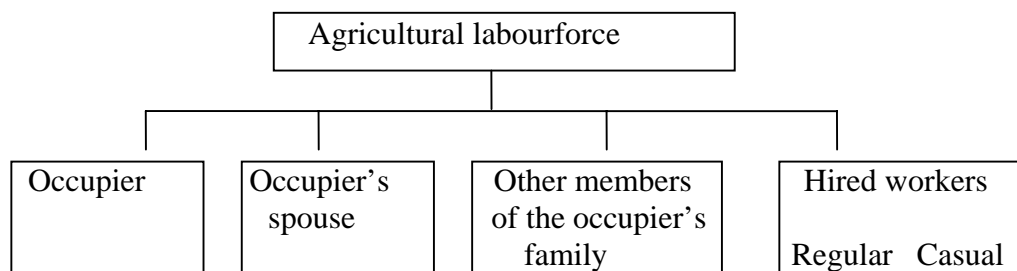
Farmer The agricultural census applies the term “farmer” to all persons who are self-employed on their own or their family business (i.e. farmers and partners). However, for the Structure Survey, the terms “occupiers” and “managers” are used.



Family workers These are other members of the occupier's family, aged 16 or over, who contribute to the work of the farm.

Hired workers (regular) These are non-family workers who are employed on the farm on a regular basis.

Hired workers (casual) These refer to non-family workers directly employed on the farm. The number of days worked by such workers is collected for the Structure Survey, rather than the number of persons. Numbers of hired workers in the agricultural census also include persons who work on a seasonal or casual basis on the census date.



BUSINESS SIZE¹²

Standard Gross Margin (SGM) The gross margin of an enterprise is its total output less the variable costs which are directly attributable to it. Standards or norms are calculated for each EU Region and the total SGM for each farm is calculated by multiplying its crop areas and livestock numbers by the appropriate SGM coefficients and then summing the result for all enterprises on the farm.

European Size Units (ESU) Farm size in the agricultural census, and in this report on the agricultural labour force, is measured in European Size Units (ESUs), where one ESU is defined as €1200 of SGM, using 1987-89 values for SGMs (€1 = £0.68); to provide continuity of statistics, these SGM values are held constant for a number of years². However, the EU updates SGM values for each Structure Survey and before Eurostat publishes the results of the 2003 survey, it will apply 1999-2001 values and reclassify the records for all Member States.

Very Small Businesses This term refers to farms of less than 8 ESUs. Farms in this size range are generally too small to provide full-time occupation for one person.

¹² The method of measuring farm business size in the UK will be changed in 2004 to one based on Standard Labour Requirements.

² See "Farm Incomes in the United Kingdom 1991/92 Edition (HMSO, 1993) and The Digest of Agricultural Census Statistics, UK 1993 (HMSO, 1993).

Small Businesses This term refers to farms of between 8 and 40 ESU. Farms in this size range will generally occupy between 1 and 2 persons full-time.

Medium and Large Businesses This term refers to farms of 40 ESUs or over. Farms in this size range generally occupy at least 2 persons full-time. Agricultural census statistics are published separately for Medium and Large businesses but, because of the relatively small numbers of Large farms in the Structure Survey sample, results are not given separately for them in this report.

OTHER TERMS

Farm work This includes all agricultural activities to do with working the holding and marketing its produce.

Full working year The time spent on farm work is specified in terms of proportions of a full working year; in Northern Ireland this was stated to be normally around 40 hours per week (based on the 39 hours specified in the current Agricultural Wages Schedule) over the full year.

Annual Work Units (AWU) An Annual Work Unit is the equivalent of a person working for a full working year. Fractions of it are calculated as the mid values of the range of time given by respondents, e.g. 0.375 AWU is allocated for each person who works between 25% and 50% of a full working year. The survey collects details of the numbers of days worked by casual workers and these are converted to AWU on the basis of 225 days (1800 hours) per AWU.

Full time employment In this report, persons who work for 75% or more of a full working year are described as being in full time employment. This description complies with that used for employment statistics published by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment where 30 hours per week or less is described as part-time employment.

Other Gainful Activity (OGA) This term refers to all activities, other than agricultural work on the holding surveyed, carried out for remuneration. It includes agricultural work on another holding or non-agricultural work on or off the holding.

ANNEX 3: KEY STATISTICS FROM THE 1999/2000 STRUCTURE SURVEY FOR MEMBER STATES AND NORTHERN IRELAND

The following data have been derived from the Eurostat leaflet “Structure of agricultural holdings in the EU” (Theme 5: 22/2002) in the series “Statistics in Focus”, freely available on line from <http://europa.eu.int>, and from “Farm Structure, 1999/2000 Survey” (Eurostat, 2003). Data for Northern Ireland have been added for comparison.

Number of Holdings and Economic Size

Theoretically the Structure Survey collects data on a comparable basis throughout the EU but in practice there are significant differences, particularly in the threshold for inclusion, ranging from 0.1 ha of agricultural land (Greece) to at least 2ha (Sweden) or more than 1 ESU (Netherlands). The population covered in Northern Ireland is similar to that in the majority of countries, i.e. 1 hectare or over plus any below that size with significant business activity. With these definitions there were 6.8 million holdings in the 2000 Structure Survey for the EU15, of which the UK contributed 3% and Northern Ireland 0.4%.

Average size ranged from 6.3 ESU in Greece to 89.6 ESU in the Netherlands, with the UK average of 47.4 fourth highest; that of Northern Ireland, 21.5 ESU was above the EU average and similar to that in the Irish Republic.

NUMBER OF HOLDINGS AND ECONOMIC SIZE¹, 1999/2000

	Number of holdings (‘000)	Total Standard Gross Margin (‘000 ESU)	Average SGM (ESU)
Belgium	62	3,265	52.9
Denmark	58	3,572	61.8
Germany	472	19,194	40.7
Greece	817	5,118	6.3
Spain	1,287	15,321	11.9
France	664	28,815	43.4
Ireland	142	2,928	20.7
Italy	2,152	19,109	8.9
Luxembourg	3	101	35.9
Netherlands	102	9,098	89.6
Austria	199	2,268	11.4
Portugal	416	2,649	6.4
Finland	81	1,887	23.2
Sweden	81	2,131	26.2
UK	233	11,047	47.4
EU-15	6,769	126,503	18.7
NI	30	630	21.5

Notes

¹ Business size is measured in European Size Units (ESU). One ESU was measured as €1,200 of SGM at 1996-98 values.

Distribution of Holdings by Area Farmed

A similar picture is shown in terms of the area farmed with a marked difference between the Mediterranean and Northern European countries, though these distributions are also affected by the different thresholds for inclusion in the survey. The UK had the highest proportion, 17%, of its farms which were over 100 hectares, but also had 23% under 5ha. The range in Northern Ireland, with 9% under 5ha and 6% over 100ha, was similar to that of the Irish Republic.

The average farm area for Northern Ireland was 35.5 ha, almost double the EU average and half the UK average.

Just over half the agricultural area of the EU15 is classified as Less Favoured, with all countries with the exception of Denmark and Netherlands having some such land. With 70% LFA land Northern Ireland is above the EU average.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLDINGS BY AGRICULTURAL AREA, 1999/2000

	% Holdings by Agricultural Area					Average area Ha/farm	%area in LFA
	Under 5ha	5-20 ha	20-50 ha	50-100 ha	100 ha +		
Belgium	31	30	27	10	2	22.6	20
Denmark	3	36	30	20	11	45.7	0
Germany	25	34	24	12	5	36.3	50
Greece	77	20	3	0	0	4.4	69
Spain	58	26	9	4	4	20.3	81
France	29	20	21	18	12	42.0	35
Ireland	8	36	39	14	3	31.4	52
Italy	78	16	4	1	1	6.1	50
Luxembourg	22	17	19	32	10	45.4	100
Netherlands	31	33	28	7	1	20.0	0
Austria	36	42	18	3	1	17.0	68
Portugal	79	16	3	1	1	9.3	86
Finland	11	39	37	11	2	27.3	73
Sweden	12	38	27	15	8	37.7	47
UK	23	24	21	16	17	67.7	30
EU-15	58	23	11	5	3	18.7	51
NI	9	35	34	16	6	35.5	70

Distribution of Holdings by Type of Farming

For the EU-15 almost 60% of farms are predominantly crop-based, whether cereals, other crops, or horticulture including vines, olives and other permanent crops. Farms based mainly on grazing livestock, namely dairying, beef, sheep or goats, make up more than half the farms in Ireland, Luxembourg, Austria and the UK. Ireland is the most heavily dependant on these types of farming, with 93% in the Republic and 88% in Northern Ireland.

PERCENT¹ OF HOLDINGS BY TYPE OF FARMING, 1999/2000

	Specialist Cereals	Other Field Crops	Horticulture and Permanent Crops	Specialist Dairy	Other Grazing Livestock	Pigs & Poultry	Mixed
Belgium	3	11	13	14	31	7	21
Denmark	37	12	4	15	4	6	21
Germany	15	9	11	19	17	2	27
Greece	8	15	54	0	5	0	16
Spain	11	4	53	4	11	2	14
France	15	5	19	11	26	2	21
Ireland	2	2	0	19	74	0	3
Italy	16	9	49	3	8	0	15
Luxembourg	6	1	17	32	24	2	17
Netherlands	1	13	19	26	22	9	10
Austria	13	4	10	24	31	3	14
Portugal	2	7	37	3	9	2	40
Finland	35	13	5	26	9	2	9
Sweden	20	32	2	16	8	1	18
UK	13	6	3	11	53	3	7
EU-15	13	8	38	7	15	1	18
NI²	2	1	2	16	72	2	5

Notes:

1 The total percentages exclude holdings with no business activity.

2 The NI analysis is based on 1996 SGMS and EU types which differ slightly from those on which structural data are elsewhere published

Age of occupiers

The published analysis relates to the principal occupiers of agricultural holdings who may not be the person in charge of day to day management or do any farm work. The analyses of Northern Ireland data in the rest of this report refers to (a) farmers, i.e. those who both own and manage their business and (b) all principal managers, i.e. the persons most responsible for day to day management.

There is considerable variation between countries in the age distribution of occupiers with the Mediterranean countries generally having an older age profile. There are, however, administrative differences between countries which lead to differing age profiles. The median age both for the UK and Northern Ireland is around 55 but somewhat lower in the Irish Republic.

OCCUPIERS: DISTRIBUTION BY AGE, 1999/2000

	Age of principal occupier				
	Under 35	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Belgium	11	25	23	21	20
Denmark	9	24	25	23	20
Germany	16	29	26	23	6
Greece	9	15	20	25	31
Spain	9	16	22	25	28
France	10	22	30	20	18
Ireland	13	22	26	20	20
Italy	5	12	20	24	39
Luxembourg	11	24	26	21	19
Netherlands	7	21	25	27	19
Austria	16	29	26	19	10
Portugal	4	11	20	27	38
Finland	11	27	36	19	6
Sweden	7	19	28	25	21
UK	5	18	26	26	25
EU-15	8	17	23	24	29
NI	8	18	23	24	26

Managers

Females were the principal manager on only 7% of farms in Northern Ireland compared with an average of 22% for the EU-15. Although primarily differing on a North/South basis, with 15%, the percentage in the UK as a whole was double that in Northern Ireland.

More than three-quarters of the managers throughout the EU-15 worked less than half time on their farms but this proportion is dominated by the large numbers in Greece and Italy.

30% of farmers (managers) throughout the EU-15 had another gainful occupation, including 36% in the UK and 29% in Northern Ireland. The comparison between these statistics and those for the percentages working less than half time reflects the age structures in the differing countries, with differing proportions of managers aged over 65.

MANAGERS: DISTRIBUTION BY AGE, 1999/2000

	Female	Works <50%	With Other Gainful
	%	Time on farm	Activity ¹
	%	%	%
Belgium	15	40	18
Denmark	8	57	41
Germany	8	59	45
Greece	24	87	24
Spain	21	79	32
France	23	51	25
Ireland	10	44	44
Italy	28	88	26
Luxembourg	12	40	17
Netherlands	8	39	21
Austria	31	69	37
Portugal	23	83	30
Finland	10	54	43
Sweden	10	71	63
UK	15	58	36
EU-15	22	76	30
NI	7	38	29

Notes:

1. Restricted to managers who are also the principal occupiers (described as “farmers” in this report)