



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Agricultural labour in England and the UK

Farm Structure Survey 2016



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Introduction

The Farm Structure Survey is a survey conducted across the European Union every three or four years as a sample survey and once every ten years as a census. The latest survey was conducted in 2016. The results are used to assess the agricultural situation across the European Union, to monitor trends in the structure of holdings and to model the impact of external developments or policy proposals. This release presents analyses of the agricultural labour force¹ data.

Defra was responsible for collating data and the provision of the anonymised dataset for the UK to Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. Data was collected by Defra (in England), the Welsh Government (in Wales), the Scottish Government (in Scotland) and DAERA (in Northern Ireland).

All figures quoted in this release relate to England unless otherwise stated. The datasets containing all the results presented here, including both England and UK figures for 2016 and also 2013, are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/farm-labour-profiles-from-the-england-and-uk-farm-structure-survey>

Key findings - England

Holders:

- 84% were male
- 40% were aged over 65 (median age was 60)
- 77% of female holders worked on the farm part-time or not at all compared to just over half of male holders
- Compared to other farm types², pigs and poultry farms had the highest proportion of holders aged under 45
- The proportion of holders aged less than 55 increased with the size³ of the farm

Managers:

- 83% were male
- 35% were aged over 65 (median age was 58)
- 84% of farm managers were also the holder
- The proportion of managers aged less than 55 increased with the size³ of the farm
- 65% of managers had no formal agricultural education but instead had practical experience

Family and non-family workers:

- 55% of farm workers were family members
- 45% of family workers were male, compared to 79% of non-family workers
- 30% of the family workforce worked on the smallest farms and 14% on the largest farms³
- 16% of the non-family workforce worked on the smallest farms and 47% on the largest farms³

Holders

84% of holders in England were male

40% of holders in England were aged over 65

The median age of holders in England was **60**

Figure 1: Number of holders by age band and gender, England

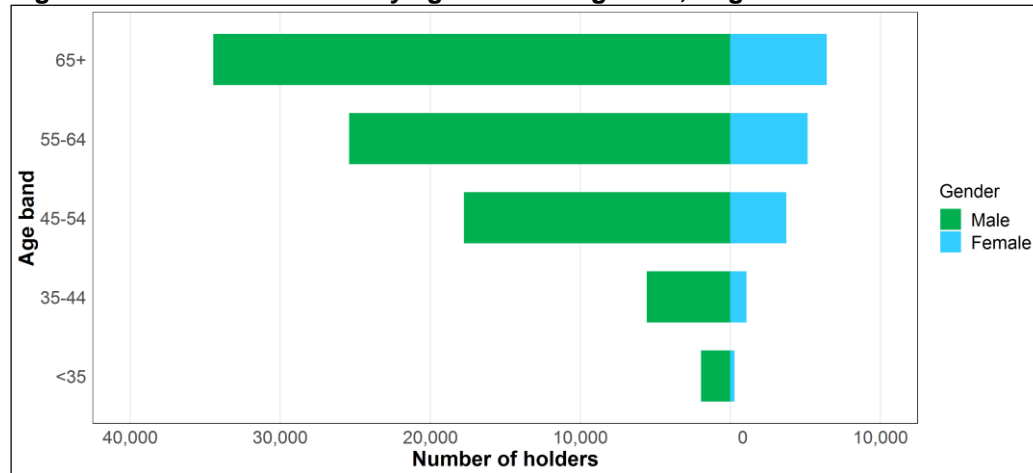
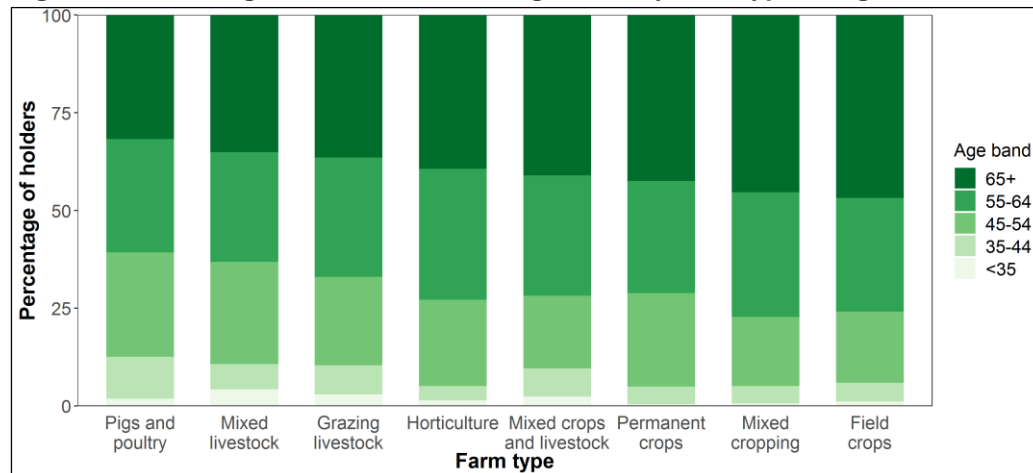


Figure 2: Percentage of holders in each age band by farm type*, England



*ordered by median age, increasing from left to right



Of the 105 thousand holdings in England⁵, 97% were run by 'sole holders' and 3% by limited companies or institutions (equivalently for the UK as a whole). Of those run by sole holders, the holders were predominantly male. 84% of holders were men and 16% were women, this was very similar to the figures for the UK.

Agriculture typically has an aging workforce. In England and the UK, around 40% of all holders were over the typical retirement age of 65 years while the proportion aged less than 35 years was around 2%. This was similar for both men and women in the UK and England.

(Figure 1)



Compared to other farm types², pigs and poultry farms had the highest proportion of holders aged less than 45 (13%), closely followed by mixed livestock farms (11%), grazing livestock (10%) and mixed crops and livestock farms (10%). While holders of field crops and mixed cropping farms were more likely to be aged 65 and over. A similar pattern was seen across the UK as a whole.

(Figure 2)

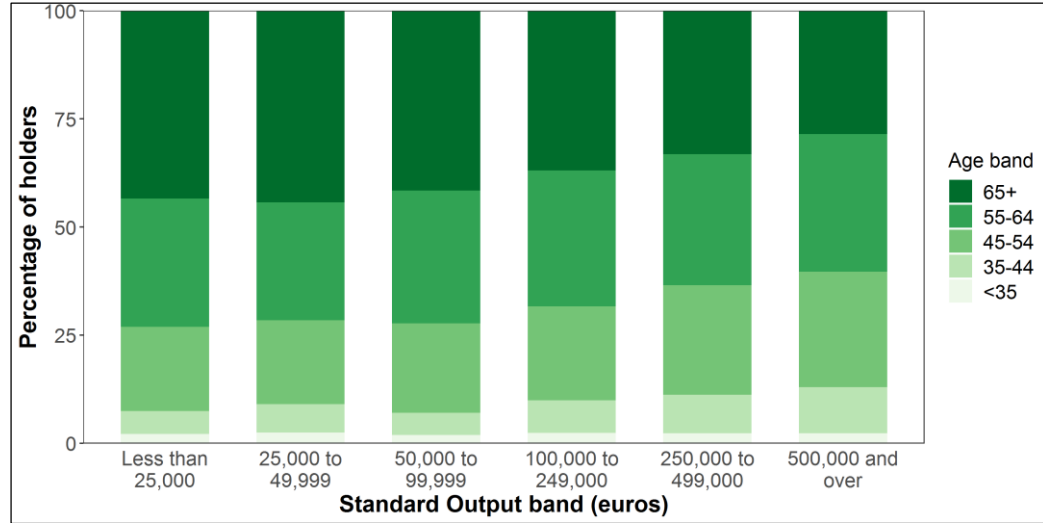
Holders

40% of holders on the largest³ farms in England were under 55

23% of female holders in England work full-time vs 47% of male holders

The age profile of holders continues to increase on **2013** figures whilst the gender balance remains the same

Figure 3: Percentage of holders in each age band by economic farm size³, England



€ The proportion of holders aged less than 55 increased with the economic size³ of the farm from less than one-third of holders on small farms to around 40% on the largest farms. This was seen in both England and the UK. (Figure 3)


 Part-time working is of considerable importance in agriculture although proportionally more women are likely to work part-time than men. In both England and the UK, over three-quarters of female holders worked on the holding part-time or not at all compared to just over half of male farm holders. (Figure 4)

Figure 4: Working time of holders by gender, England



Managers

83% of managers in England were male

35% of managers in England were aged over 65

The median age of managers in England was **58**

Figure 5: Number of managers by age band and gender, England

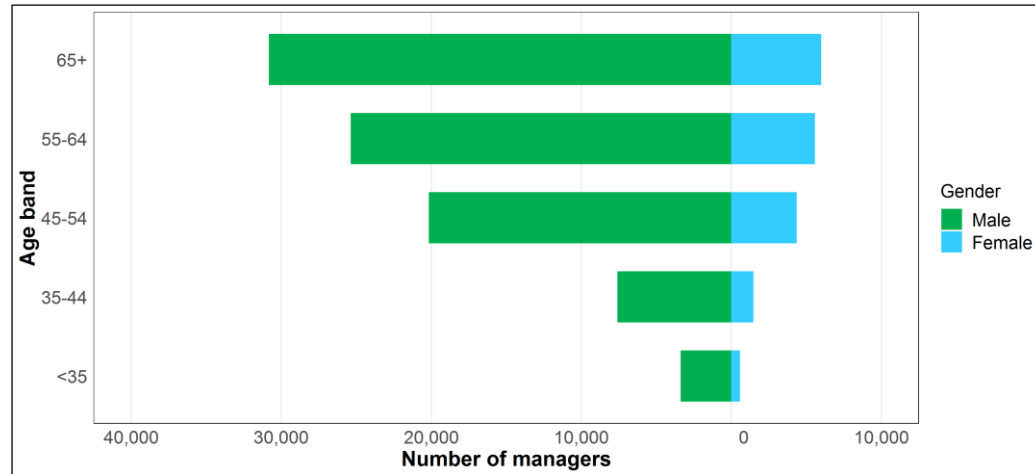
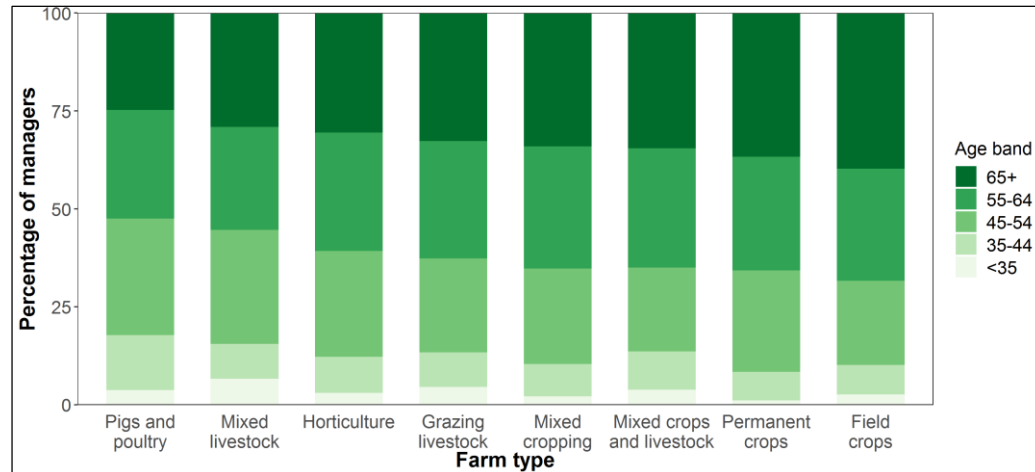


Figure 6: Percentage of managers in each age band by farm type*, England



*ordered by median age, increasing from left to right



For the structure survey each holding has one manager. Most holdings were managed by the holder (84% in England in 2016), while 3% were managed by the holder's spouse, 7% by another member of the holder's family, 3% by a person unrelated to the holder's family and 3% by a manager on behalf of an organisation, i.e. limited companies or institutions.

Like holders, managers were predominantly male (83%) in England. The proportions were slightly different for the UK with 85% of managers being men.

About 35% of all managers in England and the UK were over the typical retirement age of 65 years, a slightly smaller proportion than for holders. The proportion of managers aged less than 35 years was 4%. This was broadly true for both men and women in the UK and England.

(Figure 5)



About 40% of managers of field crop farms² were aged 65 years or more in both England and the UK compared to 25% of managers of pigs and poultry farms in England (23% in the UK). Pigs and poultry farms had the highest proportion of managers aged less than 45 (18%), closely followed by mixed livestock farms (16%).

(Figure 6)

Managers

53%

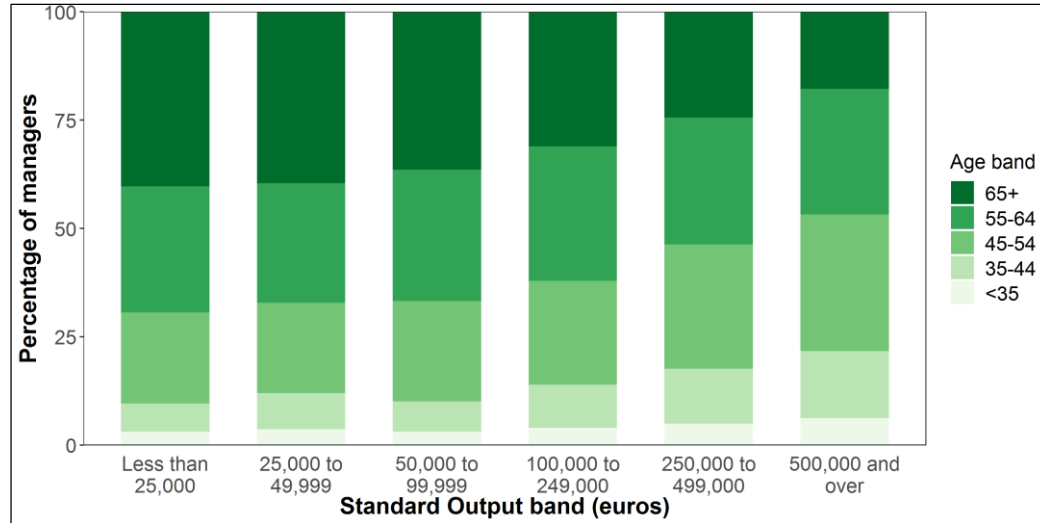
of managers on the largest³ farms in England were under 55

25%

of female managers in England work full-time vs 48% of male managers

The age profile of managers continues to increase on **2013** figures whilst the gender balance remains the same

Figure 7: Percentage of managers in each age band by economic farm size³, England



Like holders, the proportion of managers aged less than 55 increased with the size³ of the farm. In England they made up 31% of managers on the smallest farms, increasing to 53% on the largest farms. This trend was also seen in the UK.

(Figure 7)



About three-quarters of female managers worked part-time compared to about half of male managers in both England and the UK.

(Figure 8)

Figure 8: Working time of managers by gender, England



In England, 65% of managers had practical experience rather than a formal agricultural education. A further 16% had basic agricultural training and 20% had full agricultural training.

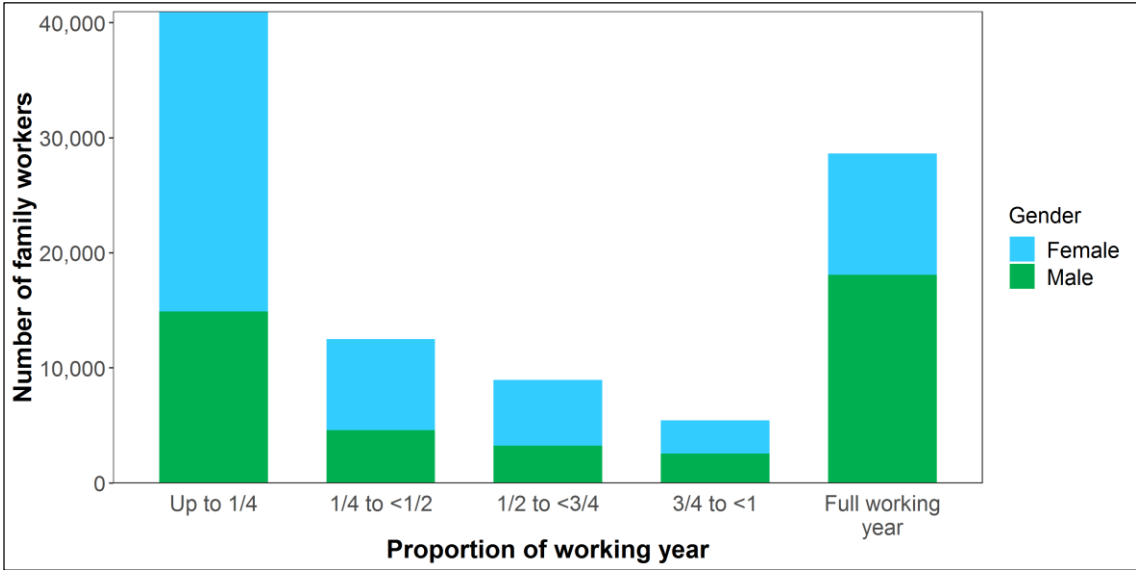
Family workers

55% of workers in England were family members

55% of family workers in England were female

63% of full-time family workers were male

Figure 9: Number of family workers by working time and gender, England



In 2016, there were 176 thousand people working on agricultural holdings in England, in addition to holders and/or managers. Of these, 55% were family members. In the UK as a whole, 60% of the workforce were family members.

Of the 97 thousand people in the family labour force in England, 55% were women. This compares to 52% in the UK.



Of the 29 thousand family workers who work full-time on the holding, the majority (63%) were male. Female family workers were most likely to work less than one quarter of a working year on the holding with almost half doing so, compared to just a third of male family workers. A similar pattern was observed for the UK.

(Figure 9)

Family workers

60%

of family workers on horticulture farms² were women

30%

of family workers worked on the smallest farms and 14% on the largest farms³

The proportion of the workforce accounted for by family members has increased from **2013**.



Women made up more than half of the family workforce across all classified farm types² in England. Horticulture farms had the highest proportion of women in the family labour force (60%) and mixed crops and livestock farms the lowest (52%). This finding was similar for the UK.

(Figure 10)



About 30% of the family work force in England worked on the smallest farms and 14% on the largest farms³. Similarly for the UK, around 33% of the family work force worked on the smallest farms and 11% on the largest farms. In England and the UK, there were fewer women than men in the family workforce on large farms and more women than men in the family workforce on small farms.

(Figure 11)

Figure 10: Number of family workers of each gender by farm type, England

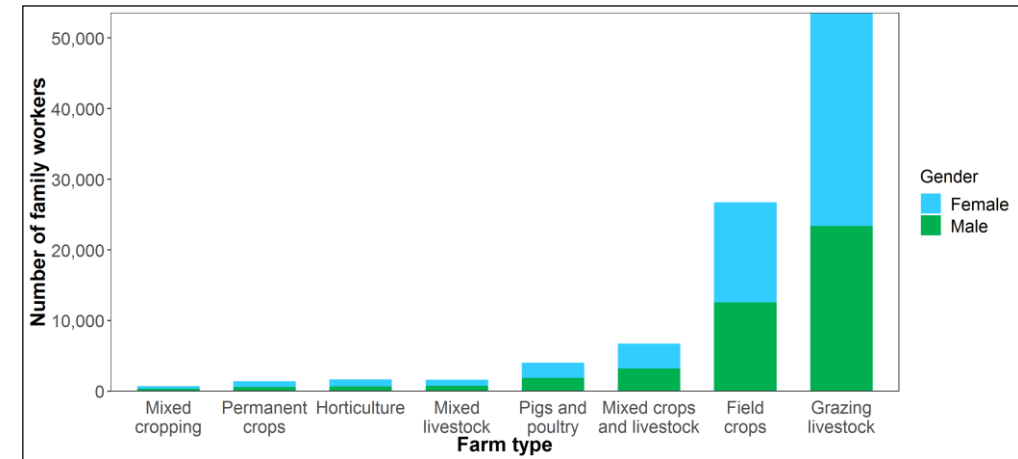
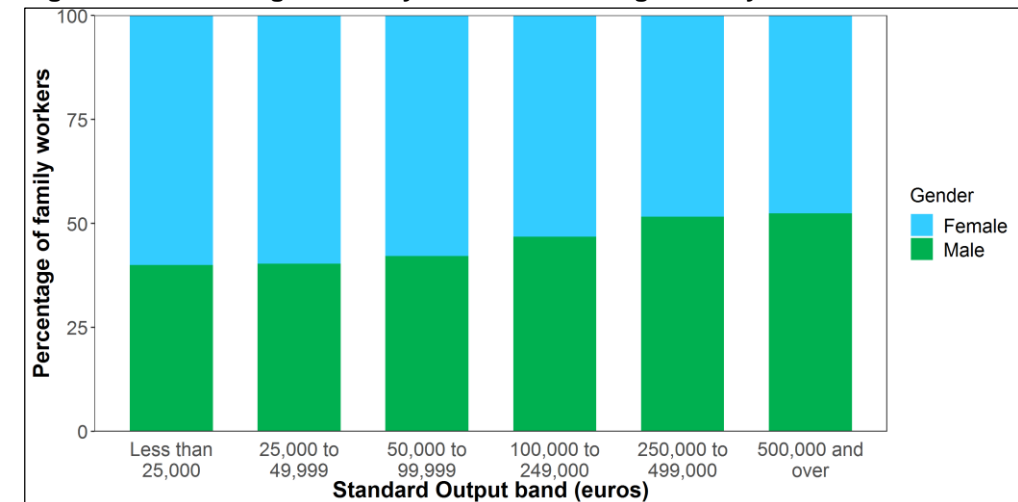


Figure 11: Percentage of family workers of each gender by economic farm size³, England



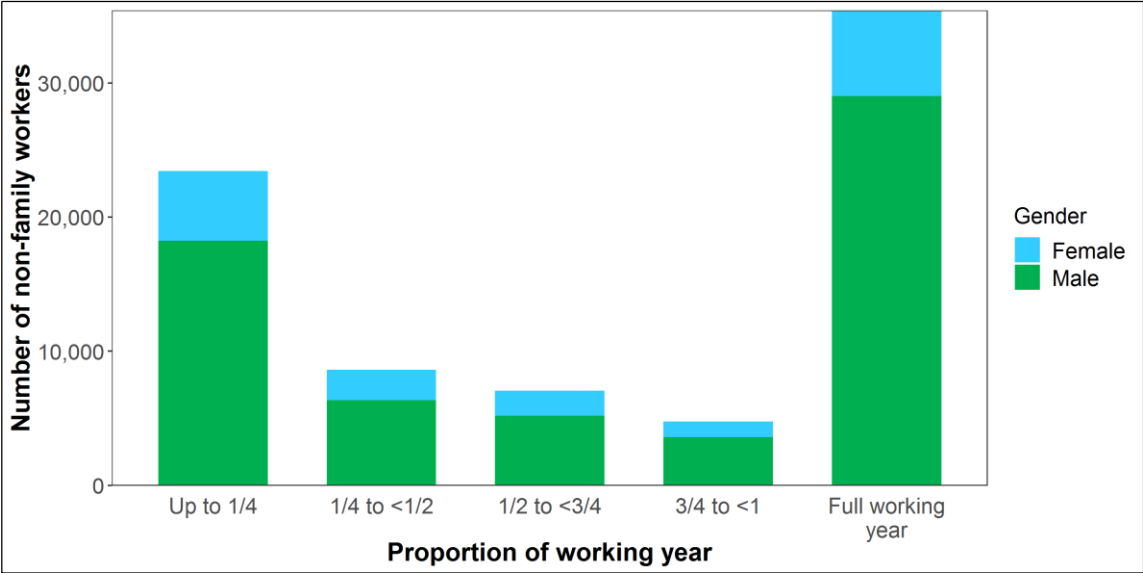
Non-family workers

45% of workers in England were non-family members

79% of non-family workers in England were male

82% of full-time non-family workers were male

Figure 12: Number of non-family workers by working time and gender, England



In 2016, there were 176 thousand people working on agricultural holdings in England, in addition to holders and/or managers. Of these, 45% were non-family workers. In the UK as a whole 40% were non-family workers.

Of the 79 thousand people in the non-family labour force in England, 79% were men. For the UK 81% were men.



Of the 35 thousand non-family workers who work full-time on the holding, the majority (82%) were male. Female non-family workers were more likely to work part-time with almost two thirds doing so, compared to just over half of male non-family workers. A similar pattern was observed for the UK.

(Figure 12)

Non-family workers

38% of all non-family workers on horticulture farms² were women

16% of non-family workers worked on the smallest farms and 47% on the largest farms³

The proportion of the workforce accounted for by non-family members has decreased from **2013**.



The majority of non-family workers were men across all farm types² in England. Horticulture farms had the highest proportion of women in the non-family labour force (38%), and the lowest proportion was found on field crops farms (14%) and mixed crops and livestock farms (14%). The same pattern of labour was observed for the UK.

(Figure 13)



47% of the non-family work force in England were employed on the largest farms³, compared to 43% in the UK. In both England and the UK, the proportion of women in the non-family workforce is greater on smaller farms than larger farms.

(Figure 14)

Figure 13: Number of non-family workers of each gender by farm type, England

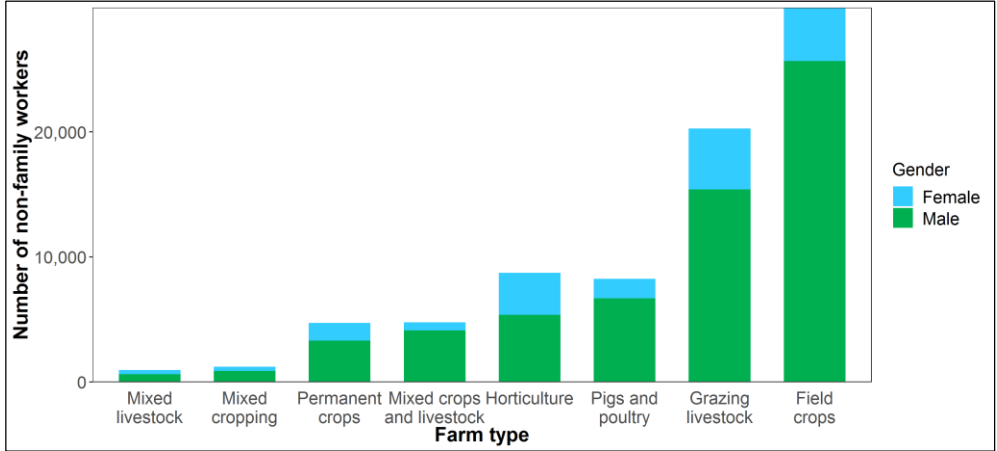
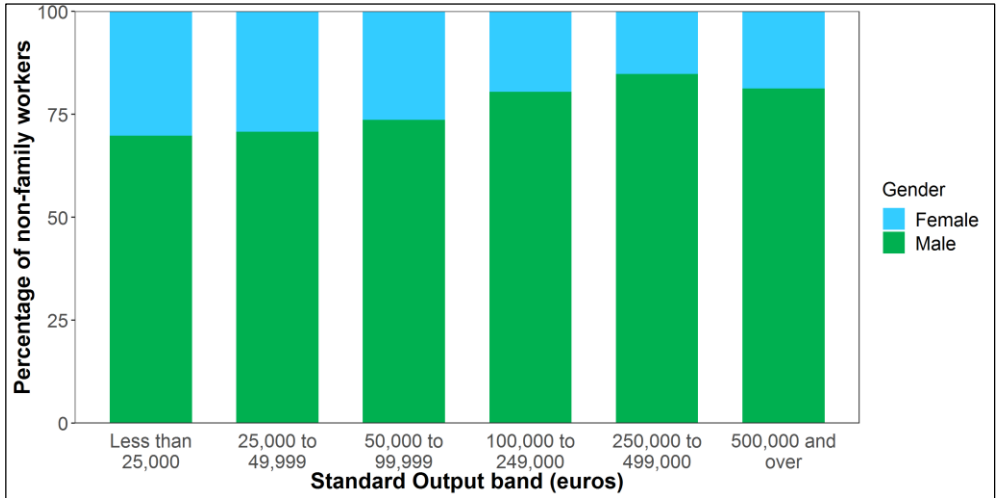


Figure 14: Percentage of non-family workers of each gender by economic farm size³, England



Metadata

Introduction

The Farm Structure Survey 2016 was led by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) which was responsible for collating the Farm Structure Survey data from the four constituent countries of the UK: Defra in England, the department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) in Northern Ireland, the Scottish Government Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services (RESAS) and the Welsh Government. The majority of data were collected in each country through the regular June survey of agriculture with administrative sources being used for other data. Further information on the June surveys of agriculture may be found at:

Defra:
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/structure-of-the-agricultural-industry-survey-notes-and-guidance>

Scotland:
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Agriculture-fisheries/PubFinalResultsJuneCensus>

Northern Ireland:
<http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/statistics/statistical-reports/agricultural-census-ni.htm>

Wales:
<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/survey-agricultural-horticulture/?tab=previous&lang=en>

Thresholds

From 2010, thresholds were applied to the Farm Structure Survey. A threshold is defined under which a unit does not have significant levels of farming activity (e.g. 5 hectares of UAA). This means that the smallest farms (under the threshold) are not surveyed. The thresholds are shown below:

Characteristics		Threshold
Utilised agricultural area	Arable land, kitchen gardens, permanent grassland, permanent crops	>5 ha
Permanent outdoor crops	Fruit, berry, citrus and olive plantations, vineyards and nurseries	>1 ha
Outdoor intensive production	Hops	>0.5 ha
	Tobacco	>0.5 ha
	Cotton	>0.5 ha
	Fresh vegetables, melons and strawberries, which are outdoors or under low (not accessible) protective cover	>0.5 ha
Crops under glass or other (accessible) protective cover	Fresh vegetables, melons and strawberries	>0.1 ha
	Flowers and ornamental plants (excluding nurseries)	>0.1 ha
Bovine animals	All	>10 Head
Pigs	All	>50 Head
	Breeding sows	>10 Head
Sheep	All	>20 Head
Goats	All	>20 Head
Poultry	All	>1,000 Head
Hardy nursery stock		>1 ha
Mushrooms	All mushroom holdings to be included	>0

Note: The UK has also included holdings with >5ha temporary let out land or temporarily empty pig or poultry sheds.

Metadata

Dataset

The datasets containing all the results presented here, also including UK level figures, are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/farm-labour-profiles-from-the-england-and-uk-farm-structure-survey>

Footnotes

1. Labour force – The farm labour force includes all persons having completed their compulsory education (i.e. having reached school leaving age) who carried out farm work on the holding during the 12 months up to the data of the survey including holders, even when not working on the holding. The Farm Structure Survey covers family (holder and member of the holder's family), non family labour (regular and non-regular) and also contractual work (workers not directly employed by the holding).
2. Farm type – Each holding is classified to a farm type depending on the main economic activities of the holding. Once the numbers of livestock and hectares of crops have been multiplied by the relevant standard outputs, a farm is allocated to a type according to where most of its total standard output come from. A farm is allocated to a particular type when the contribution of a crop or livestock type (or set of crop and livestock types) comprises more than two-thirds of its total standard outputs.
3. Standard outputs – The economic size of the holding is measured using Standard Output (SO). For each activity on a farm (e.g. wheat, dairy cows), a standard output is estimated. The standard output is the average monetary value of the agricultural output at farm-gate price in euro per hectare or per head of livestock and by region and represents the level of output that could be expected on the average farm under “normal” conditions. The sum of all the outputs, for all activities of a given farm, is referred to as the economic size of that farm. The smallest farms were those with standard output of less than 25,000 euros and the largest farms were those with a standard output of 500,000 euros or more.
4. Annual Work Units – There is a considerable degree of part-time working in agriculture and the working time of each person who works on the farm is therefore measured in Annual Work Units (AWU). One AWU corresponds to the work performed by a person engaged in full-time agricultural work. The annual working time of such a worker is 1800 hours (225 working days of 8 hours per day).
5. This number of holdings will be lower than the published total from the Defra June survey, this is due to additional holdings being removed from the Farm Structure Survey dataset if they do not meet the Eurostat thresholds.

Further enquiries

For further enquiries on this dataset, please contact: Farming Statistics, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Tel: 03000 600 170, email: farming-statistics@defra.gsi.gov.uk