

**Report of Proceedings of the Agricultural Wages Board
for Northern Ireland Under the Agricultural Wages
(Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 1977**

for the Two Years Ended 31 December 2005

*Laid before the Houses of Parliament by the Department of Agriculture and Rural
Development for Northern Ireland in accordance with Paragraph 12(2) and (4) of
the Schedule to the Northern Ireland Act 2000 and Paragraph 13 of the Schedule
to the Northern Ireland Act 2000 (Prescribed Documents) Order 2004*

14th December 2006

*Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly under Article 12 of the Agricultural
Wages (Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 1977 by the Department of
Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland*

14th December 2006

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Constitution

1. The Agricultural Wages Board for Northern Ireland (the “Board”) is constituted under the Agricultural Wages (Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 1977. The Board’s functions are to fix the minimum rates of wages and certain other related matters such as holiday remuneration for agricultural workers in Northern Ireland.

Agricultural Workforce

2. The total number of persons working both full and part-time on Northern Ireland farms at 1 June 2005 was 51,100, a decrease of 4.13% on the 2004 total of 53,300. These decreases were recorded in each of the three main categories, that is, total farmers, total spouses and total other workers. Further details of employment are set out in the Appendix.

Activities of the Board

3. The Board held three meetings in 2004 and three in 2005, and made two Orders during this period. Order No’s 83 and 84 increased the minimum rate of wages for all age groups by 5% and 4.3% respectively.
4. Copies of the Orders made by the Board are available from the Stationery Office Bookshop, 16 Arthur Street, Belfast, BT1 4GD.

Appointments

5. Three appointments were made under Article 3 and Schedule 1 of the Agricultural Wages (Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 1977 during the period of this report. Mr W F Gillespie OBE was re-appointed as Chairman and Ms P Graham and Mr I McInnes were re-appointed as Ordinary Members. Appointments are for a two-year period effective from 1 April 2005.

Review of the Board

6. During the period of this report a Review of Public Administration was taking place in Northern Ireland. This review was set up to consider how the public sector should be administered. The scope of this review covered Executive Public Bodies including the Agricultural Wages Board. As a result it was not considered necessary to carry out the separate policy review, scheduled to take place in 2005, to look at the arrangements governing agricultural minimum pay & conditions and the future of the Board.

Minimum Rates of Wages

7. The following table shows the minimum rates of gross wages payable per 39 hour, five-day week to agricultural workers:

Weekly Minimum Rates of Wages Payable to Agricultural Workers

Age	Order effective from:	
	5 April 2004 No. 83	4 April 2005 No. 84
	£	£
19 years and over	198.45	207.00
18 years	168.68	175.95
17 years	138.92	144.90
16 years	119.07	124.20
15 years and under	99.23	103.50

Holiday Entitlement

8. No amendments were made to holiday entitlement during the period of this report.

Enforcement of Minimum Rates

9. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is responsible for ensuring compliance with the provisions of the Agricultural Wages (Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 1977 and Orders made by the Agricultural Wages Board. Department Inspectors investigate complaints by workers about any matters within the remit of the Board's Orders. Complaints should be addressed to the Secretary, Agricultural Wages Board, Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3SB.

Complaints

10. Six complaints from workers about non-compliance by employers with the Board's regulations were received during the period of this report. Following investigation, four of the cases were resolved. The two remaining cases are still under consideration.

Permits of Exemption

11. Article 6 of the Agricultural Wages (Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 1977 provides for the grant of a permit exempting an agricultural employer from the requirement to pay an infirm or incapacitated worker the full statutory minimum wage set by the Agricultural Wages Orders. Permits of exemption specify a lower minimum wage for these workers although the holder is not precluded from obtaining employment at a wage higher than that specified in the Permit. Permits are subject to a proviso that the rate of pay is not less than the National Minimum Wage rate.

12. It was determined that the agricultural permit arrangements were not compatible with the European Directive on the equal treatment for disabled people and other groups. As a result the one remaining permit of exemption issued on behalf of the Agricultural Wages Board was withdrawn on 30 September 2004 and no new permits were issued. During the period of this report Regulations to repeal Article 6 of the Agricultural Wages (Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 1977 were being prepared.

Costs of Administering the Order

13. The total costs of the Board's operations were:
- | | |
|------------------------------|------------|
| Year ended 31 December 2004: | £21,814.62 |
| Year ended 31 December 2005: | £25,305.41 |

Members of the Board

14. The members of the Board during the period under review were:

Members Appointed by the Head of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Mr W F Gillespie, OBE, appointed as Chairman

Ms P J Graham

Mr I McInnes

Members Appointed by the Ulster Farmers' Union

Mrs G Cheatley

Mr T Douglas

Mr B Fawcett

Mr T Gilpin

Mr W Mayne

Mr J A Rankin, OBE

Members Appointed by the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers' Union

Mr S Campbell **

Mr H Corr *

Ms F Cummins *

Mr M Cunningham ** & *

Ms A Gribben

Mr D Henderson*

Mr A Mackle **

Mr S McAllister

Ms T McKee ** & *

Mr S McKeever **

Mr J Quinn *

Mr G Scott **

* resigned during the period of this report

** appointed during the period of this report

Conclusion

15. This report is authorised on behalf of the Agricultural Wages Board for Northern Ireland.

William F Gillespie

Chairman

APPENDIX

Farm Labour (as indicated by the NI Agricultural Census Returns)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
	('000 persons)				
Farmers					
Full-time	20.2	19.7	19.3	18.3	18.2
Part-time	15.8	14.8	14.7	14.9	14.4
Total	36.0	34.5	34.0	33.3	32.5
Farmers' Spouses	6.5	6.2	6.4	6.4	6.2
Other Workers					
Full-time	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.6
Part-time	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.5
Casual/seasonal	8.3	8.0	8.4	8.1	7.3
Total Other Workers	13.9	13.5	14.1	13.7	12.4
Total Farmers, Spouses, Paid and Other Workers	56.4	54.3	54.5	53.3	51.1
Decrease on previous year	2.42%	3.72%		2.20%	4.13%
Increase on previous year			0.37%		

