

Observatory monitoring framework – indicator data sheet

Process: Farm Business

Indicator B1: Farm size

This indicator presents data on the economic size of holdings in terms of Standard Labour Requirements (SLR), available from 2009.

B1a Numbers of commercial holdings by farm size (excluding very small holdings < 0.5SLR)

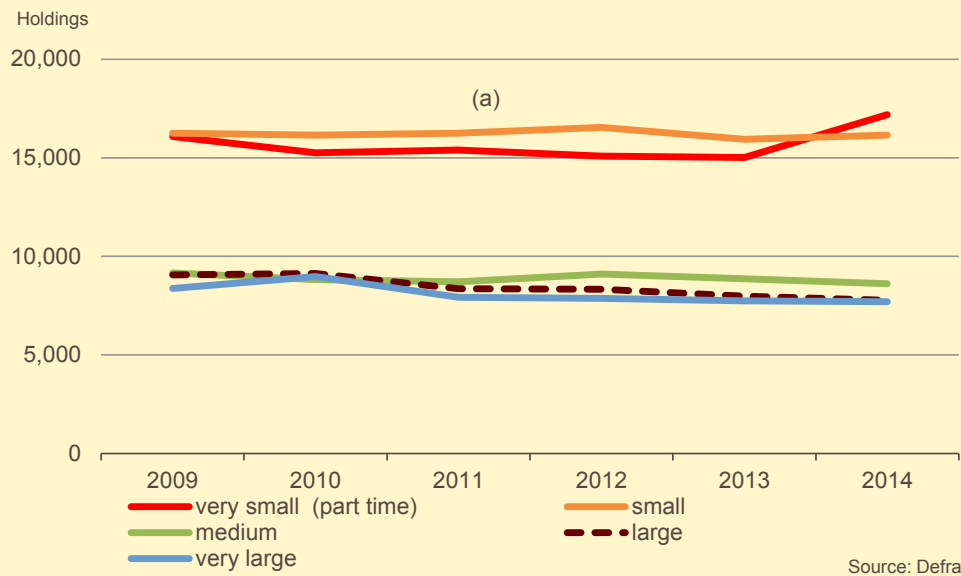


Chart B1a shows the number of commercial holdings by economic size.

Between 2013 and 2014:

- there were decreases in four of the five categories, overall this was offset by the 14.5% increase in the very small (part-time) sector.

(a) 2006 SLRs, June survey data for all but cattle - now sourced from Cattle Tracing System. In 2010 a register cleaning exercise was undertaken. This resulted in inactive holdings being removed. In addition, new thresholds were applied. These changes were backdated to 2009.

B1b Numbers of very small (spare time) commercial holdings (< 0.5SLR)

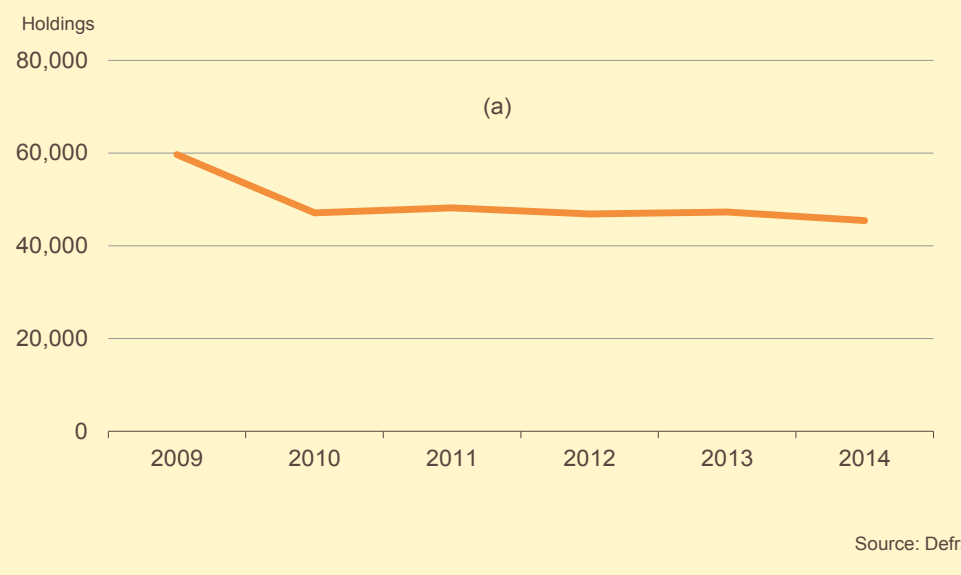


Chart B1b shows the number of holdings classified as very small (spare time) (< 0.5SLR) on the survey register.

Between 2009 and 2014:

- the number of very small holdings has decreased.

(a) 2006 SLRs, June survey data for all but cattle - now sourced from Cattle Tracing System. In 2010 a register cleaning exercise was undertaken. This resulted in inactive holdings being removed. In addition, new thresholds were applied. These changes were backdated to 2009.

This indicator was updated in September 2015. The next update will be in 2016.

Further information and contact

Background information can be found in the accompanying fact sheet.

For further queries or information on this indicator contact Defra's Observatory team on +44 (0) 1904 455058 or email Observatory@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Observatory monitoring framework – indicator fact sheet

Process: Farm business

Indicator B1: Farm size

<i>Indicator</i>	Farm size
<i>Data</i>	Numbers of holdings by Standard Labour Requirement (SLR size bands)
<i>Geographic coverage</i>	England
<i>Years</i>	2009 - 2014
<i>Source</i>	Defra
<i>Origin of data</i>	June survey, Cattle Tracing System
<i>Updates</i>	This indicator will be updated annually. The next update will be in 2016.
<i>Background</i>	<p>It is thought that one of the likely impacts of CAP reform and the relatively low prices for agricultural produce is that farms will become larger in order to achieve economies of scale. Conversely there could be an expansion of small “hobby” farms or small holdings, whose owners have alternative sources of income. Management of land in large units could result in high levels of uniformity over considerable areas which could have important consequences for the landscape and biodiversity. Conversely, small holdings could increase diversity in the landscape.</p> <p>Data are only presented from 2009 onwards due to several survey methodological changes over time which makes comparisons with earlier years difficult..</p> <p>For historical data please see the accompanying indicator dataset.</p>
<i>Statistical & methodological information</i>	<p><u>Standard Labour Requirements (SLR)</u></p> <p>Economic farm size is now calculated for each farm in terms of Standard Labour Requirements (SLRs). The Standard Labour Requirement (SLR) for a farm represents the labour requirement (in full-time equivalents) for all the agricultural activities on the farm, based on standard coefficients for each commodity on the farm. The SLR is representative of labour requirement under typical conditions for enterprises of average size and performance. The SLR may be different from actual labour use on a farm depending on factors such as the extent to which the farmer chooses to substitute machinery for labour. There are two advantages in using standard coefficients rather than actual labour used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SLR can be used as a physical measure of farm size, independent of labour efficiency and other non-size factors• the labour requirement can be calculated for a group of farms or for a farm on which actual labour use is unknown <p>Chart B1a excludes holdings that are classified as very small and requiring less than half a full time worker.</p>

Cattle Tracing System (CTS) data

In 2006, cattle populations were sourced from both the Cattle Tracing System (CTS) and the June survey allowing farm types and sizes to be calculated using both data sources in that year for comparability. From 2007, cattle populations have been sourced from CTS only to reduce the survey burden on respondents. From 2009, updated coefficients have been used to calculate SLRs.

Since June 2006, cattle populations have been derived from administrative data - the Cattle Tracing system (CTS). The decision to use administrative cattle tracing data was supported by a report prepared by a National Statistics Strategic Review Group which was widely drawn and included economists, statisticians and policy makers from Defra and the devolved administrations.

Register Cleaning

In advance of the full census in 2010, a number of holdings were identified with whom no contact had been made for many years and that did not appear recently on any other Defra administrative system. There were a further substantial number of responses to the 2010 census for holdings that had not recently been surveyed indicating that they now had little or no agricultural activity. It is very likely that these holdings have been inactive for a number of years.

Please note that the apparent reduction in the number of very small (spare time) holdings between 2008 and 2009 is due to the register cleaning exercise.

In order to derive comparable results for June 2010, the 2009 June Survey results have been revised to reflect both the survey threshold and the register cleaning exercise.

Economic farm size is calculated for each holding on the register every year.

Further information

Defra June Survey of Agriculture and Horticulture information and data can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs/series/structure-of-the-agricultural-industry>

Detailed information on June Survey of Agriculture and Horticulture methodology can be found at:

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