



Results from the Seasonal Labour in Horticulture Survey for England – Quarter 4, 2019

This release shows the results from the Seasonal Labour in Horticulture Survey that collected data regarding the fourth quarter of 2019. The results presented in this publication are classified as experimental statistics. Experimental Statistics are those that are within their development phase and are published in order to involve potential users at an early stage in building a high quality set of statistics that meet user needs. The Experimental Statistics label highlights to users that Defra is still working on further developing the methodologies used in producing these statistics. Full detail of the survey is provided in the methodological notes on page 4.

Key findings and definitions:

The results shown in this release are averages for those that responded to the survey. The results have not been weighted to account for the background population. Whilst there does not appear to have been any bias in response, some care should be taken when interpreting the results.

Farms with horticulture are defined for this statistical release as those with fruit and vegetables grown outdoors for human consumption, Hardy Nursery Stock (HNS), bulbs and flowers in the open, or glasshouse and protected crops.



Seasonal labour is employment which fluctuates or is restricted according to the season or time of the year



37% of survey respondents needed seasonal labour in quarter 4 of 2019



Shortfall in seasonal labour is the difference between seasonal labour need and actual use



Average shortfall was 5% in quarter 4 of 2019 for survey respondents who needed seasonal labour



Person days is a method of measuring labour, where 1 person day = 8 hours of work



Average shortfall ranged from 7 (December) to 12 (October) person days in quarter 4 of 2019 for survey respondents who needed seasonal labour

Background

The Seasonal Labour in Horticulture Survey is a voluntary, quarterly online survey that asks farms with horticulture how many person days their farm business needed from seasonal labour, and how many they actually used, in each month¹. Seasonal labour is defined in the survey as 'those employed full-time or part-time on a casual / as required basis'. The survey began in early 2018 to assess any potential shortfall in seasonal labour on farms with horticulture. More detail on methodology can be found on page 4.

Detailed Results

The results shown in this release are averages for those that responded to the survey. The results have not been weighted to account for the background population. Whilst there does not appear to have been any bias in response, some care should be taken when interpreting the results.

2019 Quarter 4 (October to December)

The response rate of the fourth quarterly survey in 2019 was 19%.

In Quarter 4 of 2019, out of the 607 farms with horticulture who responded, 383 had no need for seasonal labour.

Of the 224 survey respondents who did need seasonal labour, 27% reported a shortfall. The average shortfall for the entire quarter per farm with horticulture who needed seasonal labour was 28 person days, which equated to a 5% shortfall. The average need for seasonal labour decreased throughout the quarter from 265 person days in October to 104 person days in December. The average shortfall followed the same pattern, decreasing from 12 person days in October to 7 person days in December.

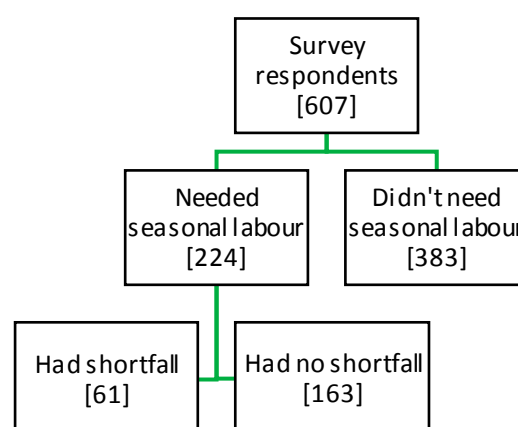


Table 1: Average quarterly and monthly need, use and shortfall per farm with horticulture for survey respondents with a need for seasonal labour, in quarter 4 of 2019.

	Person days needed	Person days used	Shortfall		
			Person days	%	People per day ^a
Quarter 4^b (n = 224)	548	520	28	5	0.3
October	265	253	12	5	0.4
November	179	170	9	5	0.3
December	104	96	7	7	0.2

a) Based on a 30 day month and 90 day quarter.

b) The response rate for 2019 Quarter 4 was 19%. This was lower than expected, therefore results for this quarter should be treated with caution.

n: the number of survey respondents who needed seasonal labour within the quarter.

¹ Please see page 4 for more details on person days.

Figure 1: Average person days needed and used per farm with horticulture from January 2018 to December 2019 for survey respondents who needed seasonal labour

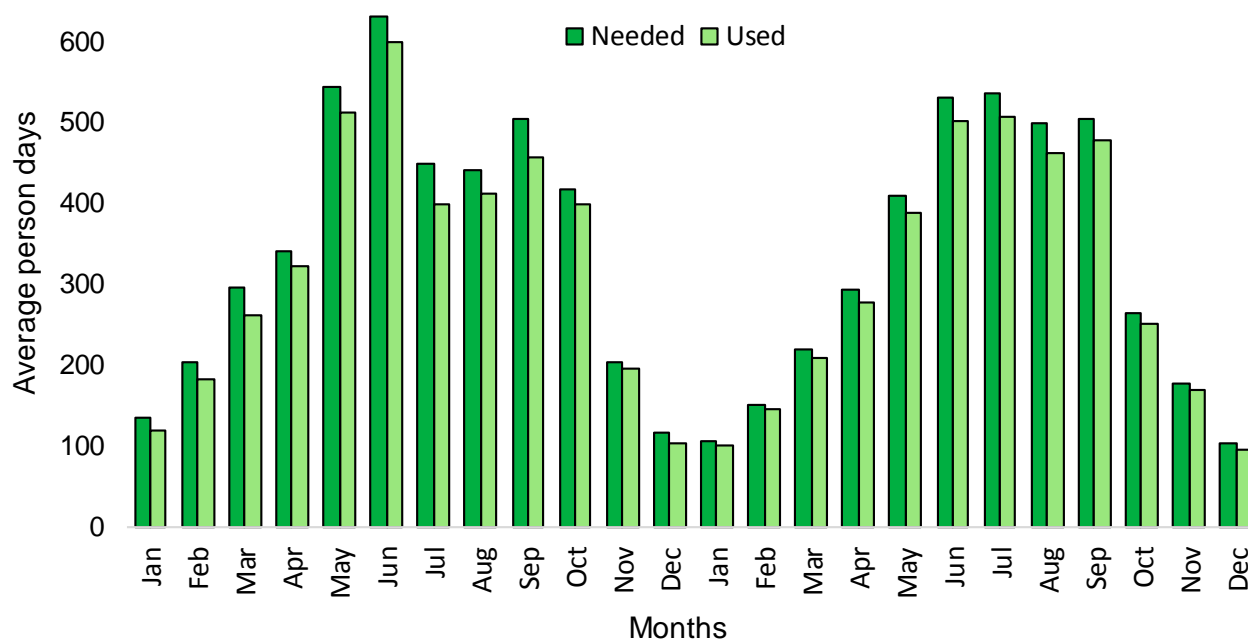


Figure 1 above shows that there was a sudden decrease in the need for seasonal labour from September to October 2019, whereas in 2018 this decrease in labour needed was more gradual. The average person days needed and used by respondents in quarter 4 of 2019 was lower than in the same quarter of 2018, but the percentage shortfall remained at 5% in both years. Table 2 below shows the quarter 4 figures for 2018 and 2019 for comparison. The full monthly and quarterly results for 2018 and 2019 can be found in the accompanying dataset.

Table 2: Average quarterly need, use and shortfall per farm with horticulture for survey respondents with a need for seasonal labour, in quarter 4 of 2019 and 2018.

average per farm with horticulture					
	Person days needed	Person days used	Shortfall		
			Person days	%	People per day ^a
2018 - Quarter 4 (n = 243)	741	702	40	5	0.4
2019 - Quarter 4 ^b (n = 224)	548	520	28	5	0.3

a) Based on a 30 day month and 90 day quarter.

b) The response rate for 2019 Quarter 4 was 19%. This was lower than expected, therefore results for this quarter should be treated with caution.

n: the number of survey respondents who needed seasonal labour within the quarter

Why use person days?

Person days were collected instead of people as it provides a more consistent measure over time. For example, a team of 10 workers pick a crop on farm A, then when they have finished they do the same on farm B, followed by farm C. If asked how many people they needed, each farm would say 10 people, totalling 30 people, whereas it was actually the same 10 people that worked on them all. Person days is also consistent with our approach for collecting labour statistics for seasonal workers on the Farm Structure Survey.

Survey methodology

The population was approximately 7,500 holdings with horticulture, defined as holdings who grew more than 0.1 ha of vegetables in the open, fruit, Hardy Nursery Stock (HNS), or more than 100m² of protected crops as recorded in the 2018 June Survey of Agriculture and Horticulture.

The sample size was 3,141 for quarter 4 in 2019. To ensure a representative sample holdings were stratified by Standard Labour Requirement (SLR) band. In the SLR system, each livestock type and land-use has a theoretical amount of labour required each year. This value is multiplied by the land area or livestock numbers and then summed to give the SLR for the holding. The SLR represents the typical number of full time workers required on the holding. Holdings were selected only if we held an email address as the survey was online only.

	Number of holdings		Response rate
	Sample	Responses	
Q4 2018	3 117	985	32%
Q4 2019	3 141	607	19%

Data analysis

The data for the Seasonal Labour in Horticulture Survey are subject to rigorous validation checks which identify inconsistencies within the data. Any survey responses which accounted for multiple holdings (i.e. at a business level) were proportionally split across each holding using their respective SLR value and any individual holdings which did not meet our definition of horticulture farms were excluded from analysis.

Other survey results and publications

Results from the Seasonal Labour in Horticulture Survey will be published quarterly. The dataset containing the full timeseries can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/results-from-the-labour-in-horticulture-survey-2019-for-england>.

Feedback

We welcome feedback and any thoughts to improve the publication further. Please send any feedback to: farming-statistics@defra.gov.uk. Suggested questions to help you structure your feedback are below but all feedback is welcome:

- How relevant is the current content of the publication to your needs as a user?
- What purpose do you require the data for?
- Which data do you find most useful?
- Is there any content that you did not find useful?
- Do you have any suggestions for further development of this release; including additional content, presentation and any other thoughts?