

Farm structure in the United Kingdom – 2005

71% of the agricultural land is in farms of 100 ha or more

This Statistics in Focus is part of a series of country-specific publications on the results of the Farm Structure Survey (FSS) 2005. It provides a brief but nevertheless comprehensive insight into the farm structure in the United Kingdom. A similar publication was issued in December 2004 presenting the results of the FSS 2003 in the United Kingdom.

In June 2005 in the United Kingdom, about **183.2 thousand*** agricultural holdings had an economic size of at least 1 European Size Unit (ESU).

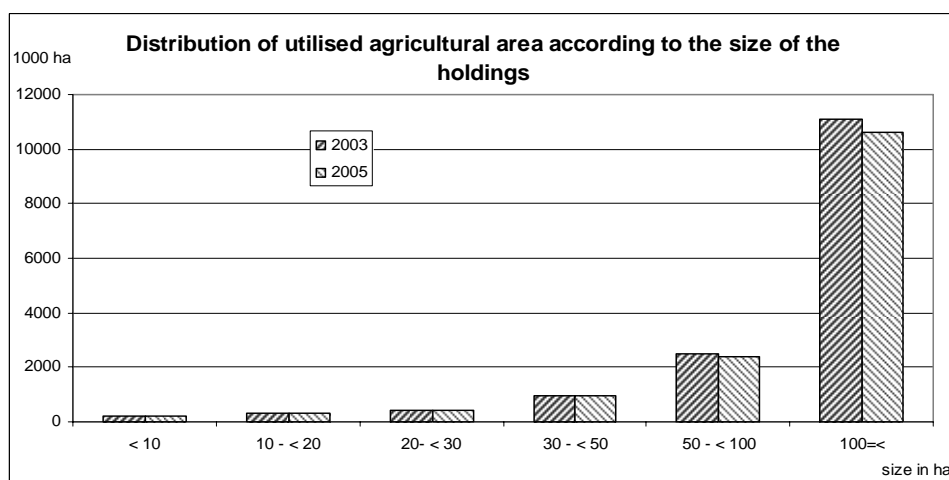
- These holdings employed 289.2 thousand AWUs (annual work units), the equivalent of 289.2 thousand persons working full time;
- they made use of about 14.9 million ha of agricultural area, which is on average **81.3 ha per holding** (compared to 85.2 ha in 2003).

Among these 183.2 thousand agricultural holdings

- 39% made use of less than one AWU, while 27% made use of 2 or more AWUs;
- 17% used less than 5 ha agricultural area, while 20% used 100 ha or more;
- 31% were holdings of specialist sheep, goat and other grazing livestock, 20% had specialised in cattle rearing and fattening, 14% were specialist cereals, oil seed and protein crops, 12% were specialist dairy farming and 6% were general field cropping;
- 45% of their agricultural area was situated in less favoured or mountain areas;
- 2% were organic farms;
- 4% benefited from direct investment aid.

Among the 178.1 thousand sole holders

- 13% were women;
- 57% were aged 55 or more, and only 4% were younger than 35 years;
- 24% had another gainful activity as their major occupation.



Due to differences in the threshold across Member States, the total number of farms is not comparable between countries. This is why the present analysis, including Tables 1-4 and the graphs focus on holdings of at least one ESU. See methodological notes for more information on the concept of the ESU.

Statistics in focus

AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

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Agriculture

Authors

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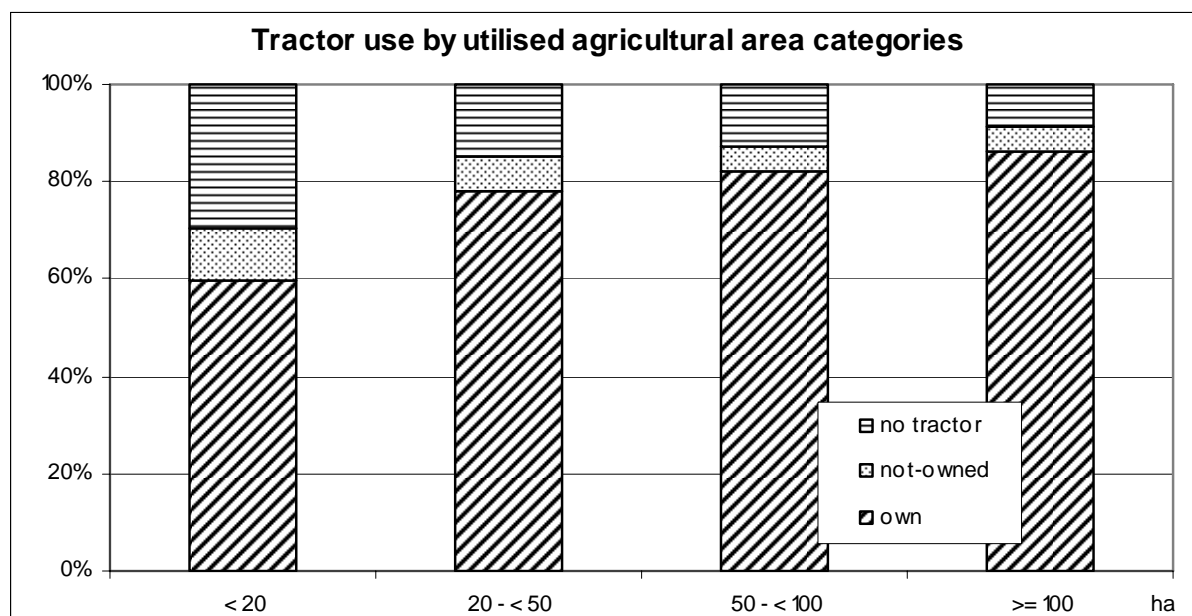
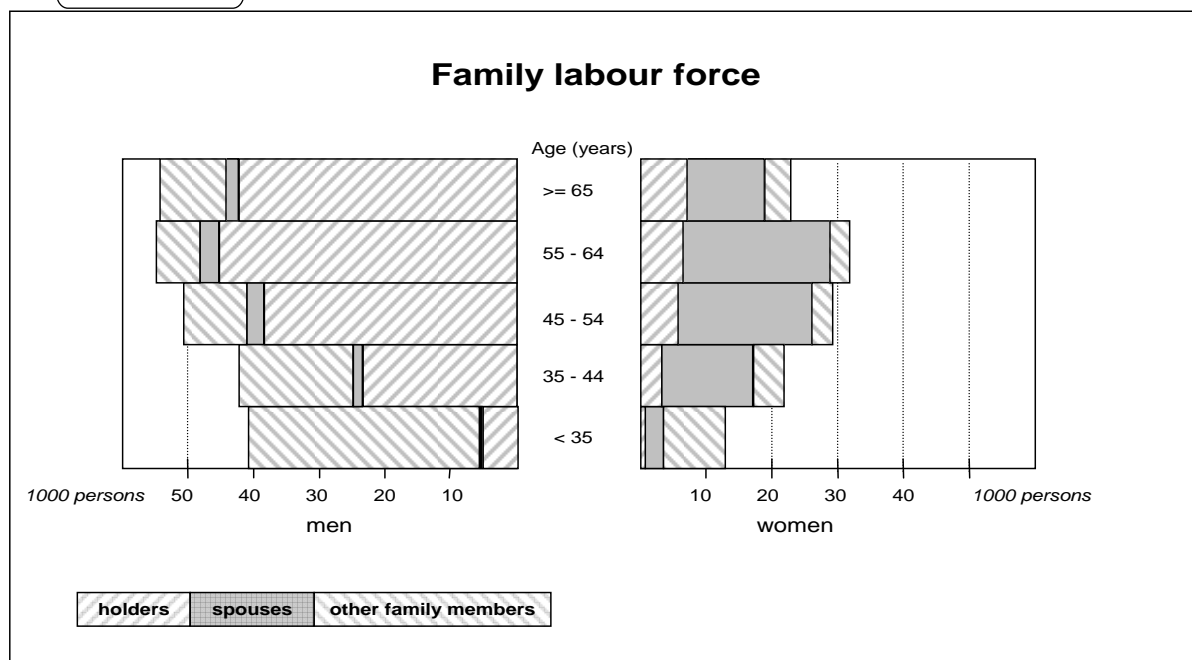
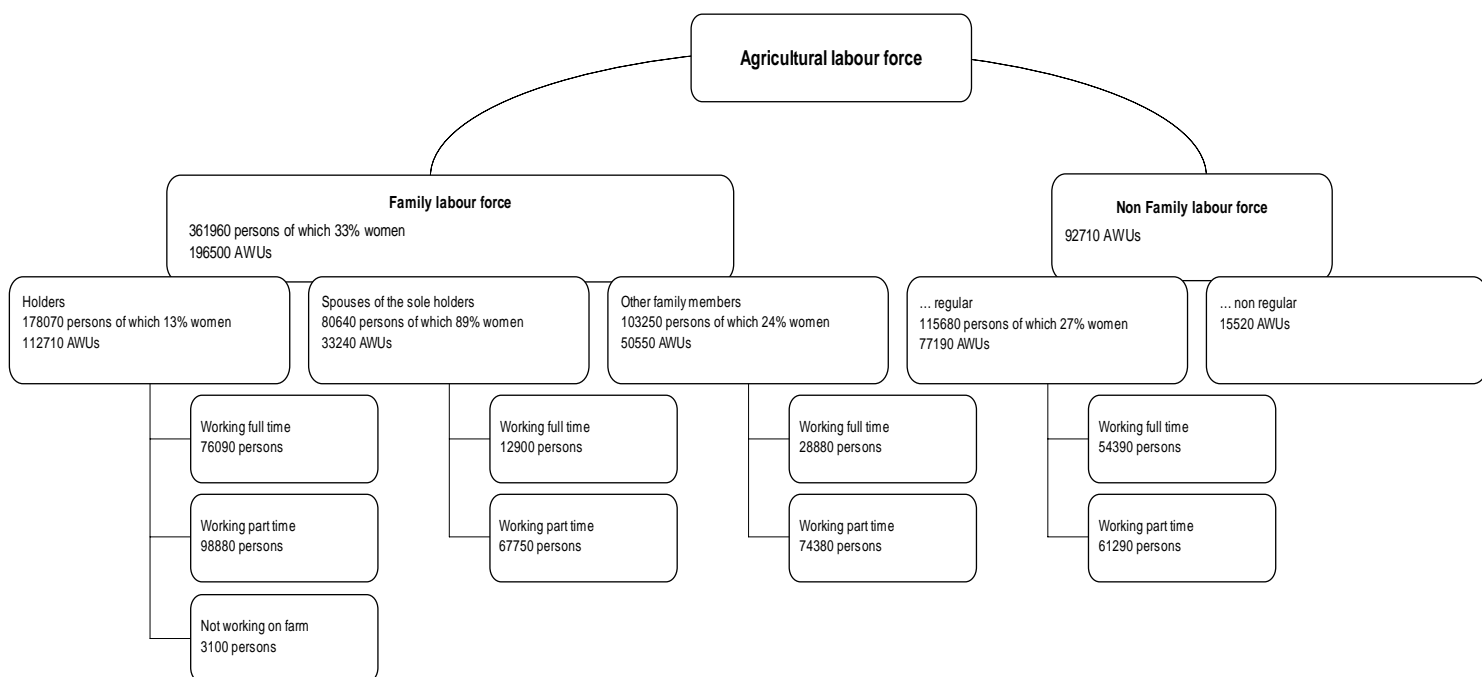
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United Kingdom 2005 – Holdings of at least 1 ESU



Size of the farms	Agricultural area (ha)				All farms	Livestock (LU*)			
	< 20	20 - < 50	50 - < 100	100 =<		0	0-< 100	100-<500	500 =<
Total labour force									
1000 annual work units	75.5	51.5	58.0	104.3	289.2	60.6	124.8	89.5	14.2
Family labour force									
1000 persons	128.6	79.0	70.6	83.8	362.0	48.4	217.3	90.3	6.0
1000 annual work units	50.0	42.6	46.1	57.8	196.5	23.3	103.3	65.6	4.3
Non-family labour regularly employed									
1000 persons	34.2	12.7	16.4	52.3	115.7	44.1	31.2	29.1	11.3
1000 annual work units	22.1	6.7	9.5	38.9	77.2	29.7	17.2	21.0	9.3
Non regular non family labour force									
1000 annual work units	3.4	2.1	2.4	7.6	15.5	7.6	4.4	3.0	0.6
Holding managers (1000)	73.0	41.3	34.0	38.4	186.6	29.0	116.0	38.8	2.9
- women (%)	23.1	11.1	7.2	4.8	13.8	8.7	18.4	4.6	3.1
- part-time - under 50 % (%)	61.1	33.7	19.0	14.1	37.7	49.1	45.5	7.9	11.2
- 50 % and over(%)	17.1	21.7	16.2	16.0	17.7	16.0	20.2	11.8	15.5
- with a basic agricult. training only (%)	8.0	12.2	15.7	16.8	12.1	12.7	10.1	17.5	14.2
- with a full agricultural training (%)	12.6	15.1	22.7	35.2	19.6	33.7	13.6	25.4	44.4
Sole/main holders (1000)	70.6	40.2	32.7	34.6	178.1	25.2	113.3	37.2	2.3
- women (%)	21.0	11.1	6.8	5.0	13.1	9.5	16.9	4.3	3.4
- distribution by age (%)									
- under 35 years	3.4	3.7	3.3	3.4	3.5	2.5	3.5	3.7	5.7
- from 35 to 44 years	13.2	14.0	16.5	18.5	15.0	12.8	13.8	19.7	21.1
- from 45 to 54 years	23.7	22.9	26.2	27.9	24.8	23.0	23.9	28.5	28.2
- from 55 to 64 years	29.2	28.1	29.2	29.6	29.0	30.4	28.7	29.0	30.3
- 65 years and over	30.6	31.3	24.8	20.6	27.7	31.4	30.0	19.1	14.8
- part-time - under 50 % (%)	63.1	34.6	19.7	15.7	39.5	56.4	46.5	8.2	14.2
- 50 % and over(%)	17.7	22.3	16.9	17.8	18.6	18.4	20.7	12.3	19.6
- with another gainful activity ¹ (%)	49.4	39.4	27.2	23.3	37.9	42.7	44.1	17.2	20.7
- as main occupation	38.5	23.1	11.6	7.0	23.9	28.1	29.8	4.5	6.1
- as a subsidiary occupation	10.9	16.3	15.6	16.2	14.0	14.5	14.3	12.7	14.7
Spouse of sole holder working on the holding (1000)	31.0	17.4	15.3	16.9	80.6	9.7	50.4	19.4	1.1
- women (%)	79.6	90.3	95.7	97.4	88.7	92.7	84.4	97.4	97.2
- distribution by age (%)									
- under 35 years	3.2	3.9	4.0	4.4	3.8	2.8	3.4	5.1	7.0
- from 35 to 54 years	45.3	43.9	49.7	54.0	47.6	42.8	45.7	54.5	57.1
- 55 years and over	51.5	52.2	46.3	41.6	48.6	54.4	51.0	40.4	35.9
- part-time - under 50 % (%)	76.8	64.5	58.5	59.7	67.1	75.4	71.6	52.3	50.1
- 50 % and over(%)	12.8	18.3	20.2	20.0	16.9	13.4	15.5	21.7	24.1
- with another gainful activity (%)	53.0	44.8	39.7	39.3	45.8	40.2	50.4	37.6	30.9
Other members of the holder's family working on the holding (1000)	26.9	21.4	22.7	32.3	103.3	13.5	53.5	33.6	2.6
- women (%)	29.9	22.0	20.9	21.2	23.6	22.2	25.4	21.4	21.3
- part-time - under 50 % (%)	77.9	69.8	49.7	38.3	57.7	58.9	71.1	37.8	31.0
- 50 % and over(%)	10.7	13.5	16.0	16.9	14.4	13.0	13.5	16.0	17.7
- with another gainful activity (%)	49.1	48.3	36.7	29.6	40.1	36.5	48.7	29.4	21.6

Symbols : not available 0 less than half of the unit or nil

* LU = Livestock Unit

¹ Refers only to holders who are also farm managers.

Size of the farms	Agricultural area (ha)				All farms	Livestock (LU)			
	< 20	20 - < 50	50 - < 100	100 = <		0	0 < < 100	100 - < 500	500 = <
Holdings									
- total number (1000)	72.5	40.3	33.1	37.3	183.2	28.9	112.8	38.5	3.1
- by legal personality of the holder (%)									
- sole holder	96.8	97.4	96.2	89.9	95.4	87.1	97.7	96.1	78.8
- legal person	3.2	2.6	3.8	10.1	4.6	12.9	2.3	3.9	21.2
- group holders	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
- by employed labour force (%)									
- under 1 AWU	65.2	38.0	18.9	10.1	39.4	48.0	49.5	5.6	4.2
- from 1 to less than 2 AWU	24.0	44.9	45.4	28.7	33.5	24.5	35.8	35.0	12.7
- from 2 to less than 3 AWU	6.4	13.2	25.5	29.2	16.1	12.3	10.9	34.1	18.8
- 3 AWU and over	4.3	3.8	10.3	32.0	11.0	15.1	3.8	25.3	64.4
- by economic size (%)									
- from 1 to less than 8 ESU	71.7	26.5	5.7	2.2	35.7	20.4	52.7	0.1	0.0
- from 8 to less than 16 ESU	12.1	28.3	9.0	2.3	13.1	10.7	18.4	0.6	0.0
- from 16 to less than 40 ESU	7.4	28.3	33.0	10.1	17.2	19.8	15.5	21.5	0.5
- from 40 to less than 100 ESU	5.2	14.1	38.8	33.0	18.9	24.3	9.9	41.9	6.7
- 100 ESU and over	3.6	2.8	13.5	52.5	15.2	24.8	3.5	35.9	92.8
- by farm type (%)									
- sheep, goat and other grazing livestock	40.2	27.6	21.2	23.2	30.5	0.6	38.8	29.7	18.8
- specialist cattle – rearing and fattening	21.6	30.1	17.2	8.9	20.1	0.0	27.6	14.2	7.7
- specialist cereals, oil seed and protein crops	6.6	12.8	18.7	27.5	14.4	56.2	8.0	3.1	1.1
- specialist dairy farming	3.2	13.7	23.6	15.2	11.6	0.0	7.5	32.6	10.3
- general field cropping	2.2	5.0	7.3	12.1	5.8	21.4	3.0	2.3	2.9
- other types of farming	26.2	10.8	12.0	13.2	17.6	21.9	15.2	18.1	59.2
- by farming methods (%)									
- organic farming	0.8	1.4	1.8	2.6	1.5	1.2	1.2	2.3	2.5
- irrigating	1.1	0.9	1.4	4.8	1.9	7.2	0.8	0.9	3.0
- with fixed irrigation equipment	1.4	0.9	1.0	2.8	1.5	5.3	0.7	1.2	2.6
- with crops under glass	6.2	0.8	0.5	0.4	2.8	11.9	1.4	0.1	0.4
- benefiting of direct investment aids	1.2	2.7	4.0	8.4	3.5	4.9	2.5	5.2	7.7
- using a tractor (%)									
- with their own tractor	70.3	85.4	87.5	91.4	81.1	86.1	77.8	86.4	92.9
- using a combine harvester (%)									
- with another gainful activity than agricultural production (%)									
- tourism	22.2	24.9	28.6	37.3	27.1	35.0	25.5	25.6	29.4
- handicraft	10.7	10.4	11.6	16.4	12.0	10.4	12.7	10.9	11.2
- processing of farm products	0.6	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.1
- wood processing	1.5	1.1	1.5	1.8	1.4	1.9	1.3	1.4	2.6
- aquaculture	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.5	0.8	0.5	0.3	0.9
- renewable energy production	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3
- contractual work	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.8
- other gainful activities n.a.e.	5.3	10.6	12.8	17.7	10.4	16.4	8.5	11.5	12.8
	8.5	8.1	9.7	14.9	10.0	15.7	9.1	8.0	12.0

Symbols : not available 0 less than half of the unit or nil

Size of the farm (1000 ha)	Agricultural area (ha)				All farms	Livestock (LU)			
	< 20	20 - < 50	50 - < 100	100 =<		0	0-< 100	100-<500	500 =<
Area									
Total area of agricultural holdings	584.6	1387.2	2438.6	10995.2	15405.7	3164.8	4769.5	6439.6	1031.8
Other area	41.6	44.8	66.9	354.5	507.7	123.5	157.9	186.9	39.5
Wooded area	16.5	18.3	20.3	164.6	219.7	44.4	63.6	93.8	17.9
Agricultural area	543.0	1342.4	2371.7	10640.7	14898.0	3041.3	4611.7	6252.7	992.3
Arable land	119.0	411.2	994.8	4455.0	5979.9	2112.0	1774.2	1776.9	316.9
Cereals	41.9	164.0	442.2	2212.0	2860.0	1155.8	860.4	702.5	141.3
<i>Common wheat and spelt</i>	22.7	89.3	246.8	1509.2	1868.0	855.7	544.6	381.5	86.2
<i>Durum wheat</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Rye</i>	0.1	0.3	0.8	4.9	6.1	3.3	1.4	1.0	0.3
<i>Barley</i>	17.6	70.3	184.5	668.0	940.4	287.2	299.8	301.0	52.5
<i>Oats</i>	1.1	2.7	6.4	17.5	27.7	7.0	9.5	10.0	1.2
<i>Grain maize</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Dried pulses	2.3	9.2	26.4	201.1	238.9	116.2	73.9	41.0	7.8
Root crops	5.3	19.7	46.2	245.9	317.1	157.5	84.4	59.2	16.0
<i>Potatoes</i>	2.9	9.5	20.0	104.7	137.2	70.0	36.8	24.1	6.3
<i>Sugar beet</i>	1.4	7.3	19.7	119.9	148.4	84.9	39.3	17.6	6.5
<i>Fodder root</i>	1.0	2.9	6.4	21.2	31.6	2.5	8.3	17.5	3.3
Industrial crops	3.5	18.0	60.8	548.2	630.6	292.8	189.6	119.9	28.4
<i>Tobacco</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Hops</i>	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.8	1.4	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.0
<i>Cotton</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Rape and turnip</i>	2.7	15.5	55.8	504.4	578.3	267.0	175.1	109.5	26.6
<i>Sunflower</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Soya</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Fresh vegetables, melons, strawberry	7.0	9.7	13.1	95.8	125.5	87.1	22.6	10.4	5.4
<i>outside</i>	6.3	9.7	13.0	95.7	124.7	86.3	22.5	10.4	5.4
<i>under glass</i>	0.7	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.8	0.8	0.1	0.0	0.0
Flower and ornamental plants	1.8	0.7	0.7	4.0	7.2	5.3	1.2	0.7	0.0
<i>outside</i>	1.1	0.7	0.7	4.0	6.4	4.5	1.1	0.7	0.0
<i>under glass</i>	0.7	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.7	0.1	0.0	0.0
Forage plants	45.8	153.6	319.3	741.1	1259.8	62.9	378.6	725.1	93.2
Fallow land	9.7	32.3	79.1	367.6	488.8	214.4	149.2	104.2	20.9
Kitchen garden	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Permanent pasture and meadows	415.0	924.7	1370.2	6174.3	8884.2	906.7	2829.1	4473.8	674.5
Permanent crops	9.1	6.6	6.8	11.5	33.8	22.6	8.3	2.0	0.8
Fruit and berry plantation	7.0	5.6	6.0	9.8	28.3	18.0	7.7	1.9	0.8
Citrus plantation	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Olive trees	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Vineyard	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.7	0.5	0.2	0.0	0.0
Ratios									
Agricultural area per holding (ha)	7.5	33.3	71.6	285.0	81.3	105.4	40.9	162.3	324.6
Agricultural area... (%)									
... own farmed	83.3	78.1	73.0	64.5	67.8	74.1	72.2	62.3	62.5
... in less favoured or mountain area	35.8	39.2	34.5	49.1	45.4	25.4	38.9	57.4	61.0
... organic farmed	0.8	1.3	1.6	3.0	2.5	0.8	1.5	3.6	5.6
... irrigated	0.5	0.4	0.7	1.7	1.4	4.1	1.0	0.5	0.8

Symbols : not available

0 less than half of the unit or nil

Size of the farm	Agricultural area (ha)				All farms	Livestock (LU)		
	< 20	20 - < 50	50 - < 100	100 =<		0<-< 100	100-<500	500 =<
Total livestock (1000 LU)	2668.7	2029.7	3081.0	6469.4	14248.7	3382.2	7768.1	3098.4
of which grazing (%)	43.1	83.6	88.5	87.1	78.6	95.9	89.9	31.6
Grazing livestock (1000 heads)								
Equidae	145.9	66.8	42.5	54.0	309.2	261.3	44.6	3.3
Bovine animals	867.4	1678.3	2760.6	5079.9	10386.2	3016.9	6509.8	859.5
Under 1 year	257.5	439.7	679.6	1348.2	2724.9	863.7	1645.6	215.6
From 1 to less than 2 years	236.0	464.6	754.3	1313.5	2768.5	850.2	1684.5	233.7
Dairy cows	86.9	280.6	662.5	1035.0	2065.1	348.0	1566.6	150.5
Other cows	197.2	309.6	372.5	884.1	1763.5	642.6	964.2	156.6
Other bovine animals 2 years and older	89.9	183.7	291.6	499.1	1064.3	312.4	648.8	103.2
Sheep	4361.6	4494.9	6780.9	19508.5	35145.8	9515.1	22029.4	3601.3
Goats	40.3	18.5	5.6	18.5	82.8	53.4	24.0	5.4
Granivores								
Pigs (1000 heads)	1602.8	667.5	631.6	1896.0	4797.8	279.8	1620.6	2897.4
Piglets < 20 kg	450.9	192.4	168.1	496.9	1308.4	119.2	415.2	774.1
Breeding sows	169.8	72.6	59.2	181.9	483.5	40.2	148.1	295.2
Other pigs	982.1	402.5	404.2	1217.1	3005.9	120.4	1057.3	1828.1
Poultry (million heads)	108.9	16.7	15.9	32.1	173.6	5.1	34.8	133.8
Broilers	73.6	11.2	8.9	17.9	111.5	0.6	19.6	91.3
Laying hens	27.9	4.6	4.7	11.5	48.8	3.7	13.0	32.1
Other poultry	7.4	1.0	2.3	2.7	13.4	0.7	2.2	10.4
Rabbits, breeding females (1000 heads)	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Beehives (1000)	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Average size of herds*								
Equidae (head/holding)	6.5	8.6	7.3	7.3	7.2	7.3	6.3	6.5
Cattle (head/holding)	29.9	61.4	117.4	208.1	99.6	44.2	189.8	509.8
Dairy cows (head/holding)	27.1	43.8	75.0	131.8	78.5	32.0	105.2	286.6
Other cows (head/holding)	11.0	18.7	29.9	60.2	28.7	15.5	50.4	146.8
Sheep (head/holding)	162.4	283.9	487.5	1126.9	475.5	188.5	991.6	2964.1
Goats (head/holding)	8.1	17.8	11.1	40.6	11.8	8.4	43.0	119.7
Pigs (head/holding)	315.0	372.5	477.0	1122.5	484.9	44.8	579.2	3424.8
Breeding sows (head/holding)	54.7	62.6	71.6	184.9	79.6	10.4	90.8	502.0
Other pigs > 20 kg (head/holding)	227.4	264.4	352.4	803.9	353.6	23.7	409.5	2192.0
Rabbits, breeding females (head/holding)	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Laying hens (1000/holding)	1.6	0.9	1.5	3.9	1.7	0.2	3.0	75.8
Broilers (1000/holding)	66.8	36.2	38.5	74.7	59.3	1.0	29.5	157.9
Beehives (hive/holding)	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

Symbols : not available 0 less than half of the unit or nil

* Number of animals of a given livestock category per holding with this kind of animal.

		Absolute figures			% of total	
		Total	< 1 ESU	>= 1 ESU	< 1 ESU	>= 1 ESU
Regular labour force	(1000 persons)	647.9	170.3	477.6	26.3	73.7
Regular labour force	(1000 AWU)	319.0	45.3	273.7	14.2	85.8
Holders	(1000 persons)	274.0	96.0	178.1	35.0	65.0
... at least 65 years old		84.2	34.9	49.4	41.4	58.6
... having another gainful activity		102.6	42.6	60.0	41.5	58.5
Number of holdings	(1000)	286.7	103.5	183.2	36.1	63.9
... producing mainly for own consumption		0.0	0.0	0.0	:	:
... producing mainly for direct sales		:	:	:	:	:
... using a tractor		198.2	46.8	151.4	23.6	76.4
Standard Gross Margin (SGM)	(1000 ESU)	10521.4	15.0	10506.4	0.1	99.9
Agricultural area	(1000 ha)	15894.3	996.3	14898.0	6.3	93.7
... owned farmed		10989.0	891.3	10097.7	8.1	91.9
Livestock	(1000 LU)	14305.3	56.6	14248.7	0.4	99.6

Symbols : not available 0 less than half of the unit or nil

► METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

The survey on the structure of agricultural holdings in the countries of the United Kingdom was carried out in 2005 using both exhaustive and sample surveys. The reference time in the case of livestock and land area, as well as the management of the holding was beginning of June 2005. For labour force data, 12 months up to end of September 2005 in England and Wales, and the end of February 2005 in Scotland and Northern Ireland. In the latter two countries other information was collected together with labour force data, as well. Special surveys on machinery were carried out in Wales in December 2004 and 2005.

The target population was all active farms in each country included in the continuously updated Census Registers for the June survey. For the labour force surveys, however, 65 thousand units were allocated proportionally (using number of total holdings) among the countries. In England and Wales sample surveys were organised in June and October. In Scotland the March survey was sample-based, while in June all active big holdings (at least 1 ha farmed land and at least 1 2/3 ESU) were included. In Northern Ireland a combined method was used: all active farms, except the very small ones where 50% sample was drawn. The samples were stratified by size and, in the case of the March or October surveys, by type. In Wales for the purpose of the December surveys a special sample was drawn taking into account the likelihood of having machinery. The sampling ratios were 5% to 100% depending on the strata (with a higher ratio for bigger holdings or for new holdings). The sampling was random in all cases.

For each activity ('enterprise') on a farm (for instance wheat, dairy cow or vineyard), a **standard gross margin (SGM)** is estimated, based on the area (or the number of heads) and a regional coefficient. The sum of such margins in a farm is its **economic size**, expressed in **European Size Units (ESU)**. 1 ESU is equal to 1200 euros.

Each farm is classified in the community typology by its economic size and its **type of farming**, depending on the share of each enterprise in its economic size. For instance, a farm where breeding sows account for more than 2/3 of the economic size is classified as *specialist pig rearing* (type 5011). Depending on the level of aggregation, farms are grouped into 8 to 70 types.

Annual work unit (AWU) is equivalent to a worker employed on a full time basis for one year. In the United Kingdom it is 1800 hours (225 working days of 8 working hours per day).

Livestock Unit (LU) is equivalent to a dairy cow. The number of animals (number of heads) is converted into LU using a set of coefficients reflecting the feed requirements of the different animal categories.

Subsistence farming refers here to all farms below 1 ESU economic size. Note that the number of farms cannot be compared between countries due to the differences in coverage of FSS.

► REFERENCE PUBLICATIONS

Final Results of the June agricultural survey 2005

- for England: Press Release 16 December 2005., Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

- for Wales: 1 December 2005. (SDR128/2005), Statistical Directorate, National Assembly of Wales

- for Scotland: Press Release 26 October 2005, Scottish Executive National Statistics

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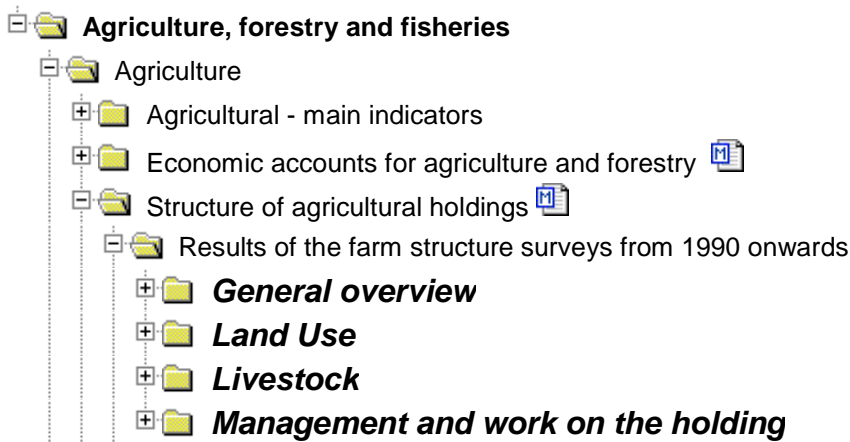
Useful websites: www.defra.gov.uk www.wales.gov.uk/statistics

www.scotland.gov.uk/statistics www.dardni.gov.uk/statistics

National Methodological Report – FSS 2005 (available on request)

Further information:

Data: [EUROSTAT Website/Theme: Agriculture and Fisheries/Data](#)



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