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The trend in agricultural labour input in the European Community

**1993 stronger decrease (-3,5%) than
the long-term average (-3,3%)**

The decline in the number of persons working in agriculture and in the volume of work they do has, for many years, contributed to the increase in per capita income in agriculture, since the income itself has remained the same or even fallen in real terms.

Information on the number of persons working in agriculture and its changes over time is therefore essential for effective analysis of the trends in both income and productivity in agriculture. Because of the high rate of part-time working in the sector, however, analysis based on the numbers working in agriculture will be less accurate than analysis based on numbers converted to annual work units (AWU).

For these reasons Eurostat regards statistical records of agricultural labour input, expressed in annual work units, as extremely important. This rapid report shows the revised time series on the long-term trend in agricultural labour input (1973-1992) and initial estimates of its changes in 1993.¹

¹ The data, transmitted to Eurostat by the Member States, are based on national surveys or censuses, Community Farm Structure Surveys or a combination of these sources.

1. Long-term trend in agricultural labour input in the Community

During the period 1973-93 (1993 estimated), the **total labour input** in agriculture on the territory of the European Community of the Twelve (Germany as it was before 3 October 1990) fell by nearly 50% from 14.5 to 7.4 million AWU (see Figure and Table 3). In 1973, there were 11.4 million AWU of **family labour input** in agriculture; by 1993 this figure had dropped by half, to 5.9 million AWU (see Figure and Table 4). In addition, **non-family labour input** fell in the same period from 3.0 million to 1.6 million AWU (see Figure and Table 5).

These reductions in the total labour input represent an average decrease of 3.3% per annum between 1973 and 1993. Family labour fell at the same average annual rate; this figure is only slightly less for non-family labour input (-3.2% per annum). The decline in total labour input was less steep in the mid-1980s (five successive years) than the long-term average. The smallest decline, 1.5%, was in 1983.

Table 1: Family and non family labour input as a proportion of the total labour input (in %)

	family labour input		non family labour input	
	1973	1993 ¹⁾	1973	1993 ¹⁾
B	93.3	88.2	6.7	11.8
DK ²⁾	82.6	73.3	17.4	26.7
D ³⁾	89.8	87.8	10.2	12.2
GR	87.3	92.5	12.7	7.5
E ²⁾	81.9	80.7	18.1	19.3
F	85.0	84.2	15.0	15.8
IRL ²⁾	90.2	87.2	9.8	12.8
I	65.7	68.4	34.3	31.6
L	95.3	87.5	4.7	12.5
NL	83.0	72.3	17.0	27.7
P ²⁾	83.8	84.1	16.2	15.9
UK	57.2	63.7	42.8	36.3
EUR 12	79.2	79.0	20.8	21.0

1) Provisional data 2) Eurostat estimate for 1973 3) Germany as before 3.10.1990

The **share of family labour** in the total labour input remained virtually unchanged in the Community as a whole during the reference period. In 1973 and 1993, just under four-fifths (79.2%; 1993: 79.0%) of the total labour input expressed in annual work units consisted of family labour and hence just over a fifth (20.8%; 1993: 21.0%) of **non-family labour** (see Table 1). A glance at the rates of change in labour input shows that these fluctuate more widely for non-family labour than for family labour. The annual decline in non-family labour input was greatest in 1980: 6.6% less than in 1979. The highest annual rate of change in family labour input, in 1989, was -5.3%. While the rate of change for family labour was negative in every

year, the smallest decline being -1.6% in 1978, the figures on non-family labour input show an isolated increase of 1.8% in 1985.

2. The long-term trend in agricultural labour input in the Member States

Total labour and family labour input in agriculture decreased in all the Member States between 1973 and 1993, but at varying rates. Non-family labour input also declined in most countries, with the exception of the Netherlands and Luxembourg.

With different rates of decline in the labour input in the various Member States, their shares of labour input in the Community as a whole have also changed. **Spain**, which accounted for exactly a quarter of the total labour input in the Community in 1973 at 3.6 million AWU, now provides only 16%, reflecting a drop of over two-thirds of its labour input in agriculture, to 1.2 million AWU, over the period concerned (-5.5% p.a.; see Table 2).

The volume of agricultural labour input in 1993 was greatest in **Italy** (2.0 million AWU, or 26.7% of the total for the Community), the average exodus from agriculture having been less there than the Community average, at -2.7% compared with -3.3% p.a.

France provided the third largest share of the Community labour input, with 2.1 million AWU in 1973 (14.9% of the Community total) and 1.1 million AWU in 1993 (15.1%).

The **Netherlands** increased their relative share of the total agricultural labour input in the Community, from 2.0% (0.3 million AWU) in 1973 to 3.2% (0.2 million AWU) in 1993, and also showed the slowest average rate of decline, at -1.0% p.a. Other Member States with average rates of decline smaller than -3% p.a. were the United Kingdom (-1.7%), Ireland (-2.2%), Greece (-2.3%), Italy (-2.7%), Portugal (-2.8%) and Belgium (-2.9%). As mentioned above, Spain had the greatest annual decrease at -5.5%; the figures for the remaining Member States were -3.2% (D) and -3.8% (DK and L).

In all Member States except Greece, Italy, Portugal and the United Kingdom, the **family labour input** declined more than the non-family labour input. The annual rate of change in Greece was -2.0% on average for family labour input, but -4.9% for non-family labour input. The Netherlands and Luxembourg showed positive rates of average annual change in non-family labour, at 1.5% and 0.9% respectively.

Non-family labour input in the Netherlands accounts for a large share of the total labour input, at 28% (see Table 2). Only proportions in the United Kingdom (36% and falling) and Italy (32%) exceed this figure. Employed workers in Greece (8%) take the smallest share of the labour input.

Table 2: Average rate of annual change in the volume of labour input (in %)

	total labour input ¹⁾		family labour input ¹⁾		non family labour input ¹⁾	
	1973 - 93	1992 - 93	1973 - 93	1992 - 93	1973 - 93	1992 - 93
B	-2.9	-5.3	-3.1	-5.3	-0.1	-5.5
DK ²⁾	-3.8	-2.0	-4.3	-1.9	-1.6	-1.9
D ³⁾	-3.2	-5.1	-3.3	-5.1	-2.4	-5.0
GR	-2.3	-2.3	-2.0	-2.1	-4.9	-4.7
E ²⁾	-5.5	-4.7	-5.6	-2.9	-5.2	-11.6
F	-3.2	-5.0	-3.2	-5.0	-2.9	-5.0
IRL ⁴⁾	-2.2	0.0	-2.4	0.0	-0.9	-0.1
I	-2.7	-3.8	-2.5	-2.5	-3.1	-6.6
L	-3.8	-1.7	-4.3	-3.9	0.9	18.1
NL	-1.0	-1.5	-1.7	-2.4	1.5	0.8
P ²⁾	-2.8	-1.3	-2.8	1.0	-2.9	-11.8
UK	-1.7	-0.7	-1.2	-0.7	-2.5	-0.7
EUR 12	-3.3	-3.5	-3.3	-2.7	-3.2	-6.5

1) Provisional data for 1993 2) Eurostat estimate for the period 1973-1979 3) Germany as before 3.10.1990 4) Eurostat estimate

3. Estimated change in agricultural labour input in 1993

While still provisional and to be treated with care, the 1993 estimates confirm the trend of decline in total agricultural labour input but at an accelerated rate. The rate of decrease estimated for 1993 for the Community is -3.5 % (against -3.3 % for the period 1973-1993).

Family labour input has continued to decline. The annual decrease for 1993 is estimated at -2.7%. This rate is smaller than the long-term average (-3.3%). It is also smaller than the rate of decrease for total labour input during the same period (-3.5%).

The reduction in agricultural labour input is common to all the Member States, but the rates vary from one country to another.

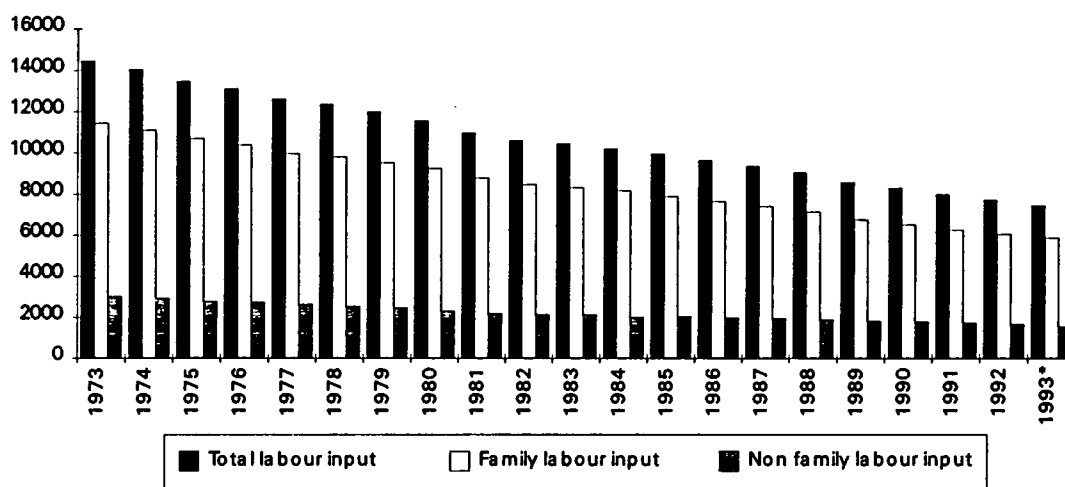
Spain, Denmark and Luxembourg experienced the highest rates of average annual decline over the whole period in the Community, but results for more recent years show a markedly slower fall. Nevertheless, Spain still has one of the highest rates of decrease of agricultural labour input (-4.7% in 1993).

In contrast, whilst the average rate of decline of the agricultural labour input over the period 1973-93 for Belgium, Germany, France and Italy has been lower than the average for the Community, the declines estimated for 1993 have been much above the Community average. The lowest rates of decline, ranging from 0.0 to -1.5% have been recorded in Ireland, Portugal, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

Concerning the development of family labour input, it is worth noting that the highest rates of decline have been estimated for countries with a high share of the Community's agricultural population. Germany, Spain, France and Italy have all experienced high rates of decline in the family labour input in 1993. The highest rate of decline in the Community has been estimated in Belgium (-5.3%) and the lowest in Ireland (0.0%) and the United Kingdom (-0.7%). An increase is estimated for Portugal (+1.0%).

Non-family labour input is forecast to have declined by -6.5% in 1993, although there have been large differences at Member State level with both positive and negative rates of change. The sharpest decline is noted for Spain with -11.6%, against a drop of -5.2% for the period 1973-1993. Increases of non-family labour input are estimated for Luxembourg and the Netherlands.

Graph: Volume of labour input in agriculture in the Community (in 1000 AWU)



* Provisional data.

Germany as before 03.10.1990.

Table 5: Volume of non family labour input in agriculture in annual work units (AWU) from 1973 to 1993 (in 1 000)

	B	DK	D(1)	GR	E (2)	F	IRL (3)	I	L	NL	P	UK	EUR 12
1973	10.0	32.9	128.0	142.0	654.1	323.0	34.1	1 169.8	0.6	48.5	220.0	247.5	3 010.5
1974	9.3	31.8	132.0	136.0	634.7	307.0	33.8	1 129.4	0.5	48.7	215.2	239.8	2 918.1
1975	8.1	31.1	123.0	129.0	593.8	292.0	32.7	1 063.1	0.5	48.6	210.4	230.2	2 762.5
1976	8.1	30.7	115.0	123.0	552.3	290.0	33.1	1 075.6	0.5	48.8	213.8	227.9	2 718.8
1977	7.7	30.2	111.0	116.0	519.0	287.0	33.3	1 038.6	0.5	48.8	207.6	226.4	2 626.1
1978	7.1	29.7	108.0	110.0	504.9	285.0	33.4	983.5	0.5	49.6	196.7	223.9	2 532.3
1979	7.4	29.2	112.0	104.0	503.6	283.0	32.8	949.0	0.6	49.5	176.2	218.8	2 466.1
1980	6.9	27.8	106.0	98.0	440.3	283.0	32.3	868.9	0.6	50.6	174.5	213.3	2 302.2
1981	6.1	26.4	114.0	92.0	398.4	276.0	33.0	811.4	0.6	50.5	164.9	206.1	2 179.4
1982	6.4	27.8	110.0	97.0	389.7	269.0	33.3	786.3	0.6	50.9	159.4	201.9	2 132.3
1983	6.8	28.0	107.0	104.0	391.9	262.0	33.9	765.8	0.6	50.7	165.2	198.8	2 114.8
1984	7.2	28.4	100.0	110.0	325.5	254.0	34.8	734.1	0.6	50.2	165.9	191.0	2 001.7
1985	7.0	28.0	113.0	128.0	348.9	245.0	35.1	726.3	0.6	51.7	166.6	188.1	2 038.3
1986	7.6	27.1	110.0	117.0	345.5	237.0	33.0	706.9	0.6	53.3	153.8	178.4	1 970.2
1987	7.5	26.0	99.0	120.0	344.5	230.0	30.7	693.2	0.6	54.5	160.3	173.3	1 939.6
1988	7.5	24.8	103.0	116.0	333.6	222.0	31.5	679.4	0.6	54.8	153.5	168.2	1 894.8
1989	7.5	24.8	100.0	*63.8	311.9	211.6	32.0	691.0	0.7	57.7	145.8	162.9	1 809.7
1990	7.5	24.2	92.0	*60.7	298.3	201.6	31.5	686.8	0.6	*60.1	149.1	160.9	1 773.4
1991	7.3	24.1	87.4	*56.0	307.7	194.6	29.5	659.8	0.7	*62.9	140.7	154.9	1 725.6
1992	10.4	24.1	83.6	*55.1	252.4	187.8	28.7	669.5	0.6	*64.6	139.5	150.0	1 666.4
*1993	9.9	23.6	79.4	52.5	223.2	178.4	28.7	625.5	0.7	65.1	123.0	148.9	1 558.8
% 93/92	- 5.5	- 1.9	- 5.0	- 4.7	- 11.6	- 5.0	- 0.1	- 6.6	18.1	0.8	- 11.8	- 0.7	- 6.5

* Provisional data

(1) Germany as before 03.10.1990

(2) Eurostat estimate for the period 1973-1979

(3) Eurostat estimate

Table 4: Volume of family labour input in agriculture in annual work units (AWU) from 1973 to 1993 (in 1 000)

	B	DK	D(1)	GR	E (2)	F	IRL (3)	I	L	NL	P	UK	EUR 12
1973	139.0	156.6	1 122.0	974.0	2 952.7	1 824.0	314.3	2 237.7	12.1	237.5	1 140.0	330.9	11 440.8
1974	134.0	144.5	1 066.0	956.0	2 853.5	1 771.0	299.6	2 207.3	11.7	232.3	1 114.8	316.3	11 107.0
1975	129.1	137.1	1 045.0	939.0	2 645.0	1 716.0	291.9	2 146.0	11.0	228.9	1 088.9	311.1	10 689.0
1976	122.4	132.2	1 024.0	922.0	2 432.7	1 675.0	285.0	2 131.9	10.3	224.9	1 107.0	317.5	10 384.9
1977	117.2	126.3	971.0	906.0	2 263.0	1 639.0	278.7	2 055.8	10.1	217.1	1 074.1	313.0	9 971.3
1978	113.7	120.8	951.0	889.0	2 190.8	1 610.0	272.0	2 111.0	9.6	210.3	1 016.1	314.1	9 808.4
1979	112.9	115.2	895.0	874.0	2 018.1	1 581.0	264.5	2 095.4	9.1	207.0	1 034.5	307.8	9 514.5
1980	108.7	109.8	881.0	858.0	1 883.0	1 534.0	257.3	2 069.9	8.6	203.7	1 027.7	300.0	9 241.7
1981	106.3	105.0	860.0	843.0	1 715.9	1 492.0	250.8	1 940.2	8.0	198.8	970.8	295.6	8 786.4
1982	103.8	98.9	841.0	827.0	1 646.7	1 451.0	245.7	1 807.1	7.7	197.1	938.7	294.1	8 458.8
1983	102.6	95.8	820.0	813.0	1 611.1	1 409.0	242.2	1 880.0	7.3	197.6	847.0	293.2	8 318.8
1984	101.5	91.9	812.0	808.0	1 537.9	1 366.0	241.1	1 864.6	6.9	196.5	851.1	292.6	8 170.1
1985	99.1	86.7	791.0	803.0	1 435.1	1 319.0	240.7	1 767.8	6.7	193.7	854.1	293.1	7 890.0
1986	97.2	84.7	780.0	781.0	1 346.3	1 272.0	233.0	1 766.5	6.4	189.4	788.2	294.8	7 639.5
1987	94.1	79.1	737.0	729.0	1 282.2	1 225.0	223.8	1 729.7	6.1	186.0	822.9	288.8	7 403.7
1988	90.8	76.2	718.0	712.0	1 241.8	1 179.0	216.5	1 633.8	5.8	182.6	787.2	284.5	7 128.2
1989	88.5	73.7	675.0	*706.6	1 161.0	1 123.6	211.0	1 502.6	5.6	179.8	747.7	277.4	6 752.5
1990	86.1	71.0	662.0	*691.7	1 108.5	1 070.8	206.5	1 466.4	5.4	*176.7	690.1	269.7	6 504.9
1991	83.5	68.6	628.9	*627.7	986.6	1 033.3	199.9	1 495.9	5.1	*174.0	692.9	264.9	6 261.3
1992	77.6	65.9	601.2	*662.9	962.9	997.1	194.7	1 391.1	5.3	*174.4	642.8	263.4	6 039.2
*1993	73.4	64.6	570.6	649.0	935.0	947.2	194.7	1 356.5	5.1	170.2	649.0	261.5	5 876.8
% 93/92	- 5.3	- 1.9	- 5.1	- 2.1	- 2.9	- 5.0	0.0	- 2.5	- 3.9	- 2.4	1.0	- 0.7	- 2.7

* Provisional data

(1) Germany as before 03.10.1990

(2) Eurostat estimate for the period 1973-1979

(3) Eurostat estimate

Table 3: Volume of total labour input in agriculture in annual work units (AWU) from 1973 to 1993 (in 1 000)

	B	DK	D(1)	GR	E (2)	F	IRL (3)	I	L	NL	P	UK	EUR 12
1973	149.0	189.5	1 250.0	1 116.0	3 606.8	2 147.0	348.4	3 407.5	12.7	286.0	1 360.0	578.4	14 451.3
1974	143.3	176.3	1 198.0	1 092.0	3 488.2	2 078.0	333.4	3 336.7	12.2	281.0	1 330.0	556.0	14 025.1
1975	137.2	168.2	1 168.0	1 068.0	3 238.8	2 008.0	324.6	3 209.1	11.5	277.5	1 299.3	541.3	13 451.5
1976	130.5	162.9	1 139.0	1 045.0	2 985.0	1 965.0	318.1	3 207.5	10.8	273.7	1 320.8	545.4	13 103.7
1977	124.9	156.5	1 082.0	1 022.0	2 782.0	1 926.0	312.0	3 094.4	10.6	265.9	1 281.7	539.4	12 597.4
1978	120.8	150.5	1 059.0	999.0	2 695.7	1 895.0	305.4	3 094.5	10.1	259.9	1 212.8	538.0	12 340.7
1979	120.3	144.4	1 007.0	978.0	2 521.7	1 864.0	297.3	3 044.4	9.7	256.5	1 210.7	526.6	11 980.6
1980	115.6	137.6	987.0	956.0	2 323.3	1 817.0	289.6	2 938.8	9.2	254.3	1 202.2	513.3	11 543.9
1981	112.4	131.4	974.0	935.0	2 114.3	1 768.0	283.8	2 751.6	8.6	249.3	1 135.7	501.7	10 965.8
1982	110.2	126.7	951.0	924.0	2 036.4	1 720.0	279.0	2 593.4	8.3	248.0	1 098.1	496.0	10 591.1
1983	109.4	123.8	927.0	917.0	2 003.0	1 671.0	276.1	2 645.8	7.9	248.3	1 012.2	492.1	10 433.6
1984	108.7	120.3	912.0	918.0	1 863.4	1 620.0	275.9	2 598.7	7.5	246.7	1 017.0	483.6	10 171.8
1985	106.1	114.7	904.0	931.0	1 784.0	1 564.0	275.8	2 494.1	7.3	245.4	1 020.7	481.2	9 928.3
1986	104.8	111.8	890.0	898.0	1 691.8	1 509.0	266.0	2 473.4	7.0	242.7	942.0	473.2	9 609.7
1987	101.6	105.1	836.0	849.0	1 626.7	1 455.0	254.5	2 422.9	6.7	240.5	983.2	462.1	9 343.3
1988	98.3	101.0	821.0	828.0	1 575.4	1 401.0	248.0	2 313.2	6.4	237.4	940.7	452.6	9 023.0
1989	96.0	98.5	775.0	*770.4	1 472.9	1 335.2	243.0	2 193.6	6.3	237.5	893.5	440.3	8 562.2
1990	93.6	95.2	754.0	*752.4	1 406.8	1 272.4	238.0	2 153.2	6.0	*236.8	839.2	430.7	8 278.3
1991	90.8	92.7	716.3	*683.7	1 294.3	1 227.9	229.4	2 155.7	5.8	*236.9	833.6	419.8	7 986.9
1992	88.0	89.9	684.8	*718.0	1 215.3	1 184.9	223.4	2 060.6	5.9	*239.0	782.3	413.4	7 705.6
*1993	83.3	88.1	650.0	701.5	1 158.2	1 125.6	223.4	1 982.0	5.8	235.3	772.0	410.4	7 435.6
% 93/92	- 5.3	- 2.0	- 5.1	- 2.3	- 4.7	- 5.0	0.0	- 3.8	- 1.7	- 1.5	- 1.3	- 0.7	- 3.5

* Provisional data

(1) Germany as before 03.10.1990

(2) Eurostat estimate for the period 1973-1979

(3) Eurostat estimate