

# Farm structure in Ireland – 2005

## Half of the farms specialised in cattle rearing and fattening

*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 Ireland.\**

\* \* \*

In June 2005 in Ireland, about 125.5 thousand\*\* agricultural holdings had an economic size of at least 1 European Size Unit (ESU).

- These holdings employed 148 thousand AWUs (annual work units), the equivalent of 148 thousand persons working full time;
- they made use of about 4.2 million ha of agricultural area, which is on average 33.2 ha per holding.

Among these 125.5 thousand agricultural holdings

- 35% made use of less than one AWU, while 15% made use of 2 or more AWUs;
- 5% used less than 5 ha agricultural area, while 3% used 100 ha or more;
- 50% were holdings of the type specialised cattle rearing and fattening, 24% various grazing livestock (including sheep), 17% were specialist dairy farming, 2% specialist cereals, oil seed and protein crops and 2% were engaged in combined field cropping and grazing livestock;
- 68% of their agricultural area was situated in less favoured or mountain areas;
- 1% were organic farms;
- 40% benefited from direct investment aid.

Among the 125.3 thousand sole holders

- 10% were women;
- 48% were aged 55 or more, and only 8% were younger than 35 years;
- 26% had another gainful activity as their major occupation.

## Statistics in focus

### AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

6/2007

### Agriculture

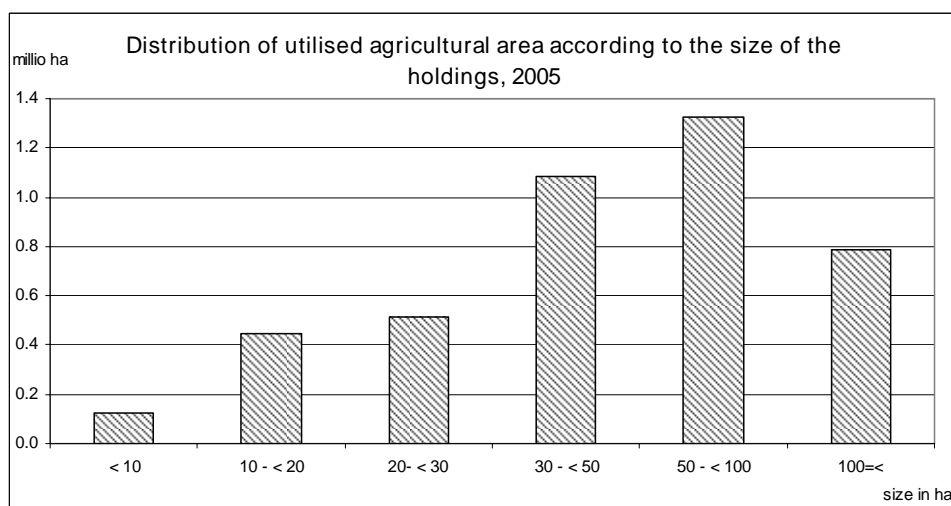
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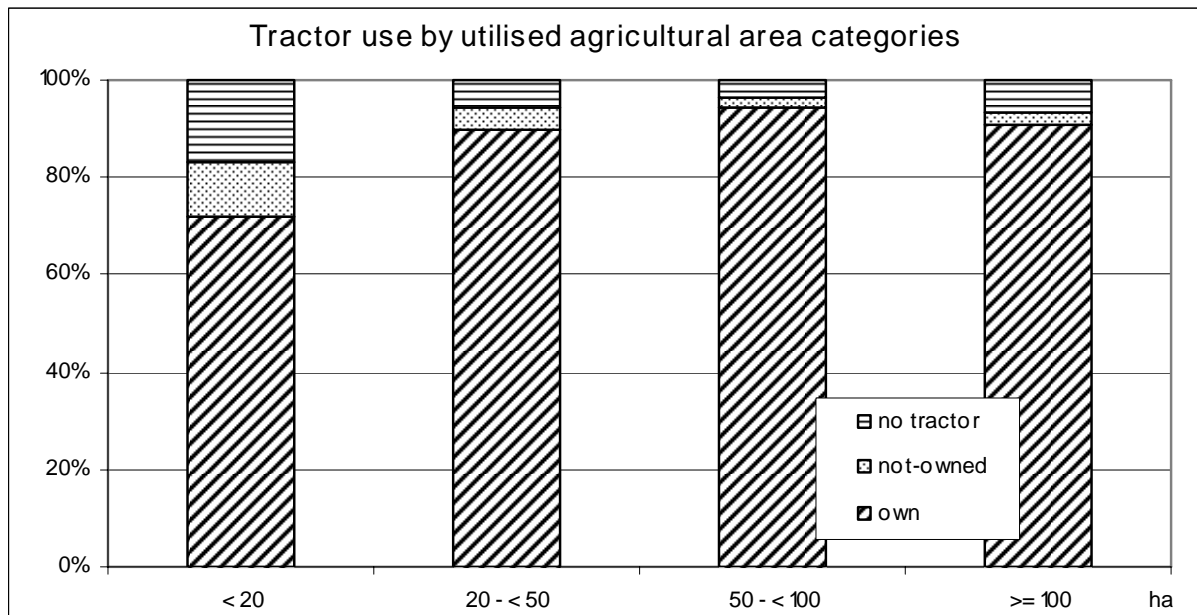
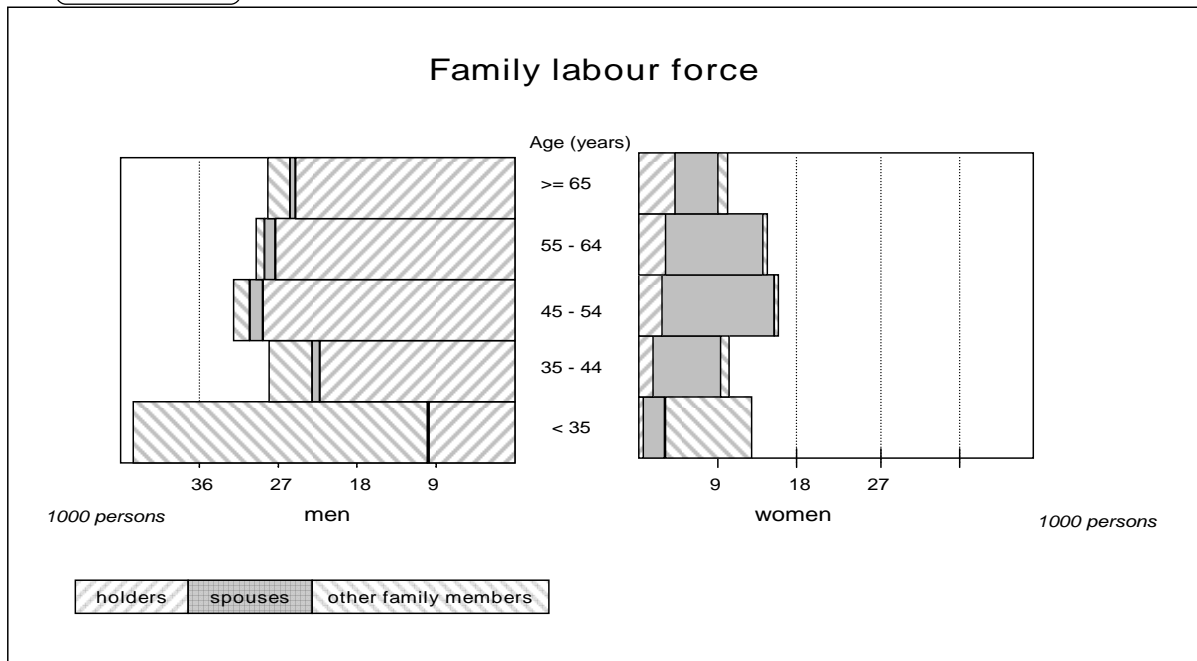
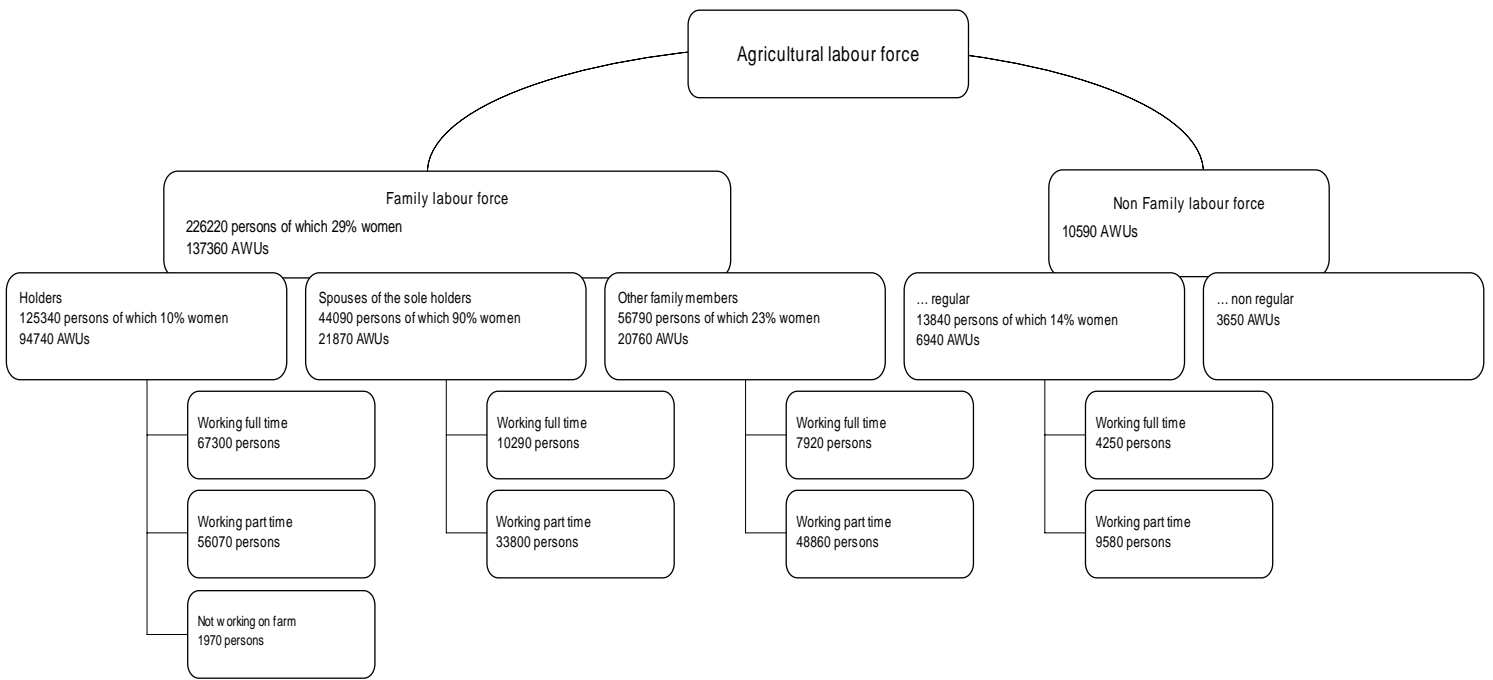


\* A similar publication was issued in December 2004 presenting the results of the FSS 2003 in Ireland, however due to methodological changes the results of the FSS 2003 are not comparable with those ones of the recent publication on FSS 2005.

\*\* 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.



# Ireland 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 <- < 50	50 - < 100	100 =<
Total labour force									
1000 annual work units	47.0	62.7	29.8	8.4	148.0	4.2	84.0	34.4	25.4
Family labour force									
1000 persons	83.1	94.8	39.7	8.7	226.2	5.4	141.1	49.3	30.5
1000 annual work units	44.8	59.7	26.7	6.2	137.4	2.9	80.7	32.4	21.3
Non-family labour regularly employed									
1000 persons	3.2	4.5	3.9	2.3	13.8	1.4	5.1	2.7	4.7
1000 annual work units	1.4	1.7	2.1	1.7	6.9	1.0	1.9	1.0	3.0
Non regular non family labour force									
1000 annual work units	0.8	1.4	1.1	0.5	3.7	0.3	1.4	0.9	1.0
Holding managers (1000)	51.2	50.8	19.6	4.0	125.5	3.3	83.3	24.8	14.2
- women (%)	13.4	10.7	7.3	6.3	11.1	7.9	12.9	8.4	5.6
- part-time - under 50 % (%)	31.9	15.0	9.2	7.5	20.8	35.7	25.8	10.0	6.3
- 50 % and over(%)	30.2	22.2	11.0	9.9	23.3	17.9	29.0	14.1	7.2
- with a basic agricult. training only (%)	11.4	20.8	23.9	20.4	17.5	18.5	14.4	24.0	24.0
- with a full agricultural training (%)	7.1	15.5	26.7	30.3	14.3	25.1	8.8	21.0	32.4
Sole/main holders (1000)	51.1	50.8	19.5	4.0	125.3	3.3	83.2	24.8	14.1
- women (%)	12.0	9.1	5.7	4.6	9.6	7.4	11.5	6.7	3.9
- distribution by age (%)									
- under 35 years	6.5	8.8	11.3	9.0	8.3	12.0	7.0	10.1	11.9
- from 35 to 44 years	15.9	20.1	23.9	23.1	19.1	17.7	16.5	23.1	27.4
- from 45 to 54 years	25.3	24.9	25.2	24.3	25.1	26.6	24.9	25.1	26.0
- from 55 to 64 years	24.9	24.2	22.6	25.5	24.3	27.9	24.7	24.1	21.4
- 65 years and over	27.4	22.0	16.9	18.2	23.3	15.8	27.0	17.6	13.3
- part-time - under 50 % (%)	32.0	15.0	9.2	7.6	20.8	35.9	25.9	10.0	6.4
- 50 % and over(%)	30.2	22.3	11.1	10.0	23.4	18.0	29.1	14.1	7.2
- with another gainful activity <sup>1</sup> (%)	54.4	37.8	21.7	20.2	41.5	50.3	49.7	28.2	14.4
- as main occupation	40.1	20.6	7.8	5.3	26.1	32.0	34.1	11.0	3.7
- as a subsidiary occupation	14.3	17.1	13.9	15.0	15.4	18.3	15.5	17.2	10.8
Spouse of sole holder working on the holding (1000)	14.9	19.2	8.2	1.8	44.1	0.8	26.4	10.4	6.4
- women (%)	86.7	90.1	95.5	97.1	90.2	93.9	87.2	93.5	96.9
- distribution by age (%)									
- under 35 years	4.6	6.5	7.2	7.0	6.0	7.7	5.2	6.4	8.3
- from 35 to 54 years	51.6	52.7	56.3	55.3	53.1	48.6	51.3	54.6	58.8
- 55 years and over	43.8	40.8	36.5	37.7	40.9	43.6	43.5	39.1	32.9
- part-time - under 50 % (%)	60.5	50.5	48.2	39.7	53.1	62.9	56.6	48.9	43.7
- 50 % and over(%)	21.3	24.6	24.6	27.9	23.6	18.0	22.8	25.0	25.7
- with another gainful activity (%)	71.5	65.4	61.0	55.2	66.2	67.5	69.5	63.1	57.7
Other members of the holder's family working on the holding (1000)	17.1	24.8	12.0	2.9	56.8	1.3	31.4	14.1	10.0
- women (%)	22.6	22.9	23.7	21.6	22.9	19.0	22.7	22.9	24.0
- part-time - under 50 % (%)	76.2	70.5	62.5	49.5	69.4	64.7	74.5	68.1	56.1
- 50 % and over(%)	16.1	17.6	15.7	15.6	16.6	8.1	16.6	17.5	16.6
- with another gainful activity (%)	88.5	86.4	76.5	61.6	83.7	72.4	88.5	83.7	69.7

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

\* LU = Livestock Unit

<sup>1</sup> 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 < - < 50	50 - < 100	100 = <
Holdings									
- total number (1000)	51.2	50.8	19.6	4.0	125.5	3.3	83.3	24.8	14.2
- by legal personality of the holder (%)									
- sole holder	99.9	99.9	99.8	98.9	99.9	99.5	99.9	99.9	99.5
- legal person	0.1	0.1	0.2	1.1	0.1	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.5
- 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	52.4	27.7	13.5	10.1	35.0	47.3	44.7	16.2	7.9
- from 1 to less than 2 AWU	40.3	56.4	59.5	41.0	49.8	34.4	45.8	62.9	54.1
- from 2 to less than 3 AWU	6.5	13.7	20.8	29.7	12.4	8.9	8.4	17.9	26.8
- 3 AWU and over	0.9	2.2	6.2	19.2	2.8	9.4	1.1	3.0	11.2
- by economic size (%)									
- from 1 to less than 8 ESU	83.0	27.2	4.1	2.9	45.6	32.8	67.3	0.3	0.1
- from 8 to less than 16 ESU	12.4	35.6	11.8	6.3	21.5	20.6	24.9	22.2	0.6
- from 16 to less than 40 ESU	3.9	27.5	40.4	18.8	19.6	23.3	7.2	59.1	22.6
- from 40 to less than 100 ESU	0.4	9.4	40.5	46.7	11.8	14.4	0.5	18.2	66.1
- 100 ESU and over	0.2	0.3	3.3	25.3	1.5	9.0	0.1	0.2	10.6
- by farm type (%)									
- specialist cattle – rearing and fattening	59.2	49.6	31.8	22.1	49.9	0.0	58.6	42.6	23.0
- sheep, goats and other grazing livestock	29.0	21.9	17.9	25.7	24.3	0.0	29.5	17.6	11.2
- specialist dairy farming	5.3	21.1	35.5	22.9	17.0	0.0	6.1	34.0	55.1
- specialist cereals, oil seed and protein crops	1.7	1.7	3.5	10.1	2.3	61.2	1.0	0.2	0.1
- field crops – grazing livestock combined	0.9	2.2	4.7	7.7	2.2	0.0	2.1	3.0	2.0
- other types of farming	3.8	3.4	6.5	11.3	4.3	38.8	2.7	2.7	8.6
- by farming methods (%)									
- organic farming	0.3	0.6	0.5	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.1
- irrigating	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
- with fixed irrigation equipment	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
- with crops under glass	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3	2.9	0.3	0.1	0.1
- benefiting of direct investment aids	33.4	47.3	42.9	31.0	40.4	30.5	40.0	46.8	34.1
- using a tractor (%)									
- with their own tractor	71.8	89.8	94.4	90.8	83.2	72.8	78.0	94.8	96.2
- using a combine harvester (%)									
- with another gainful activity than agricultural production (%)									
- tourism	0.6	1.1	1.0	2.0	0.9	1.0	0.8	1.1	1.2
- handicraft	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.0
- processing of farm products	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.7	0.2	0.5	0.1	0.2	0.2
- wood processing	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
- aquaculture	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1
- renewable energy production	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.7	0.1	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.1
- contractual work	0.7	1.5	2.9	4.6	1.5	8.0	0.9	2.1	2.1
- other gainful activities n.a.e.	1.5	2.1	2.3	3.4	2.0	4.4	1.7	2.2	2.3

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	0 < - < 50	50 - < 100	100 =<
Area (1000 ha)									
Total area of agricultural holdings	652.5	1762.1	1375.7	645.6	4435.7	159.3	1912.4	1213.8	1150.2
Other area	67.6	101.8	67.5	37.7	274.6	9.7	137.7	65.9	61.3
Wooded area	27.4	42.2	31.9	19.7	121.2	4.3	60.1	26.9	30.0
Agricultural area	584.9	1660.2	1308.1	607.9	4161.1	149.6	1774.7	1147.9	1089.0
Arable land	129.2	397.5	391.1	224.7	1142.4	136.5	403.7	285.6	316.6
Cereals	12.7	56.5	103.4	108.8	281.5	99.9	81.1	47.4	53.1
<i>Common wheat and spelt</i>	2.0	10.1	28.7	52.2	93.1	42.0	23.9	10.9	16.3
<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>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Barley</i>	9.8	43.4	68.0	48.5	169.6	51.7	52.6	33.1	32.2
<i>Oats</i>	0.8	2.6	5.5	6.6	15.4	5.6	4.0	2.8	3.0
<i>Grain maize</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Dried pulses	0.1	0.3	1.3	1.9	3.7	1.6	1.0	0.4	0.7
Root crops	2.3	10.9	18.7	16.4	48.4	16.2	13.7	9.2	9.3
<i>Potatoes</i>	0.6	1.7	2.4	5.7	10.4	5.5	2.8	1.0	1.1
<i>Sugar beet</i>	1.3	7.2	13.6	8.9	31.0	9.9	9.3	6.5	5.3
<i>Fodder root</i>	0.4	2.0	2.7	1.8	6.9	0.7	1.6	1.8	2.9
Industrial crops	0.1	0.5	0.9	2.0	3.5	1.6	1.2	0.4	0.3
<i>Tobacco</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Hops</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	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>	0.1	0.5	0.9	2.0	3.5	1.6	1.2	0.4	0.3
<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	0.5	1.2	1.1	1.4	4.2	2.8	1.1	0.1	0.1
<i>outside</i>	0.5	1.2	1.0	1.4	4.1	2.8	1.1	0.1	0.1
<i>under glass</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Flower and ornamental plants	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.0	1.2	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.1
<i>outside</i>	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.0	1.2	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.1
<i>under glass</i>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Forage plants	111.3	323.5	259.1	86.3	780.1	5.8	298.1	225.4	250.7
Fallow land	0.8	2.8	5.6	6.7	15.9	7.1	5.1	1.7	2.0
Kitchen garden	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
Permanent pasture and meadows	455.0	1261.8	916.7	383.1	3016.6	12.1	1370.3	862.1	772.1
Permanent crops	0.5	0.9	0.3	0.1	1.8	0.9	0.6	0.2	0.2
Fruit and berry plantation	0.4	0.7	0.3	0.1	1.4	0.6	0.5	0.2	0.2
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	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Ratios									
Agricultural area per holding (ha)	11.4	32.7	66.9	151.9	33.2	45.7	21.3	46.2	77.0
Agricultural area... (%)									
... own farmed	90.8	84.8	77.7	72.0	81.6	61.2	87.5	81.3	74.9
... in less favoured or mountain area	83.9	75.5	59.4	53.1	68.4	15.3	82.4	69.8	51.3
... organic farmed	0.3	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.7	0.3	0.2
... irrigated	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

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 < - < 50	50 - < 100	100 =<
Total livestock (1000 LU)	986.3	2462.6	2043.7	711.2	6203.8	1816.9	1746.6	2640.3
of which grazing (%)	86.7	94.2	92.2	84.7	91.3	99.8	99.6	79.8
Grazing livestock (1000 heads)								
Equidae	25.1	28.0	18.1	7.7	78.9	45.2	18.1	15.7
Bovine animals	994.2	2814.3	2334.4	706.7	6849.6	2101.4	2120.1	2628.0
Under 1 year	248.4	701.9	585.4	161.5	1697.3	538.3	523.7	635.3
From 1 to less than 2 years	258.0	685.0	621.2	203.8	1768.1	520.9	529.4	717.8
Dairy cows	53.6	441.8	466.0	120.6	1082.0	109.5	365.7	606.7
Other cows	246.3	528.7	299.2	86.5	1160.6	568.8	356.2	235.6
Other bovine animals 2 years and older	187.9	456.8	362.6	134.4	1141.7	363.9	345.1	432.7
Sheep	1320.6	2521.5	1630.7	745.3	6218.1	2979.7	1771.3	1467.1
Goats	7.8	2.6	0.6	0.3	11.2	9.5	1.2	0.5
Granivores								
Pigs (1000 heads)	262.9	391.0	577.4	429.0	1660.3	2.8	3.5	1653.9
Piglets < 20 kg	75.9	118.7	180.3	113.3	488.2	1.0	1.0	486.2
Breeding sows	33.0	37.2	56.8	42.3	169.4	0.5	0.5	168.5
Other pigs	154.0	235.1	340.3	273.3	1002.7	1.3	2.0	999.3
Poultry (million heads)	4.7	5.0	2.3	0.2	12.3	0.2	0.5	11.6
Broilers	2.6	3.7	1.6	0.2	8.1	0.1	0.3	7.7
Laying hens	1.0	0.9	0.5	0.0	2.4	0.1	0.2	2.1
Other poultry	1.1	0.4	0.2	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.0	1.7
Rabbits, breeding females (1000 heads)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Beehives (1000)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Average size of herds*								
Equidae (head/holding)	4.2	4.7	5.8	10.6	5.0	4.4	5.5	7.2
Cattle (head/holding)	24.1	61.4	130.3	216.6	63.3	30.0	87.6	188.8
Dairy cows (head/holding)	16.4	38.2	60.1	100.1	45.4	18.3	40.2	69.5
Other cows (head/holding)	9.0	16.6	25.1	39.5	15.8	11.6	22.5	28.0
Sheep (head/holding)	79.6	153.4	243.5	443.9	150.2	101.2	219.6	377.0
Goats (head/holding)	9.4	4.9	2.4	4.1	6.8	8.0	4.2	2.8
Pigs (head/holding)	1051.7	1290.4	2624.4	8411.3	2014.9	9.5	44.1	3691.8
Breeding sows (head/holding)	237.6	159.9	350.5	962.2	293.1	3.1	7.3	469.2
Other pigs > 20 kg (head/holding)	802.2	971.3	1651.9	5577.6	1457.4	6.7	36.2	2297.3
Rabbits, breeding females (head/holding)	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Laying hens (1000/holding)	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.1	2.2
Broilers (1000/holding)	5.7	8.5	9.2	6.8	7.4	0.1	1.6	26.2
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)	249.8	9.8	240.1	3.9	96.1
Regular labour force	(1000 AWU)	148.7	4.4	144.3	2.9	97.1
Holders	(1000 persons)	132.5	7.1	125.3	5.4	94.6
... at least 65 years old		31.6	2.4	29.2	7.7	92.3
... having another gainful activity		50.9	4.2	46.7	8.3	91.7
Number of holdings	(1000)	132.7	7.2	125.5	5.4	94.6
... producing mainly for own consumption		0.0	0.0	0.0	:	:
... producing mainly for direct sales		0.0	0.0	0.0	:	:
... using a tractor		117.2	4.2	113.1	3.6	96.4
Standard Gross Margin (SGM)	(1000 ESU)	2412.2	3.8	2408.4	0.2	99.8
Agricultural area	(1000 ha)	4219.4	58.3	4161.1	1.4	98.6
... owned farmed		3447.9	54.2	3393.8	1.6	98.4
Livestock	(1000 LU)	6220.4	16.6	6203.8	0.3	99.7

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

## ► METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

The survey on the structure of agricultural holdings in Ireland was carried out on a sample base using the reference date of 1<sup>st</sup> June 2005. The previous full-scope census was executed in 2000. The FSS 2005 was conducted on a voluntary basis.

The target population was all the active farms in Ireland regardless of any thresholds, due to the fact that certain characteristics (e.g. goats, sheep) could be underestimated otherwise. However returned questionnaires of farm having less than 1 ha UAA or 1 LU or not having specialised activity were excluded later from the estimations.

The basis for sampling was the periodically updated farm register (based on the census 2000 and administrative information). The sample of 85,000 units was composed of 3 sub-samples: active farms surveyed in June 2004, active farms surveyed in FSS 2003, as well as other farms. For the latter sub-sample the target population was stratified into 10 strata. Units within the strata of specialised pig or poultry holdings not chosen from the 2003-2004 populations – due to their significance – were included exhaustively, as well as holdings with 100 ESU or more and new holdings. From the remaining units stratified by UAA the sampling rate was determined by using Neymann-allocation with 100% selection of holdings of at least 100 ha. During the selection procedure, the units with the longest time interval since last being surveyed were picked first.

A population frame, stratified by agricultural area used, was drawn up using the farm register adjusted for changes in size classes using the survey returns. Specialist strata e.g. for larger pig and poultry units were also used. Initial grossing factors for each stratum were determined using the ratio of the number of returned questionnaires in the stratum to the total number of holdings in the stratum. A further process of post-stratification adjustment was then conducted. This process divided certain strata into sub-strata based on the number of livestock in various categories or on the area of cereals. This process ensured that account was taken of separately calculated matched sample results.

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 Ireland 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

Crops and Livestock Survey, June 2005 – Provisional Estimates, CSO, October 2005.

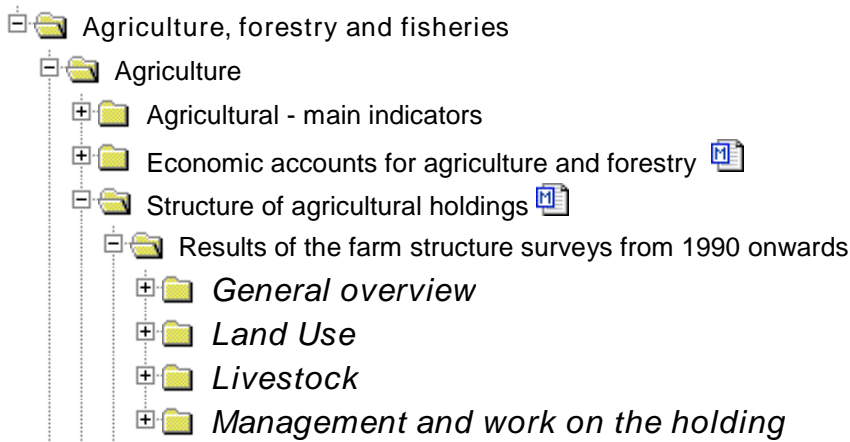
A detailed publication is envisaged in early 2007.

Website of the Central Statistics Office Ireland: [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)

*National Methodological Report – FSS 2005 (available on request)*

## Further information:

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



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