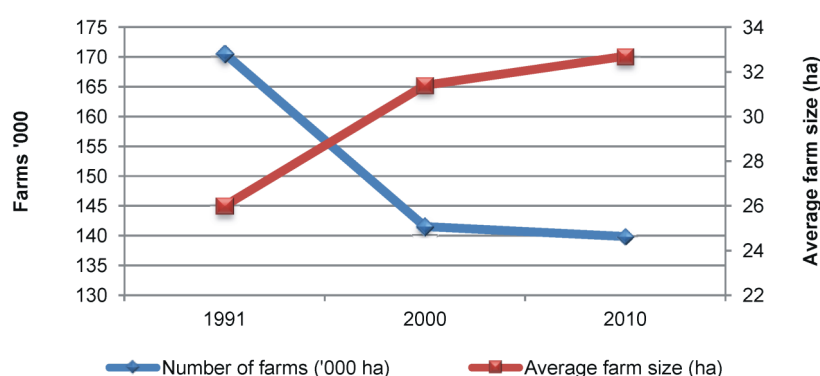


Commentary on Results

Number of farms

In 2010, there were 139,860 farms in Ireland. This compares to a total of 141,527 farms in 2000. Therefore, the total number of farms decreased by less than 2,000 or just 1.2% in the ten years between 2000 and 2010. Just under 74,000 farms (53%) were located in the Border Midland and Western (BMW) region and almost 66,000 farms (47%) in the Southern and Eastern (SE) region in 2010. See Table 1.

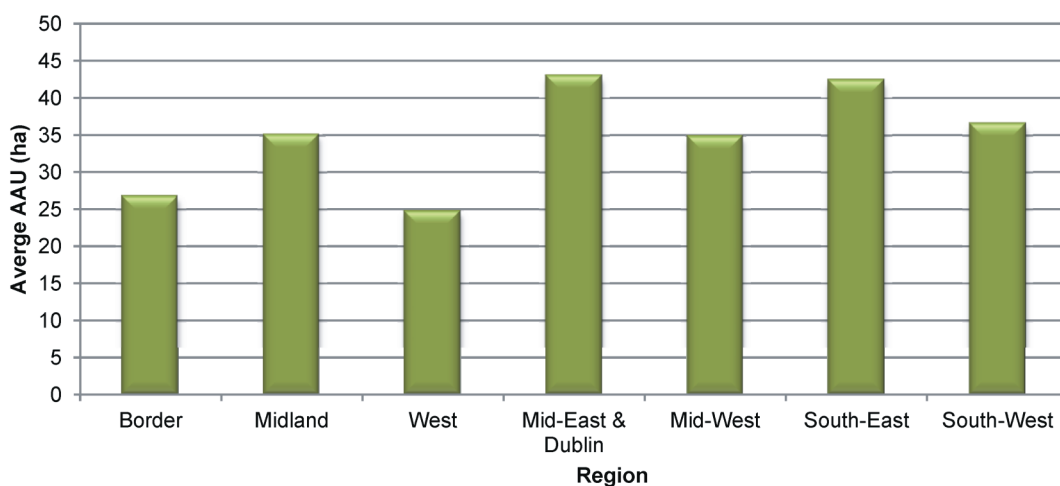
Figure 1.1 Farm numbers and average farm size (1991 - 2010)



Farm Size

The average farm size in Ireland in 2010 was 32.7 hectares, a slight increase on 2000 when the average farm size was 31.4 hectares. Over 42% of farms (59,055) held less than 20 hectares while just over 3% of farms (4,695) held 100 hectares or more. Farms were smaller in the BMW region where the average farm size was 27.3 hectares, while in the SE region the average farm size was 38.6 hectares. More than 60% of smaller farms (under 20 hectares) were located in the BMW, while almost two thirds (65.3%) of the larger farms (more than 50 hectares) were located in the SE region. At an average of 43 hectares, the Mid-East region had the largest average farm size of all the other regions. See Table 1.

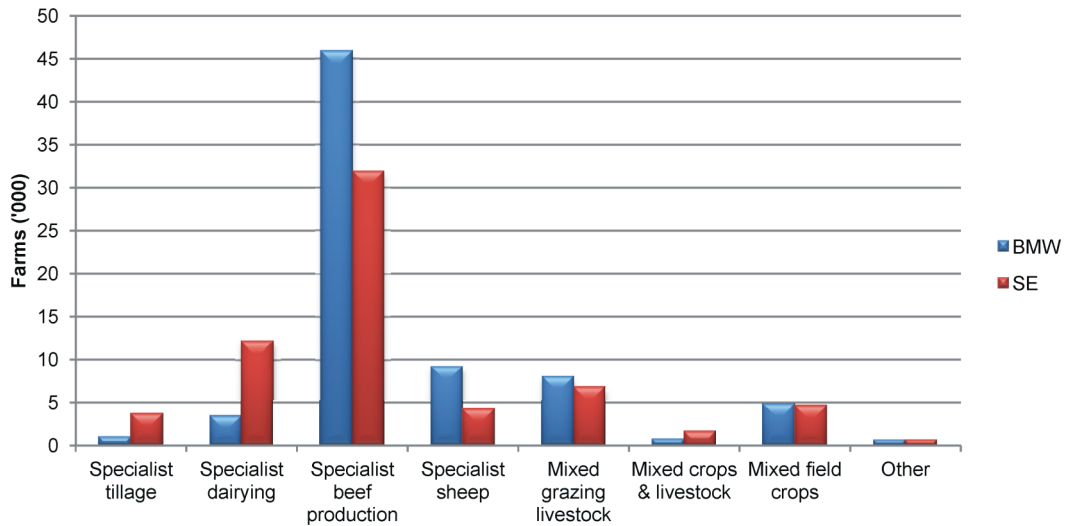
Figure 1.2 Average farm size by region, 2010



Farm Type

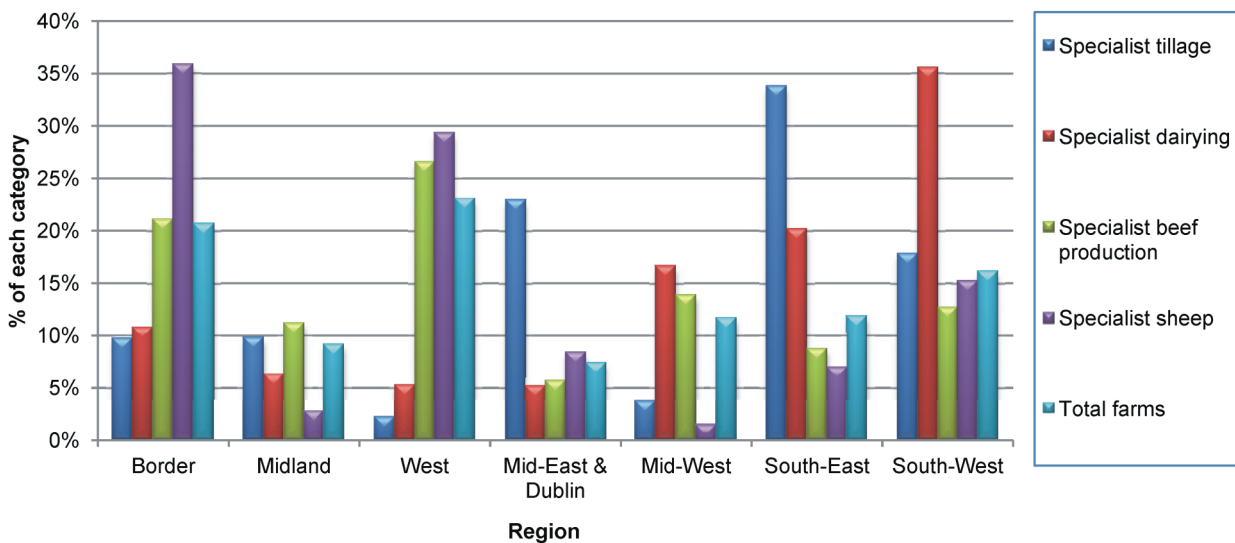
At national level, specialist beef production continues to be the dominant type of farming in Ireland with over 55% of farms classified as such. In excess of 11% of farms were classified as specialist dairying and a further 11% were classified as mixed grazing and livestock. Almost 13,600 farms were identified as specialist sheep farms.

Figure 1.3 Distribution of farm types by region, 2010



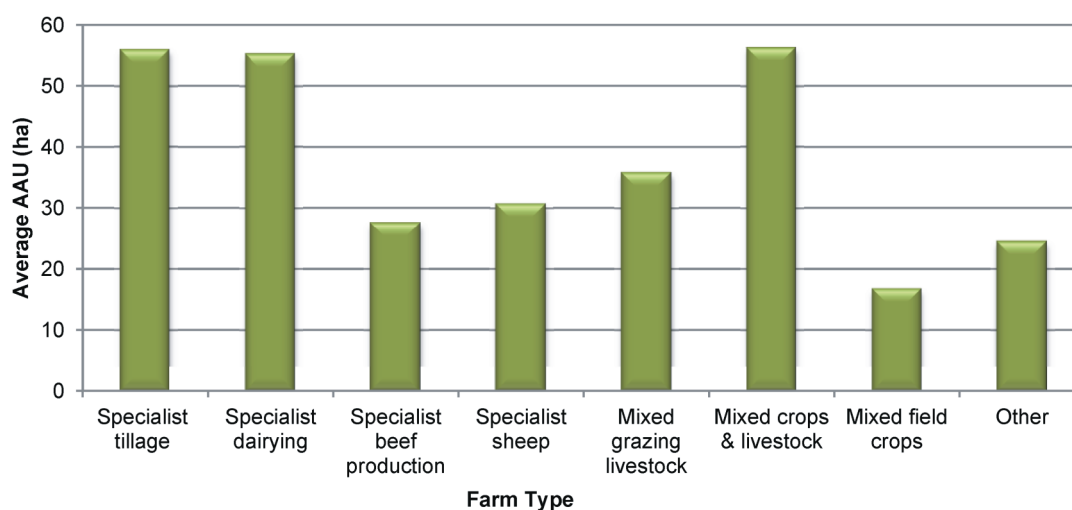
When compared to the SE region, the BMW region had a higher proportion of certain farm types. These were specialist sheep (68% of all such farms were in the BMW region) and specialist beef production (59%). The SE region tended to dominate in other types of farming including specialist tillage (78% of all such farms were in the SE region) and specialist dairying (78%).

Figure 1.4 Distribution of specialist farm types by region, 2010



On a national level, the larger farms were found to be those classified as mixed crops and livestock (56.3 hectares), specialist tillage (56.0 hectares) and specialist dairying (55.3 hectares). The smallest farms were those growing mixed field crops (16.9 hectares). See Tables 2,4, 6.

Figure 1.5 Average farm size by farm type, 2010



Economic Size (Standard Output¹)

The average Standard Output (SO) in 2010 for all farms was €30,726, ranging from €20,227 in the BMW region to more than twice that amount in the SE region (€42,482). The highest average SO was in Dublin at €100,836 but this figure is influenced by the presence of larger farms with activity in sectors with higher value output.

Almost a quarter of farms in Ireland (24.8%) had an SO of less than €4,000. Over 61% of all farms had an SO of less than €15,000 per annum, while less than one in ten farms (7.2%) had output of more than €100,000. There was a direct correlation between farm size and standard output. The larger the size of the farm the greater the standard output. Farms with standard output of less than €4,000 had an average of 11.2 hectares, just over one third of the average farm size at national level. Farms with a standard output of more than €100,000 had an average of 85.9 hectares, close to three times the national average farm size. Eight out of every ten farms in this category (€100,000+) had 50 hectares or more while almost a quarter of such farms held 100 hectares or more.

Average standard output by type of farming was greatest in the Other² farm type category (€310,044) followed by specialist dairying (€111,147) and specialist tillage (€89,497). Standard Output was lowest in farms classified as mixed field crops (€5,174), specialised sheep farms (€11,726) and farms engaged in specialised beef production (€13,013). Almost 86% of specialist dairying farms had a standard output of €50,000 or more, while just under half (47%) had an output of €100,000 or more. See Tables 3 and 5.

¹ Standard Output (SO) is the average monetary value of the agricultural output at farm-gate prices. See background notes in appendix 1 for further information.

² Farms specialising in horticulture or fruit, pig or poultry production as well as mixed crops or mixed livestock farms.

Figure 1.6a Average economic size by farm type, 2010

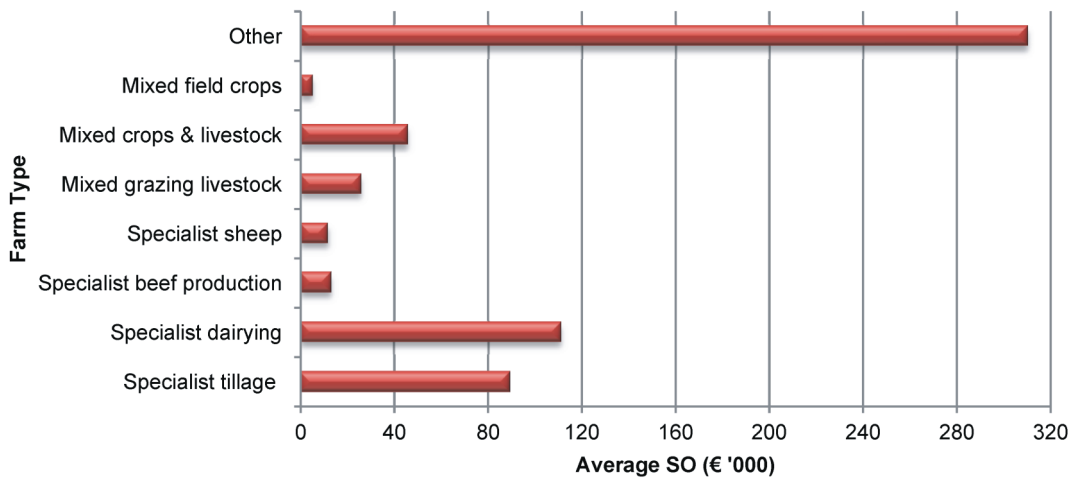
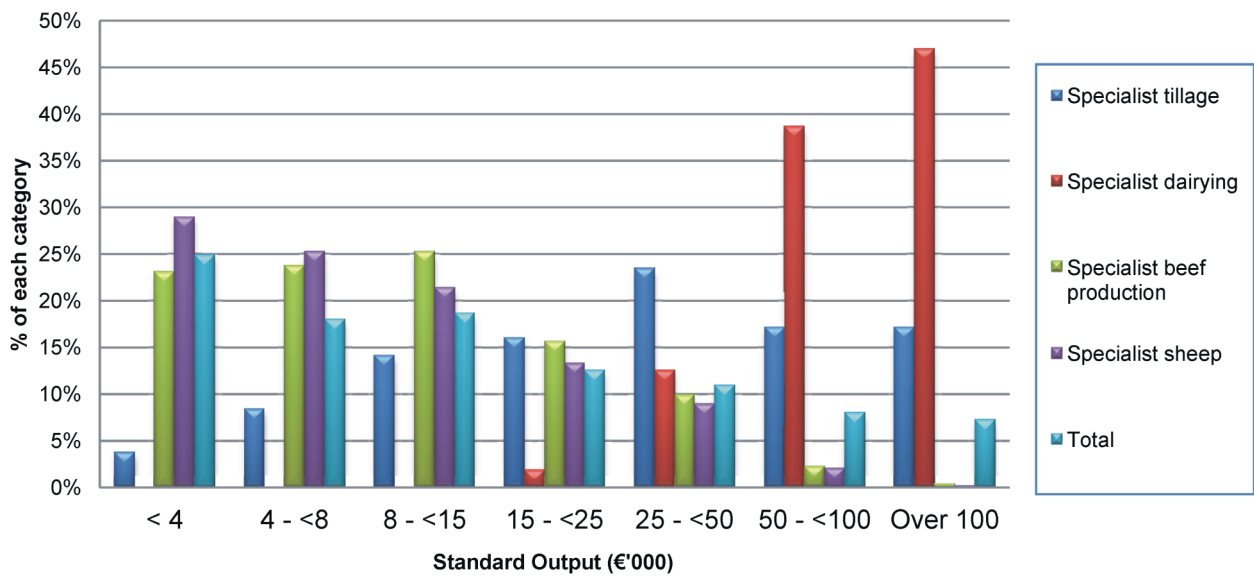


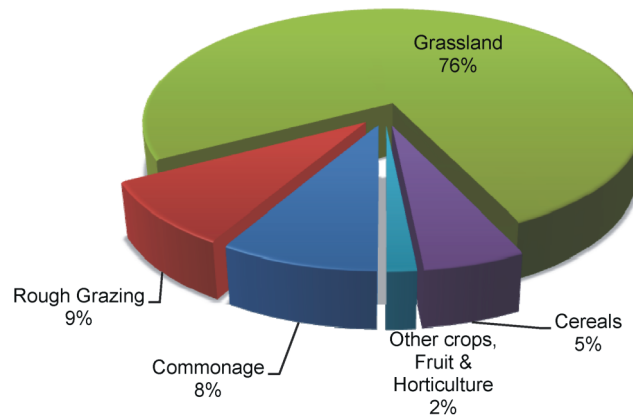
Figure 1.6b Distribution of specialist farm types by economic size(SO), 2010



Land Utilisation

In 2010, the Agricultural Area Used (AAU) in Ireland, excluding Commonage, amounted to just under 4.6 million hectares, 44% of which was located in BMW. Almost 3.8 million hectares of this was grassland. A further 437,000 hectares was rough grazing, while 274,000 hectares was devoted to cereals and the remainder (amounting to just over 80,000 hectares) was used for other crops, fruit and horticulture.

Figure 1.7 Utilisation of land, 2010

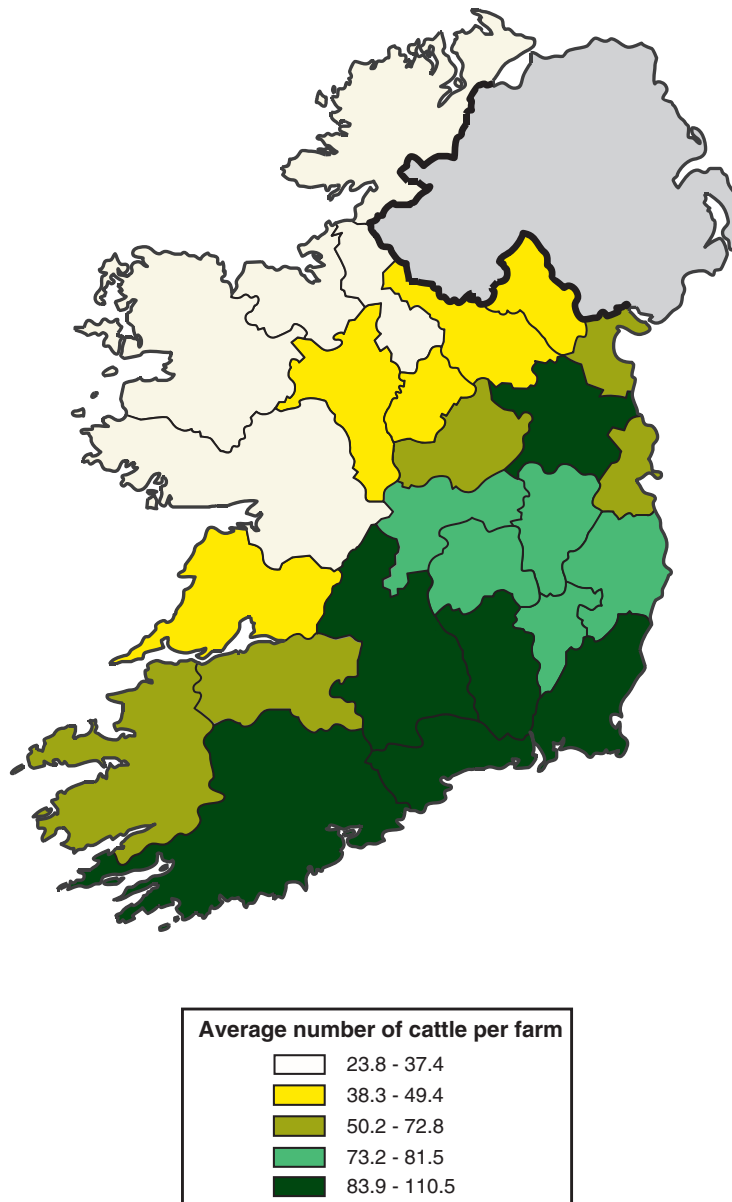


In addition, there were 422,415 hectares of commonage in Ireland, giving a total AAU of just under 5 million hectares. Almost two thirds of commonage was located in the BMW region and represented about one eighth of the total agricultural area used in that region. In the SE region, commonage represented approximately 5% of the total area used. See *Table 7A*.

Cattle

There were 6.6 million cattle in Ireland in 2010 distributed across 111,000 farms, with an average herd size of 60 cattle per farm. In the BMW region, 58,600 farms had a total of nearly 2.6 million cattle (an average of 44 cattle per farm); while in the SE region, a total of 52,400 farms had almost 4.1 million cattle (77 per farm). County Cork had the greatest proportion of cattle with 991,000 or 15% of the national total. Cattle were mostly held on farms classified as specialist beef production (3.4 million) and specialist dairying (2.2 million). One half of the total number of cattle in Ireland were located on farms of at least 50 hectares and more. These larger farms (22,433) collectively held 3.3 million cattle, with an average herd size of 147 cattle. See Tables 8A, 18, 19 and 20.

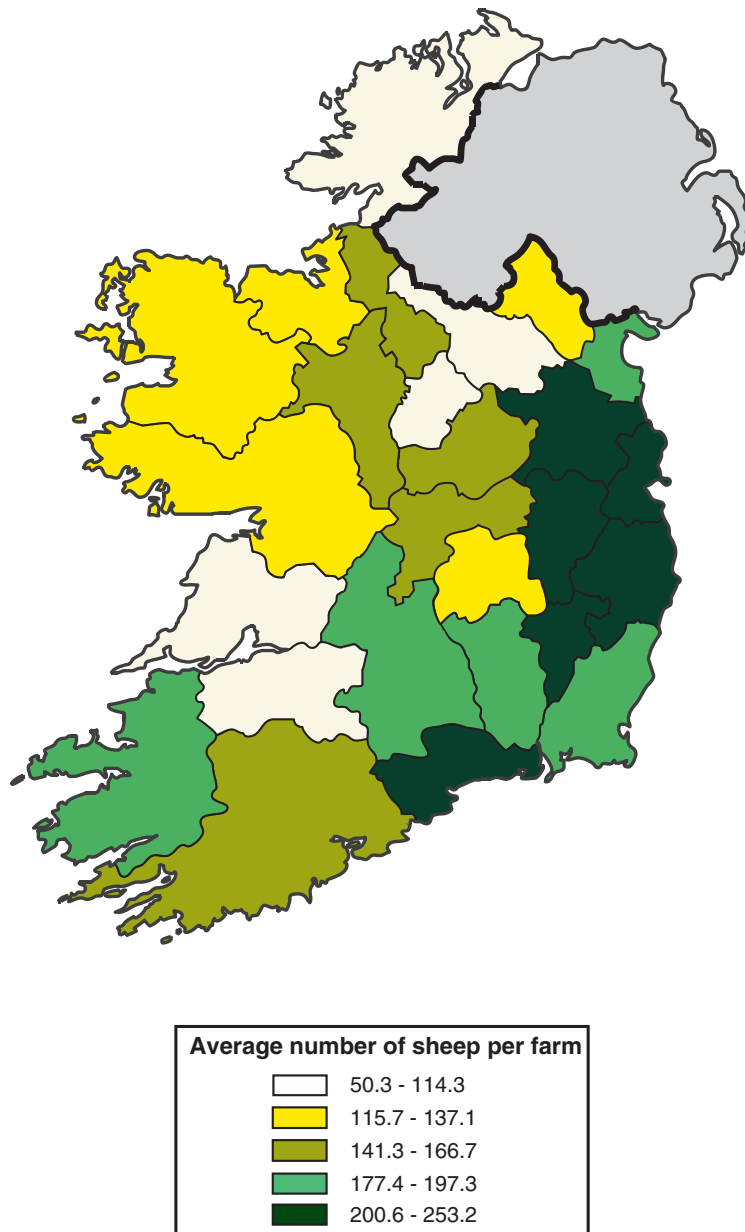
Figure 1.8 Average number of cattle per farm in each county, 2010



Sheep

There was a total of 4,745,400 sheep in Ireland in 2010 held on 32,100 farms with an average flock size of 148 sheep per farm. Almost two thirds of sheep farms were located in the BMW region. More than a quarter (26.6%) of the national flock was located in the Western region (Galway/Mayo/Roscommon). The average flock size in the SE region (187) was almost 50% greater than the average flock in the BMW region (126). See *Tables 8B and 21*.

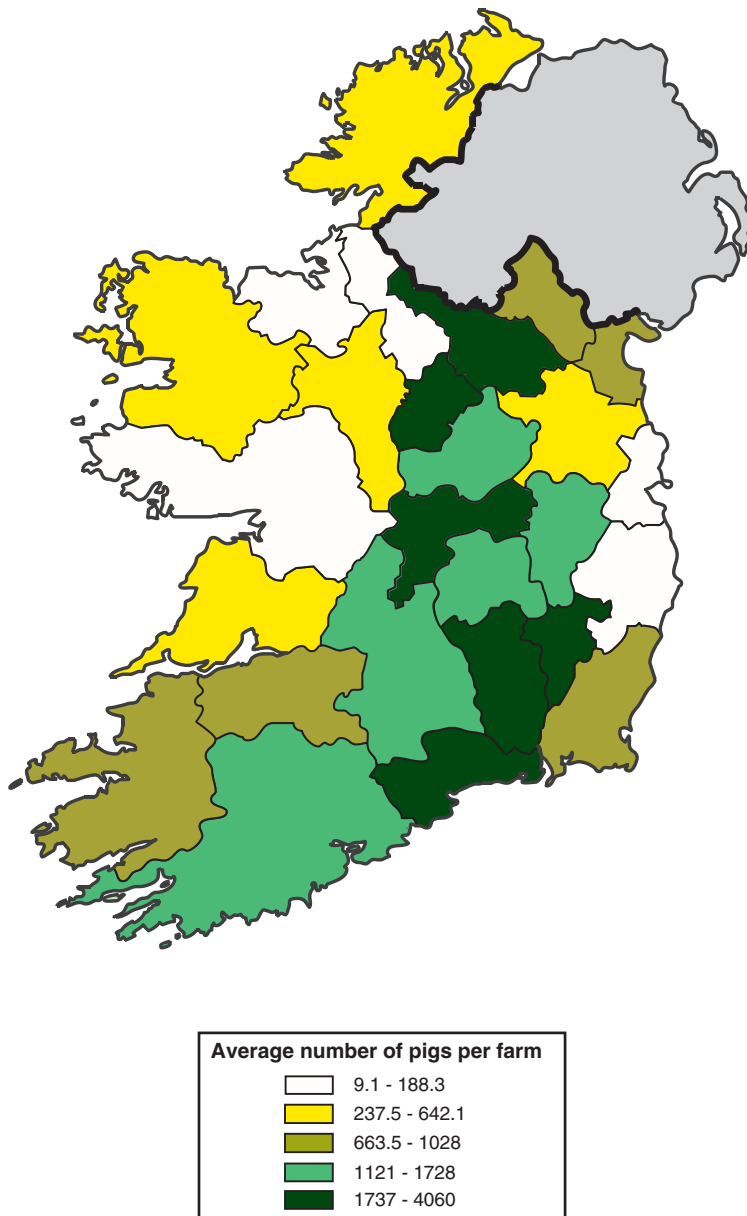
Figure 1.9 Average number of sheep per farm in each county, 2010



Pigs

In 2010, there were more than 1.5 million pigs held on 1,209 farms, with an average of 1,254 pigs per farm. More than one fifth of pigs were in Cavan (332,880 pigs) where the average number of pigs per farm was 4,059. Over 17% of all pigs were held on farms in Cork. More than a third (36%) of pig production is carried out on farms of less than 5 hectares. Pig farming continues to be an intensive activity carried out by a small number of specialised producers. In 2010, just 486 farms held more than 99% of the total number of pigs. See *Tables 8C and 22*.

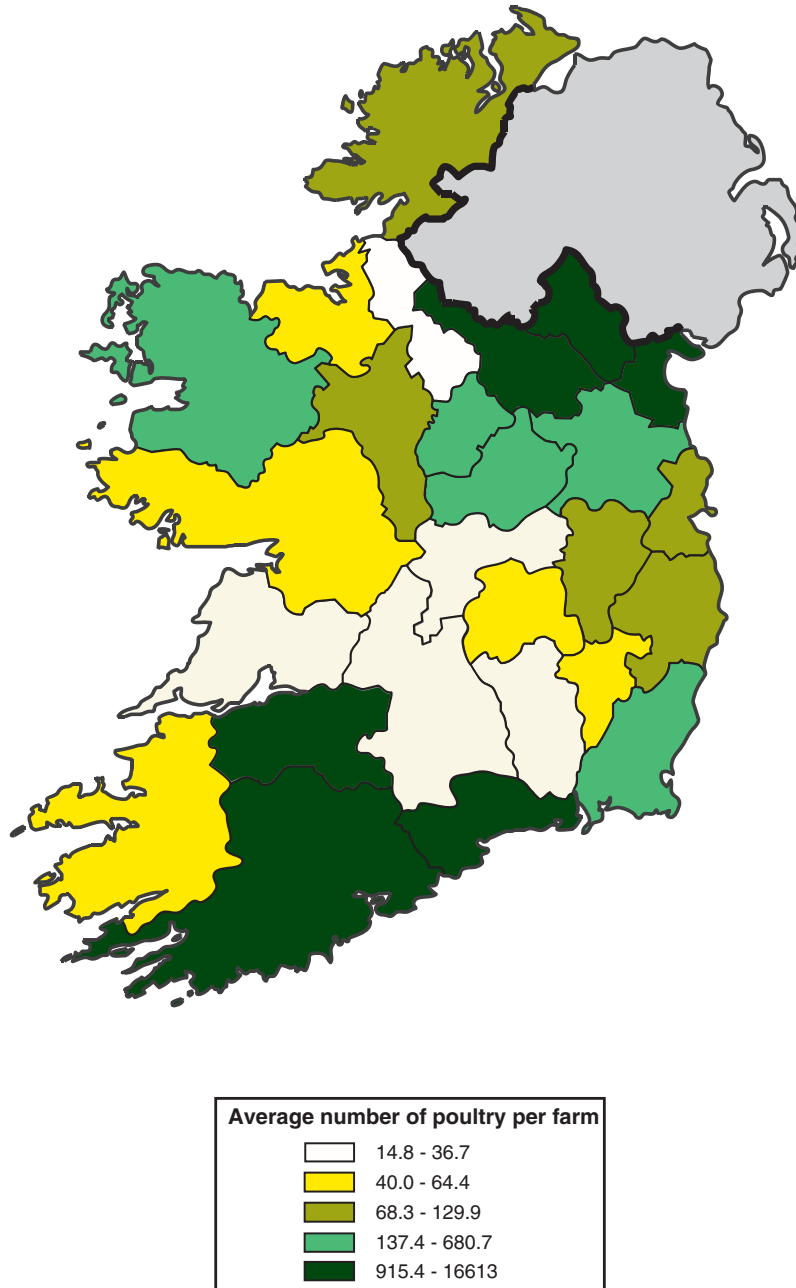
Figure 1.10 Average number of pigs per farm in each county, 2010



Poultry

There were close to 11 million poultry in Ireland in 2010, of which 7.8 million were table birds. More than half of all poultry was produced in Monaghan, where there were in excess of 5.8 million birds. While the national average flock size was 1,282, in Monaghan the average flock size was 16,613. Poultry farming continues to be an intensive activity carried out by a small number of specialised producers. In 2010, fewer than 700 farms held 98% of all poultry in Ireland. See *Tables 8E and 23*.

Figure 1.11 Average number of poultry per farm in each county



Cereals

A total of 273,900 hectares of cereals was grown on 11,374 farms in 2010. Almost 40% of the farms growing cereals were classified as specialist tillage farms (4,375 farms). These farms grew 64% of all cereals in 2010. Cereals were also grown on other farm types including specialist beef (2,165 farms), mixed crops and livestock (2,111 farms), specialist dairying (1,365 farms), although cereal growing was not a dominant activity on these holdings. Of the total land area devoted to cereals, only 20% was located in the BMW region with the remaining 80% grown in the SE region. See *Tables 7C and 11*.

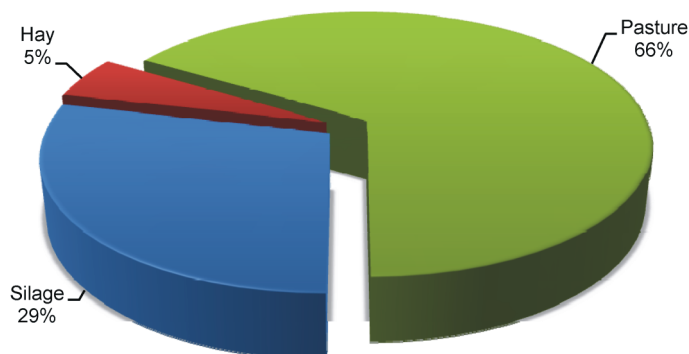
Potatoes

In 2010, there were 1,560 farms growing a total of just under 12,200 hectares of potatoes. The average area under potatoes on these farms was 7.8 hectares. Of the total land area devoted to potatoes, over 75% was located in the SE region. See *Tables 7D and 12*.

Grassland³

The total area under grassland was close to 3.8 million hectares. More than 1 million hectares (1,076,400 hectares) of silage were grown in 2010 while less than 200,000 hectares were under hay. More than 66% of the area under grassland was devoted to pasture. See *Tables 7B, 14, 15 and 16*.

Figure 1.12 Grassland, 2010



Other farm activities

Close to 30% of farms (41,440) rent land in from other landowners. The total land rented in amounted to 784,000 hectares in 2010, an average of 19 hectares. Over 3% of all farms (4,811) rent 100% of the land they farm. See *Tables 24 and 25*.

In 2010, almost one in ten farms was engaged in other gainful non-agricultural activity. Key activities included forestry, agricultural contracting and tourism & recreational activities. See *Table 27*.

³Includes silage, hay and pasture.

Agricultural Labour Input

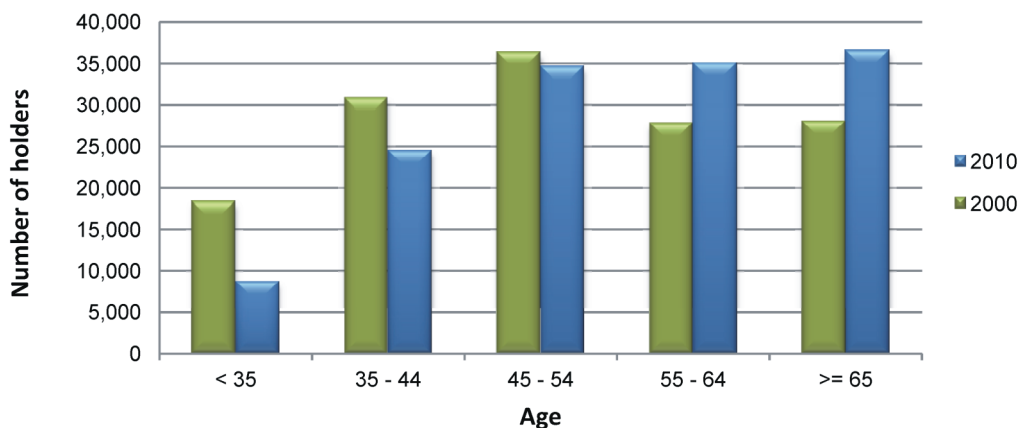
The farm holder

Of the 139,860 farms in Ireland in 2010, 99.8% were classified as family farms. Just over 300 farms were identified as commercial holdings. Almost 88% of family farm holders were male. The number of family farms owned by females in 2010 remained relatively low at 12.4%. However, this has increased by 2,246, or 14.9%, since 2000. See Table 29.

Age profile of farm holder

More than half (51.4%) of all farm holders in 2010 were aged 55 years or older. In 2000, just 39.5% of farm holders were aged 55 or older. In 2010, more than a quarter of all farm holders were aged over 65 years. The greatest concentration of female holders was found to be in the 65 years and over age group with more than one third (36.3%) of all female holders in this age group. The average age of male holders was 54 years while the average age of female holders was 58 years. The comparable average ages in 2000 were 50 and 53 years respectively. The number of holders aged less than 35 years more than halved in the ten year period between 2000 and 2010 from 18,382 to 8,683 holders, representing just 6.2% of all holders in 2010. See Table 30.

Figure 1.13 Age of Holder on family farms



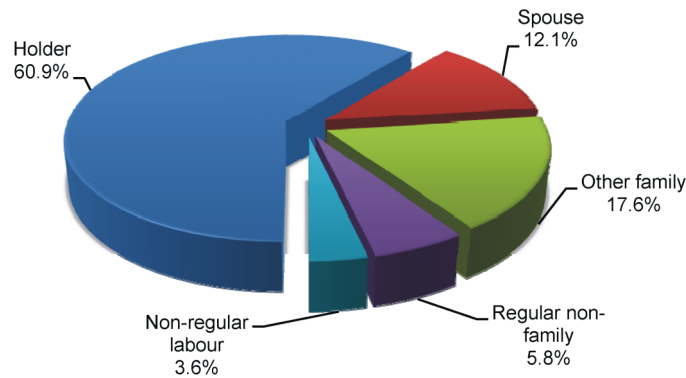
The regular farm workforce

In 2010, there were 272,016 family and regular non-family workers engaged in farming. This compares to a total of 257,948 workers engaged in farming in 2000. This represents a 5.5% increase in persons working on farms despite a 1.3% drop in the total number of farms since 2000. The increase in the number of farm workers is largely due to an increase of 13,122 in the number of other family members working on the farm

The regular workforce in 2010 was made up of 139,556 holders, 45,769 spouses, 70,312 family members and 16,379 regular non-family workers. Collectively, this regular workforce provided a combined total of 162,345 annual work units (AWU⁴) in 2010. The comparable figure for 2000 was 163,898 AWUs. The total time spent on farm work by all those working regularly on the farm fell by 1.9% between 2000 and 2010. These results show that while there were fewer farms (-1.3%) and there were more workers on these farms (+5.5%), they worked less hours (-1.9%). The net result was that average AWU per farm in 2010 was largely unchanged at 1.20, compared to 1.21 in 2000.

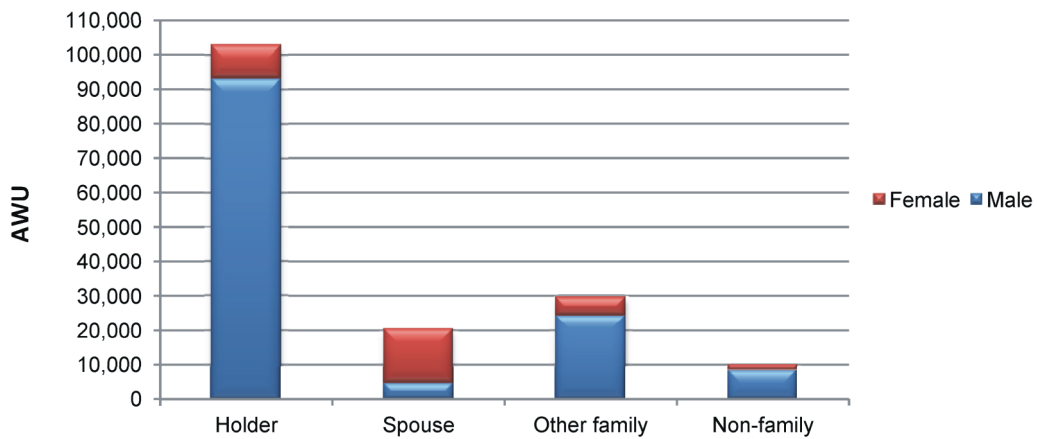
⁴ One annual work unit = 1,800 hours or more of labour input per person per annum

Figure 1.14 Contribution of farm workers to total labour input



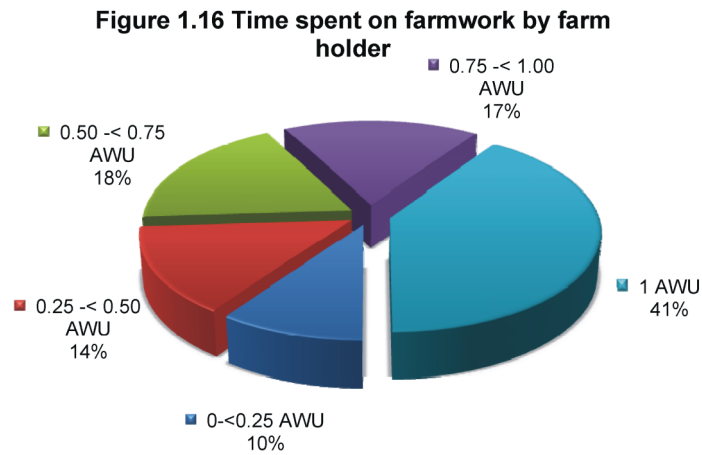
Over a quarter of the regular agricultural workforce in 2010 were women, representing 27.2% of all workers and providing 19.7% of AWUs. Of the 74,092 females engaged in farming, just 23.4% of these were holders of the farm on which they worked. The remainder were classified as spouses, family workers or regular non-family farm workers. See Tables 30, 31 and 39.

Figure 1.15 Provision of AWU classified by gender, 2010



Time spent on farm work

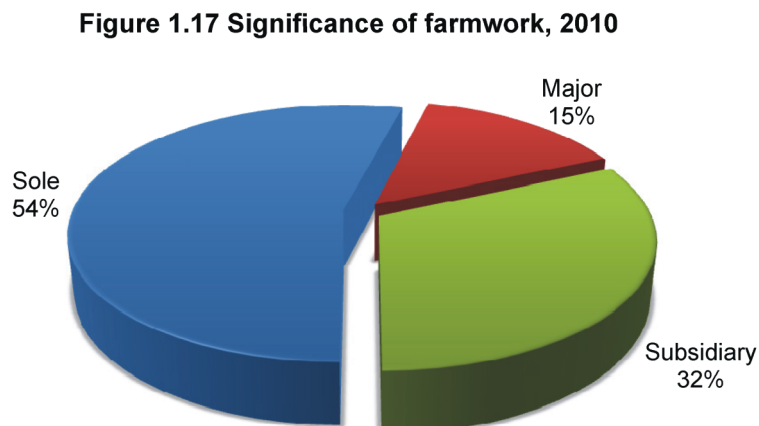
Four in every ten holders worked a full AWU during the reference period while 16% of spouses did the same.



In the SE region, 46% of holders worked a full AWU compared to just 35% of farm holders in the BMW region. Across all those regularly working on farms, only 28.4% reported to have worked a full AWU; much lower than in 2000 when 41.7% of workers provided a full AWU. See *Tables 29 and 36*.

Significance of farmwork

Over half of all holders (53.9%) identified farming as their sole occupation, a decrease since 2000 when almost 56% referred to it as a sole occupation. The proportion of holders who indicated that farming was their sole occupation increased with farm size (AAU) and was greatest on Specialist dairying farms where 84.4% of holders reported that farming was their sole occupation. More than three in ten farm holders (31.6%) identified farming as a subsidiary occupation, a slight increase on the corresponding 2000 figure (30.4%). In the BMW, 34% of holders reported farming as a subsidiary occupation compared with 29% in the Southern and Eastern region. See *Table 36*.



Farm Manager Training

The level of training undertaken by the farm manager is presented in Table 40. On over 97% of Irish farms, the manager was also the holder of the farm. The results showed that only 31% of managers had undertaken some type of formal training. The proportion of farm managers with formal training was greater amongst younger managers. In the under-35 age group, more than half (51.5%) of farm managers had undertaken training. The number of managers with training was also higher on larger farms. On holdings of 50 hectares or more, almost half (47.2%) of managers had undertaken training.

Of the 31% of managers who had completed training, the majority (36%) had attained a Certificate in Farming or completed a Farm Apprenticeship course. A further 14 % had attained a third level qualification in agriculture and the greatest proportion of these was in the under-35 age group. See *Table 40*.