

Farm structure survey 2016

Of the 10.3 million farms in the EU, two thirds are less than 5 ha in size

Only 11% of farm managers are under 40 years old

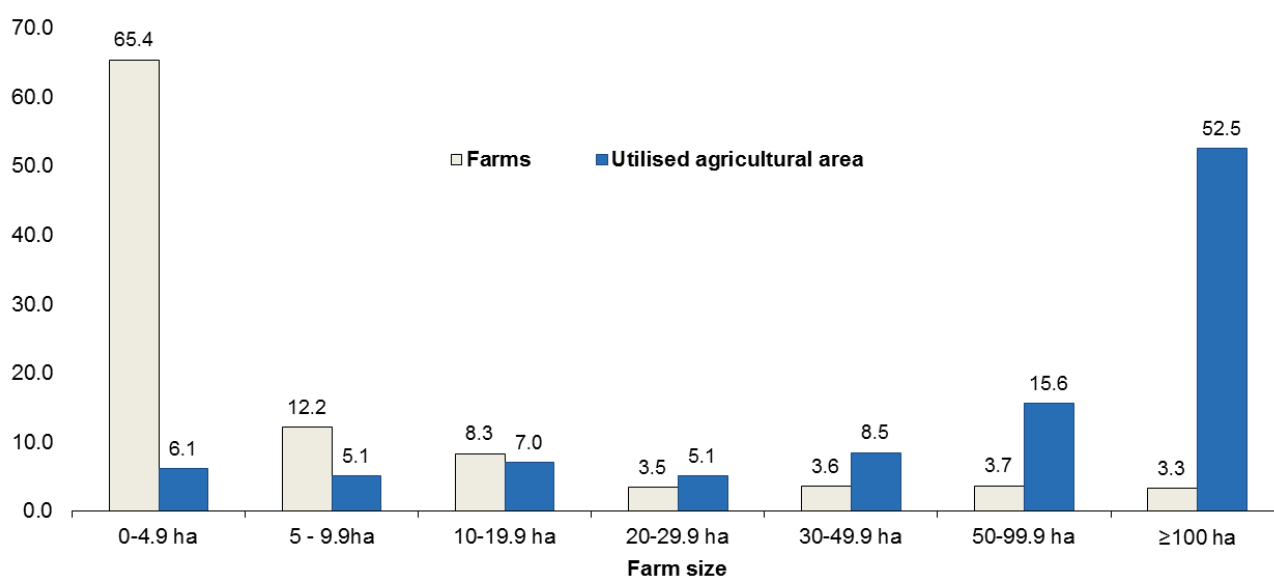
A little over 171 million hectares of land in the **European Union** (EU) were used for agricultural production in 2016 – about 40% of the **EU's** total land area. This supported about 10.3 million farms and farm managers.

Although numerous, most of the **EU's** farms were small in nature, two-thirds being less than 5 hectares (ha) in size. In contrast, the 3% of **EU** farms of 100 ha or more in size worked over half of the **EU's** utilised agricultural area.

Only 11% of farm managers in the **EU** were younger than 40 years old, in contrast to one third (32%) who were 65 years of age or older.

This information, published by **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**, comes from provisional results for the 2016 EU Farm Structure Survey and is the latest snapshot available. This survey helps better understand the structure of agricultural holdings in the EU, important for the Common Agricultural Policy.

Distribution of EU farms and EU farmland according to farm size, 2016 (%)



The source dataset can be found [here](#).

Farming in the EU is broadly characterised by three distinct groups: (i) subsistence farming, where the focus is on growing a majority of food to feed farmers and their families (ii) small and medium-sized holdings that are generally family-run businesses and (ii) large agricultural enterprises.

Romania has one third of the EU's farms but they tend to be small in size

One third of the EU's farms were located in **Romania** in 2016 (33%), another third being found in **Poland** (14%), **Italy** (10%, 2013) and **Spain** (9%).

Although numerous, most of the **EU's** farms were small in nature; 65% of EU farms were less than 5 ha in size. However, the 7% of farms that were of 50 ha or more in size worked a little over two-thirds (68%) of the **EU's** utilised agricultural area (UAA). So although the mean size of an agricultural holding in the EU was 16.6 ha in 2016, the median was under 5 ha.

Among Member States, this distribution was most contrasting in **Romania**; nine in every ten farms (92% or 3.1 million farms) were smaller than 5 ha, but the 0.5% of farms of 50 ha or more in size farmed half (51%) of all the UAA in the country.

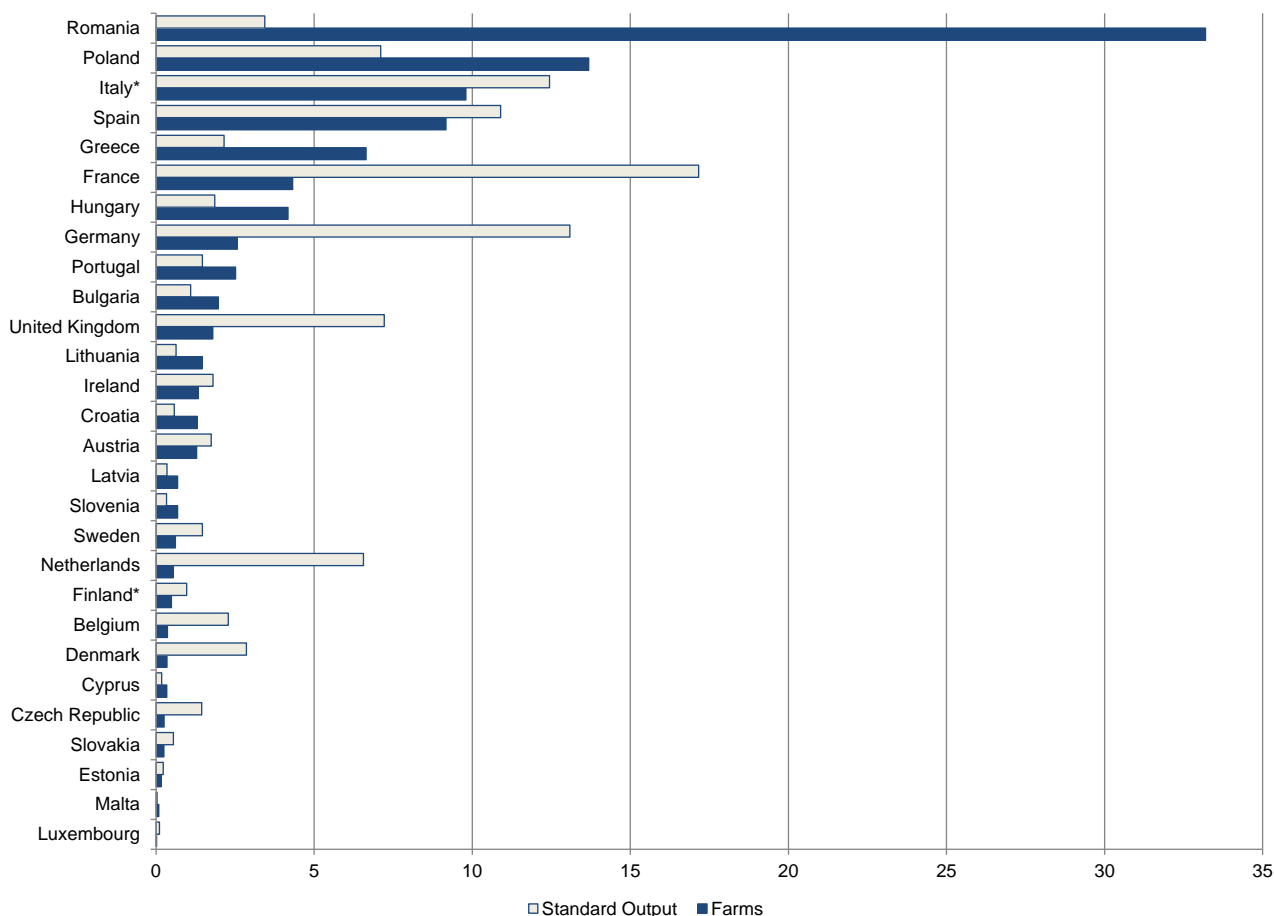
Larger farms (of 50 hectares or more) were much more common in **Luxembourg** (52% of farms), **France** (41%), the **United Kingdom** (39%) and **Denmark** (35%). In most Member States, a majority of UAA was concentrated on the largest farms (50 ha or more in size).

Just over half of EU turnover in agriculture came from France, Germany, Italy and Spain

Contrasts in the size of farms were also reflected in terms of their economic size. Of the **EU's** 10.3 million farms, 4.0 million had a standard output below EUR 2 000 and were responsible for only 1% of total agricultural economic output. The 296 000 farms (or 3% of all holdings) in the **EU** that each produced a standard output of EUR 250 000 or more were responsible for a majority (55%) of the **EU's** total agricultural economic output in 2016.

About one half (54%) of the standard output generated by agriculture in the EU was from farms in **France** (17%), **Germany** (13%), **Italy** (12% in 2013) and **Spain** (11%) in 2016. Although Romania accounted for about one third of the EU's farms, they accounted for only 3.4 % of the EU's standard output.

Farms and standard output, 2016 (share of EU total, %)



* Italy: 2013 data
The source dataset can be found [here](#).

France, Spain, the United Kingdom and Germany together account for half of EU's agricultural land

France used 27.8 million hectares for agricultural purposes in 2016, the largest of any Member State (16% of EU total). A further 23.2 million hectares were farmed in **Spain** (14%), 16.7 million hectares in the **United Kingdom** (10%), 15.2 million hectares in **Germany** (9%) and 14.4 million hectares in **Poland** (8%).

Agricultural landscapes dominated the countryside in some Member States; upwards of two-thirds of the land area of the **United Kingdom** (69%) and **Ireland** (72%) was used as agricultural land and the share was also particularly high in **Denmark** (62%). This was in stark contrast to **Finland** (8%) and **Sweden** (7%) where forest dominated the landscape, as well as **Cyprus** (12%).

Farming: a male dominated profession with relatively few young farmers

There were 10.3 million people working as farm managers in the **EU** in 2016.

The average age of farmers is very much at the older end of the age spectrum; one third (32%) of farm managers in the **EU** were 65 years of age or more. Only 11% of farm managers in the **EU** were young farmers under the age of 40 years.

Young farmers were particularly few and far between in **Cyprus** (3.3% of all farm managers), **Portugal** (4.2%) and the **United Kingdom** (5.3%). They were more common in **Austria** (22.2%), **Poland** (20.3%) and **Slovakia** (19.0%).

Nevertheless, the youngest farm managers tended to have bigger farms in terms of area, livestock and standard output than the oldest ones (over 65 years of age).

The farming profession is dominated by men, with only about three in ten (29%) **EU** farm managers being women. The proportion of young farm managers who were women was lower still (23%).

Methods and definitions

The data source is the basic Farm structure survey (FSS), also known as Survey on the structure of agricultural holdings. The FSS is carried out every 3 or 4 years by all EU Member States. The FSS are conducted consistently throughout the EU with a common methodology and provide therefore comparable and representative statistics across countries and time, down to regional levels. EU Member States collect information from individual agricultural holdings covering land use, livestock numbers, rural development, management and farm labour input (including the age, gender and relationship to the holder of the agricultural holding). Data can also be broken down by size class, area status, legal status of the holding and farm type.

An **agricultural holding** is a single unit, in both technical and economic terms, operating under a single management, which undertakes agricultural activities within the economic territory of the European Union, either as its primary or secondary activity. Other supplementary (non-agricultural) products and services may also be provided by the holding.

Utilised agricultural area describes the area used for farming. It includes the following land categories: arable land, permanent grassland, permanent crops, other agricultural land such as kitchen gardens (even if they only represent small areas of total utilised agricultural area). The term does not include unused agricultural land, woodland and land occupied by buildings, farmyards, tracks, ponds, etc.

It should be noted that some methodological changes, such as coverage, thresholds and inclusion of common land, were introduced in some Member States for the FSS 2010 onwards, which limit comparability with previous surveys (for more information, see Eurostat Statistics Explained article "[Farm structure survey - thresholds](#)").

EU data on **distribution of farms according to their size** include 2013 data for Italy. There are also some differences in the threshold applied by some Member States, often to exclude the very smallest agricultural holdings which together contribute 2% or less to the total UAA excluding common land, and 2% or less to the total number of farm livestock units.

For more information

Eurostat [website section](#) dedicated to agricultural statistics.

Eurostat [database](#) on agriculture.

Eurostat [metadata](#) on farm structure statistics.

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Farm holdings and utilised agricultural area in the EU, 2016

	Number of holdings		Utilised agricultural area (UAA)		Small farms (under 5 ha)		Large farms (≥ 50 hectares)	
	in thousands	share of EU total, %	in 1000 ha	share of EU total, %	share of all farms, %	share of UAA, %	share of all farms, %	share of UAA, %
EU*	10 321.2	100.0	171 288.5	100.0	65.4	6.1	7.0	68.1
Belgium	36.9	0.4	1 354.3	0.8	13.9	0.9	25.3	62.2
Bulgaria	202.7	2.0	4 468.5	2.6	82.6	2.9	4.8	87.3
Czech Republic	26.5	0.3	3 453.0	2.0	18.7	0.3	27.0	92.5
Denmark	35.1	0.3	2 614.6	1.5	4.4	0.1	35.3	85.4
Germany	264.8	2.6	15 166.9	8.9	8.7	0.3	30.5	78.3
Estonia	16.7	0.2	995.1	0.6	31.6	1.3	17.7	85.1
Ireland	137.6	1.3	4 883.7	2.9	7.4	0.6	18.0	51.6
Greece	685.0	6.6	4 553.8	2.7	77.3	18.5	0.9	41.4
Spain	945.0	9.2	23 229.8	13.6	51.6	4.3	10.8	70.8
France	456.5	4.4	27 814.2	16.2	24.3	0.8	41.3	86.9
Croatia	134.5	1.3	1 563.0	0.9	69.5	11.4	3.8	59.0
Italy*	1 010.3	9.8	12 098.9	7.1	58.7	11.4	4.5	44.0
Cyprus	34.9	0.3	111.9	0.1	89.6	28.1	1.0	33.1
Latvia	69.9	0.7	1 930.9	1.1	35.2	2.8	8.8	67.1
Lithuania	150.3	1.5	2 924.6	1.7	50.0	6.9	7.2	63.2
Luxembourg	2.0	0.0	130.7	0.1	16.2	0.5	51.8	88.9
Hungary	430.0	4.2	4 670.6	2.7	81.4	4.8	3.7	74.4
Malta	9.3	0.1	11.2	0.0	96.6	78.5	0.0	0.0
Netherlands	55.7	0.5	1 796.3	1.0	20.2	1.3	21.5	57.5
Austria	132.5	1.3	2 669.8	1.6	31.0	3.8	8.5	39.1
Poland	1 410.7	13.7	14 405.7	8.4	54.3	13.2	2.4	31.6
Portugal	259.0	2.5	3 641.7	2.1	71.5	9.1	4.2	66.9
Romania	3 422.0	33.2	12 502.5	7.3	91.8	28.7	0.5	51.1
Slovenia	69.9	0.7	488.4	0.3	59.5	19.9	0.9	13.7
Slovakia	25.7	0.2	1 889.8	1.1	55.7	1.5	13.0	92.1
Finland	49.7	0.5	2 233.1	1.3	4.0	0.2	30.0	66.9
Sweden	62.9	0.6	3 012.6	1.8	10.5	0.7	24.7	76.5
United Kingdom	185.1	1.8	16 673.3	9.7	10.2	0.3	38.6	88.2

*Italy: 2013 data.

The source dataset can be found [here](#).

Farm managers in the EU, 2016 (%)

	Less than 40 years old	Between 40-54 years old	Between 55-64 years old	65 years and older
EU*	10.9	31.9	25.1	31.9
Belgium	10.2	37.8	28.5	20.3
Bulgaria	14.0	25.6	23.9	36.4
Czech Republic	10.2	31.0	32.0	26.8
Denmark	6.6	34.0	29.2	24.9
Germany	14.6	45.8	31.4	8.2
Estonia	15.5	34.6	22.3	27.5
Ireland	8.5	37.3	25.1	29.1
Greece	8.3	30.8	27.4	33.5
Spain	8.6	34.5	25.4	31.2
France	15.6	39.9	29.2	15.0
Croatia	10.5	28.9	27.8	32.7
Italy**	:	:	:	:
Cyprus	3.3	20.4	31.8	44.6
Latvia	9.5	33.6	26.7	30.2
Lithuania	12.3	33.1	23.8	30.8
Luxembourg	15.2	38.6	30.5	15.7
Hungary	12.6	29.3	27.4	30.6
Malta	7.1	27.2	34.0	31.8
Netherlands	8.7	43.6	29.0	18.7
Austria	22.2	46.8	21.8	7.3
Poland	20.3	41.3	26.7	11.7
Portugal	4.2	19.6	24.1	51.9
Romania	7.6	25.7	22.3	44.3
Slovenia	9.1	33.5	28.8	28.5
Slovakia	19.0	34.3	26.3	20.3
Finland	8.8	57.8	23.7	9.7
Sweden	10.1	29.6	27.6	32.7
United Kingdom	5.3	32.6	28.0	34.1

*EU excludes Italy, for which data are unavailable.

**Italy: data unavailable.

The source dataset can be found [here](#).