A STRUCTURAL AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF FARMING IN CYPRUS

Chr. Papayiannis and M. Markou

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE
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Dr A.P. Mavrogenis, Agricultural Research Institute, Nicosia, Cyprus.

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SUMMARY

Raw data derived from the agricultural census of 1994 (Department of Statistics and Research, 1996), supplemented with research results of the Agricultural Research Institute, provided the sources of information upon which the present study was based. The study analyses the farm structures, estimates farm and off-farm incomes of the mean agricultural holding and determines the most frequent types of farming in each of the four agro-economic zones considered. In the Coastal and Dryland zones, farmers are younger, better educated and support more dependents than in the Vines and Mountain zones. The Coastal zone is characterised by high percentage of irrigated land (40.3%) and prevalence of annual cash crops, such as cereals, potatoes and vegetables; citrus and table grapes are the main permanent crops. In the Dryland zone, there is a greater specialisation, with cereals taking up about 2/3 of the mean holding’s land. The majority of livestock farms is located in the above zones, where also considerable percentage of the farm area is used for forage production. The Vines and Mountain zones are characterised by permanent crops. In the first zone, vines are cultivated on 80% of the mean holding’s area, while in the latter, apart from vines, irrigated fruit trees, nuts and olives are cultivated to a relatively large extent. Only 29% of all operators of agricultural holdings have agriculture as their exclusive source of income, indicating the great importance of part-time farming in Cyprus. Over 90% of the part-timers earn more than 50% of income from off-farm employment. Part-time farmers are generally younger and better educated than full-time farmers. Holding size of part-time farms for which the main source of income is agriculture, is twice the size of full-time farms. The total, on and off-farm, family employment of part-time farmers is in all zones higher than that of full-time farmers. On-farm employment of farmers with more than 50% of their total family income arising from agriculture, is about two times the on-farm employment of full-time farmers. Almost 60% of the total household income (£7474) is derived from off-farm sources. However, in the case of part-time farmers earning more than 50% of their total family income from agricultural activities, farm income accounts for 73% of the total, which is three times the family income of the full-time farmers. There are, large income differences between zones in both the actual amount and the relative share of on-farm and off-farm income sources; the Vines zone is the poorest and the Mountain zone the most dependent on agriculture.

Vines, Fruits, Citrus, Cereals, Combined Vines and Rainfed Trees, Olives, Potatoes, Vegetables, Sheep and Goats were, in descending order, the most frequently observed types of farming. Only in the last four types farm income was higher than 50% of the total household income.

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Τα στοιχεία που συγκέντρωσε η απογραφή γεωργίας 1994 (Τμήμα Στατιστικής και Ερευνών, 1996), εμπλουτισμένα με αποτελέσματα άλλων γεωργοοικονομικών μελετών του Ινστιτούτου Γεωργικών Ερευνών, αποτέλεσαν την υπόψη πληροφοριών πέντε στις οποίες στηρίζεται η παρούσα μελέτη. Στη μελέτη αναλύεται η διάθεση των γεωργικών εμπεριέων στην Κύπρο, υπολογίζονται τα γεωργικά και εξωγεωργικά εισοδήματα της μέσης γεωργικής εμπεριέως, και καθορίζονται οι χρύσοι εμπεριέων που εμφανίζονται συχνότερα σε κάθε μια από τις τέσσερις γεωργοοικονομικές ζώνες. Στην Παραλιακή και Ζημική γεωργοοικονομική ζώνη οι γεωργοί είναι μικρότερης ηλικίας, περισσότερο μορφωμένοι και με πολυμελέστερη οικογένεια σε σχέση με την Αμπελουργική και Ορεινή ζώνη. Η Παραλιακή ζώνη χαρακτηρίζεται από ψηλότερο ποσοστό αφεδρομικής γης (40,3%) και ο αυτή διακόσμησαν ετήσιες καλλιέργειες, όπως σιτηρά, πατάτες και λαχανικά.
INTRODUCTION

Based on a complete enumeration of all agricultural holdings, the Agricultural Census of 1994 provides information on the agricultural sector and on farm structures and cropping patterns in the various agro-economic zones of Cyprus (Philippides and Papayiannis, 1983). However, the Agricultural Census does not provide any kind of information on incomes of the agricultural holdings or the farm enterprises within holdings.

The main objective of this analysis was to incorporate farm income data in order to give the Census figures an economic perspective and allow profitability comparisons among farms with different structures, sizes, technology use and other characteristics. Another major objective is the classification of holdings into farm types, according to the farm typology used by the European Community (Mc Clintock, 1988; Papayiannis and Papachristodoulou, 1991). To this end, Standard Gross Margins (SGM) for all crop and livestock farm enterprises were calculated, on the basis of annual statistics published by the Department of Statistics and Research (Anonymous, 1996), norm input-output data (Papachristodoulou, et al., 1987; Papachristodoulou, et al., 1992; Papayiannis and Markou, 1998), cost studies carried out by the Agricultural Research Institute and information from other sources (Ansell, et al., 1984; Anonymous 1979; Anonymous, 1987). The results of this study include valuable information for agricultural and rural policy planners and may provide a basis for future studies of the agricultural sector.

The report is divided into two parts. The first part deals with farm family characteristics, farm structures, employment and incomes of the agricultural holdings by zone.
and examines the effect of various factors on the farm. The second part classifies farms into farm types and describes the major farm types in each zone.

**METHODOLOGY**

The agricultural census involved a complete enumeration of all the holders of agricultural land, including nurseries and greenhouses, and the owners of productive animals that operate on a business basis. The unit of enumeration was the agricultural holding, defined as an area of land wholly or partly used for agricultural production or, in the case of landless livestock keepers, the ownership of a minimum number of 5 cows or sows, 10 sheep or goats or 50 poultry.

The Census data were analysed by agroeconomic zone. Cyprus has been divided into 24 agroeconomic regions, which reflect the agroeconomic diversity of the country and its agriculture (Philippides and Papayiannis, 1983). Regions were grouped into the following four zones: a) The **Coastal zone**, comprising a relatively narrow belt adjacent to the south and west coast, characterised by mild climate, flat land, deep and fertile soils and availability of irrigation water, with major crops being vegetables (mainly potatoes) citrus and table grapes, b) the **Dryland zone**, covering mainly the central part of the country, characterised by low land and foothills and limited irrigation capability, where cereals, rainfed trees and livestock prevail, c) the **Vines zone**, which extends over the lower south and west slopes of the Troodos massif, consists of poor calcareous soils and is cultivated almost exclusively with vines and d) the **Mountain zone**, comprising the higher slopes of the Troodos mountain, with volcanic soils that are rather more fertile than the Vines zone. Most important crops in this zone are vines and deciduous fruit trees, but some vegetables are also cultivated in small pockets where irrigation is available.

Based on Norm input-output data and other cost studies (Papachristodoulou et al., 1987, Papayiannis and Markou, 1998), and taking into consideration existing differences among the four zones, Standard Gross Margins (SGM), calculated for all crop and livestock enterprises, were used to estimate farm incomes (Table A33). Off-farm incomes were also calculated on the basis of the off-farm employment of the family members, assuming a weekly wage of £77/week, the national average wage for agricultural workers.

Out of 52 089 agricultural holdings recorded, only those reporting agricultural income (44 802) were considered for analysis. They were classified by farm size, level and origin of farm income, size of irrigated land, farmer’s age and education, and duration of on-farm employment.

All 52 089 farms were also classified by farm type according to the European Union farm typology, which identifies 17 principal types of farming and 50 particular types of farming; farm incomes are given in Table 5. Furthermore, a slightly modified classification, to incorporate some particularities of the Cypriot farming, was done by zone and covered only farms with farm income over £360 (Table 6). Type of farming was determined by the relative share in the holding’s total Standard Gross Margin of each of the enterprises of the holding. The rules followed for classifying a farm into a particular farm type were as follows:

a) Farms reporting no agricultural income were classified as unclassifiable.
b) Farms with Gross Margin (GM) less than £360 remained unclassified.
c) If a crop or livestock enterprise contributed more than 2/3 of the total farm GM, the particular farm was classified into the respective crop or livestock farm type.
d) If either crop or livestock enterprises contributed 1/3 or more of the farm GM, the farm was classified into the respective combined mixed crop or crop/livestock farm type.
e) Farms with combinations of crop/livestock enterprises not fulfilling the above conditions were grouped as other.

Results on the family and farm structure, employment and income are presented in total and by zone in six table sets as follows:

- **Tables A1-A5. By income source.** Farms were divided into farms with farm income only and farms with on-farm and off-farm income. The latter were separated into 3 groups i.e., with farm income >50, 10-50 and <10% of the total family income.

- **Tables A6-A10. By size of holding.** Eight farm sizes were considered.

- **Tables A11-A15. By level of agricultural income.** Farms were grouped into five agri-
cultural income classes which are equivalent to the income classes used by the European Union.

d) Tables A16-A20. *By size of irrigated land.* Farms were classified into four groups corresponding to rainfed farms and farms with land under irrigation up to 1, >1-3 and over 3 hectares.

e) Tables A21-A26. *By farmer’s age, level of education and level of on and off farm family employment.* For the classification of farms by age and level of education only individual and joint holders were taken into consideration as for companies or similar status farms no age and educational level figures were reported in the census.

f) Tables A27-A31. *By type of farming.* Present the structure of the most frequent or more important farm types by zone and the major farm characteristics.

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**RESULTS**

**THE FARMING STRUCTURE**

**Distribution of agricultural holdings and origin of income**

The total number of holdings recorded by the Census was 52,089. Fourteen percent were reported as yielding no agricultural income, while a further 24.6% produced agricultural income less than £360. The above farms can be considered as not economically viable or hobby farms. Included in this category were about one third of the farms in the Coastal and Mountain zones, 25% of the farms in the Vines zone and almost half the farms in the Dryland zone. Of the remaining 31,972 holdings, which may to some extent be characterised as commercial farms, 41% were located in the Coastal zone and 37% in the Dryland zone. The Vines and Mountain zones include only 10 and 12% of these holdings, respectively (Table 1).

Out of 44,802 farms reporting agricultural income, only 29% had agriculture as the exclusive income source, while for another 7% agriculture was the main (over 50%) income contributor. The remaining 64% were evenly distributed between farms with income originating in agriculture 10-50% and those with farm income less than 10% of the total family income (Fig. 1). The distribution of holdings into the above groups differs significantly from one zone to another (Fig. 2). For these farms the family income was supplemented with income earned from other,
off-farm activities of the farm family members, the level of which differs from one zone to another.

**The farm family**

The average family size of the agricultural holders was 3.5 members and varied from 2.7 in the Vines zone to 3.7 in the Coastal and Dryland zones (Table 2). In all zones, family size was strongly related to part time farming, being remarkably bigger in the case of holders with on and off-farm employment. Family size was also positively related with farm income per holding and size of irrigated land. However, in none of the zones family size showed significant relationship with farm size.

Operators of agricultural holdings were older than the national work force. The overall mean age of agricultural operators was 51 years with the modal groups 35 to 45 and 45 to 55 years comprising about 25% of the farmers each (Table 3.) Marked differences in farmers age were found among zones. In the Coastal and Dryland zones it averaged 48 and 50 years, while in the Vines and Mountain zones it was 57 and 58 years, respectively. There appears to be a clear distinction between the mainly lowland Coastal and Dryland zones, where agricultural operators are generally young to middle-aged, and the upland Vines and Mountain zones, with an aged agricultural population. Considerable divergence did also exist between farmers employed exclusively on farm and part-timers with the latter being considerably younger. It should, however, be noted that farmers exclusively employed in agriculture are not necessarily full time employed. Included in this fraction are also aged people and pensioners who spent part, sometimes a small percentage, of their available time in farming but with no employment in off-farm activities. Farmers’ age appears to have no significant relationship with farm size or the degree of irrigation. There is, however, a clear downward tendency in age as the level of agricultural income increases.

The smaller family size of aged farmers is explained by the fact that adult children either migrate to the towns seeking better paying jobs or, after getting married, they leave the farm.

Educational levels attained by agricultural operators also vary between zones. About 46% of the farmers in the Coastal and Dryland zones have attended secondary or higher level education, while in the Vines and Mountain zones only 24% had education beyond elementary school (Table 4). Within zones, young operators are generally better educated. Also, farmers employed exclusively on-farm are less educated than those having additional employment in other sectors. In farms with on-farm employment only farm size tend to increase with the level of education, while in farms with on and off-farm employment bigger size farms are owned by farmers with elementary education (Tables A23 and A25).

**Size of holding and tenure**

The mean size of holding was 3.6 ha, ranging between 2.1 ha in the Mountain and 4.4 in the Vines zone (Table 2). On average, two thirds of the land was owned by the farmer while one third was rented land. The highest percentage (45%) of rented land was observed in the Dryland zone, followed by 35% in the Coastal zone. In the other two zones rented land was marginal, averaging 10 to 13%. Considerable variation in the farm size did also exist between farms having agriculture as the exclusive source of income and farms earning their income from both agricultural and other sources. The degree of on farm employment seems also to be an important factor affecting the farm size. Thus, while for farms with agricultural income only the mean holding size was 5.3 ha, for all the other farms with on and off-farm income the mean holding size was around 3.0 ha. Of the latter, however, much larger were the farms with more than 50% of their income originating in agriculture. The same trend was observed in all four zones (Tables A1-A5). As far as the distribution of farms by size is concerned, this was heavily skewed to the left, with the modal size being less than one ha, except for the Vines zone, where most farms were in the size 5 to 10 ha (Fig. 3 and Tables A6-A10).

One of the main characteristics of farming is the uneven distribution of land among farms. About 56.0% of the farmers operate on 11.5% of the agricultural land, while another 17% practice agriculture on 66% of this land. The same pattern is seen also in
the four zones with 55% of the farmers in the Coastal, 57% in the Dryland, 36% in the Vines and 69% in the Mountain zones holding 14%, 10%, 8%, and 25% of the land, respectively. Accordingly, in all zones about 20% of the holders operate on more than 60% of the land (Tables A6-A10).

In the case of farmers exclusively employed in agriculture, farm size is inversely related to farmer’s age with the bigger farms belonging to young or middle aged people between 25 and 55 years old, except in the Mountain zone where size is rather irrelevant to farmer’s age. However, in the case of part-time farmers, older farmers owned larger farms, both in total and by zone. Farm size was also related to some degree with farmers’ education. For full time farmers farm size increased slightly with the level of education, but in the case of part-timers no significant relationship was found between size of farm and education.

Irrigation

The degree of irrigation is a decisive factor and affects substantially the crop mix and the farming intensity. Overall, 25% of the land was irrigated. Forty percent of the land in the Coastal zone was irrigated, resulting in substantially higher productivity. About 20% of the land in the Mountain, 16.5% in the Dryland zone and only 6% in the Vines was also irrigated (Table 2). Farms with off-farm income and agricultural income over 50% of the total family income tended to have a higher percentage of irrigated land in all but the Dryland zone, where the degree of irrigation was highest (21%) in farms with farm income between 10 and 50% of the total. As irrigation water is one of the most limiting factors in Cypriot agriculture, the percentage of irrigated land decreases as farm size increases, in all zones.

Cropping patterns

The mean cropped area per holding was 2.4 ha, of which 64% under annual and 36% under perennial crops. Most of the land in the Coastal and Dryland zones was under temporary crops (68 and 83%, respectively), while in the Vines and Mountain zones 81 and 78% of the land was under perennial crops.

In the Coastal zone the crop mix included mainly cereals (circa 40% of the land), followed by vegetables, green fodder, vines (mainly table grapes) and citrus.

Nearly two thirds of the land in the Dryland zone was under cereals, green fodder being the second major crop. Olives, other rainfed trees, vegetables and citrus were minor importance crops in this zone in terms of land, though not, in terms of income.

The Vines zone presented an extreme specialisation with 67% of the area under vine cultivation. Green fodder, cereals and
rainfed trees were also found in the region, while vegetables and irrigated fruit trees, cultivated in small pockets where irrigation water is available, supplemented the narrow farm incomes of the region.

The Mountain zone is characterised by a much greater crop diversification. Though wine grape vines prevailed, being grown on 37% of the crop area, fruit trees, cereals, nuts, olives and, to a lesser extent, vegetables were also important crops for the region both area and income wise.

Differences were observed in the cropping pattern between farms with on-farm income only and farms with on and off-farm income, as well as among farms with varying contribution of the farm income in the composition of the family income. These, however, did not affect substantially the general picture of the cropping pattern. The cropping pattern was widely affected by farm size and the degree of irrigation. As size of holding decreased and irrigated land increased a higher percentage of the farm area was devoted to perennial crops, which are generally more labour intensive crops.

Livestock

The number of productive animals kept in the mean holding was comparatively small, comprising 1 cow, 7 sheep or goats, 1 pig and a few poultry. This picture is not representative of the livestock sector which, in reality, is composed of relatively few but big dairy cow, pig and poultry farms and medium size sheep and goat farms. The vast majority of productive animals is concentrated in the Dryland and Coastal zones, with a share of 60 and 33% of all livestock units, respectively. In the Vines and Mountain zones livestock farming is limited to small units of sheep and goats and a small number of pig and poultry farms.

The number of animals per holding was considerably greater in farms having agriculture as the only source of income and in part time farms, with a share of agricultural income over 50%, indicating that livestock farms are labour intensive (Table A1).

Employment

The mean available work time per holding was 78 weeks, representing about 22 weeks per family member, with more than 70% of which being employed in off-farm activities. On-farm employment was only 30% in the Coastal, 22% in the Dryland, 45% in the Vines and 33% in the Mountain zones. In all zones, on-farm labour was positively related to farm size both in real and in relative terms (Fig. 4). In addition, on farm employment increased both in real terms and as a percentage of the available labour, with the size of irrigated land. Although a relationship between the amount of on-farm labour and farmer’s age and education did ex-
no inference can be made as to whether on-farm employment was affected by the above variables since farmers in different age or educational level groups operate on varying size farms. It seems, however, that on-farm labour relates to farm size rather than to age or level of education.

The overall labour productivity of full time farmers was slightly higher than that of part time farmers, showing, in both cases, a decreasing trend as the duration of on-farm employment increased from less than 25 weeks to 50 weeks and an increasing trend thereafter (Fig. 5 and 6). There were, however, extremely large differences in labour productivity among zones. In the Coastal zone, productivity of full time farmers was about 50% higher than that of part-timers. Also, the relationship with the duration of on farm employment, which was similar to the overall trend, was remarkably stronger in the case of full time farmers. In the Dryland zone, similar trends were observed with the productivity curve being parallel to that of the Coastal zone for the part time farmers, but well above the Coastal zone’s for the full

**Figure 5.** On farm labour productivity of full-time farmers.

**Figure 6.** Labour productivity of part-time farmers.
time farmers. In both the other two zones labour productivity was considerably lower, and reaching just about 50% of the overall average. No significant relationship was found between labour productivity and duration of employment on farm in these zones.

**Farm household incomes**

The mean household income for all holdings was £7474. Household income composed of on-farm (£3144) and off-farm income (£4329), or 42 and 58% of the total, respectively. The mean per capita income was £2135 (Table 2). Income differed widely between zones. While in the Coastal and Dryland zones family income was about 15 and 7% higher than the average, in the other two zones it hardly reached 60%. Variation in farm income per household was greater than that in total incomes or off-farm incomes. Also, there were differences in the level and composition of the household income between farms with farm income only and farms with on-farm and off-farm income, as well as among farms with different shares of agricultural and non agricultural income.

Farm income was strongly related to farm size in all zones (Fig. 7 and 8), but no significant relation was found between off farm income and size of farm, except in the
case of large farms (over 10 ha), for which off-farm income was considerably lower.

The great majority (64%) of agricultural holdings produce an income of less than £1440. To this group belong 56% of the farms in the Coastal, 70% in the Dryland, 60% in the Vines and 73% in the Mountain zone. Only 5% of the farms, practically located in the Coastal and Dryland zones, had farm income over £11520. The size of irrigated land was also positively associated with farm income.

In farms having agriculture as the sole source of income younger farmers tended to have higher farm incomes; in those with both on-farm and off-farm income the highest farm incomes per holding were earned by middle aged or older farmers. This trend was deserved for all four zones (Tables A21 and A22). Also, full time farmers with secondary level education and part time farmers with elementary education had higher farm income (Tables A23 and A25).

Lorenz curves (Fig. 9) for farm income and total family income show a highly uneven income distribution. Thus, 64% of the lowest income households produced only around 11% of country’s total farm income and 44% of the farmers’ family income, while the top 5% produced 53% of total farm income and 24% of the farmers’ total income. Therefore, the curve of family income was much closer to the absolute equality curve, indicating a fairly more equitable distribution of family income compared to that of the farm income. This illustrates the fact that on-and off-farm incomes are, to some extent, complementary, with the low farm income holdings being up to a certain degree compensated by higher off-farm incomes (Tables A11-A15).

### Income per capita

Per capita income of all holdings averaged £2135. Variation in per capita income between zones is lower than variation in total income, as farmers in the more prosperous Coastal and Dryland zones had more dependents than farmers in the poorer Mountain and Vines zones. Thus, while the mean total income earned in the Mountain and Vines zones accounted for 54% of the mean total income in the Coastal and Dryland zones, the respective mean per capita income was 70%. The distribution of holdings by level of per capita income, by zone and by income source is given in Table A32. Obviously, in the great majority of holdings (57%) per capita income was less than £2000, an amount below the average. No particular differences were observed in the percentage of farms with per capita income below average in each agricultural zone.

Per capita income increased as farm size increased. It was highest in the Coastal zone, followed by the Dryland. In the Vines and
Mountain zones per capita income was remarkably lower than in the other two zones, with differences becoming increasingly greater as farms grew in size (Fig. 8).

THE FARM TYPOLOGY

Classification of all agricultural holdings into types of farming according to the EU farm typology rules, resulted in a distribution presented in Table 5. The majority of holdings (51%) were classified under the Permanent crops specialising group, but produced only 23% of the country’s farm income. Field crops (including potatoes) ranked second with 15% of the farms and 25% of the income, followed by Livestock farms which contributed another 25% of the income though they accounted for only 6% of the farms. About 14% of the holdings, reporting no income arising from agriculture, were categorised as Unclassifiable.

Further more, a slightly modified distribution, to meet certain particularities of the Cypriot agriculture, covered only holdings with farm income over £360 (Table 6). According to this classification, apart from the “Unclassifiable”, another fourth of the farms remained unclassified, while the remaining 31 972 holdings were classified under various types of farming. The most frequent farm types, accommodating about 63% of the classified holdings, were, in descending order, the following: (i) vines, (ii) fruits, (iii) citrus, (iv) cereals, (v) vines and trees, (vi) olives, (vii) potatoes, (viii) vegetables, (ix) sheep and (x) goats (Table A27, Fig. 10). About the same farm types were also the most frequently appearing in both the Coastal and Dryland zones in which the top eight types comprised nearly 65% and 53% of the considered holdings, respectively (Tables A28, A29). In the Vines zone the Vines type prevailed accounting for about 53% of the zone’s holdings while in the Mountain zone most frequent was the Fruit type of farming, covering 48% of the holdings in this zone (Tables A28-A30).

Family and farm structure by type of farming

The slight differences observed among the various types of farming with regard to farmer’s age and family size and structure pertained to the effect of the zone rather than to the particular type. However, an extremely strong diversification in the cropping pattern exist of from one type to another, with the crop, or crops, determining the respective type of farming being cultivated, in al-
most all the cases, on more than 50% of the farm’s crop area. Also, in the livestock types of farming most of the land was used for the cultivation of forage crops, mainly green fodder and hay. This indicated some degree of specialisation despite the obviously pluri-active nature of farming in Cyprus.

Employment and incomes by type of farming

Sheep, Goat, Vegetable and Potato specialised farms were the most labour demanding types requiring more than one labour unit. The first three were the only types of farming with less than one labour unit being employed off the farm. All other types can be defined, with respect to labour, as part time, with more than 50% of the farm family available labour being employed in off-farm activities (Fig. 11). As regards incomes, the pattern is similar, with only the same four types earning more than 50% of their family income from on-farm activities (Fig. 12). This does not necessarily mean that all farmers in the part time farm types are characterised as not real farmers, because the above figures are averages, not representing the real situation of each farm.

Large differences exist in farm income between different types of farming. The Dairy Cow farm type, though not included in the top 10 list of the most frequent types, had farm income exceeding £40 000. It was followed by Vegetables and Potatoes types in the coastal zone with a farm income of

Figure 11. On and off-farm employment by type of farming.

Figure 12. On-farm and off-farm income by type of farming.
£15 401 and £9 279, respectively. At the other end of the scale, the average Olive type holding earned from farming a low £706, with Vines and Trees and Vines types doing somewhat better.

For all major farm types, farm size, on-farm employment and farm incomes were considerably larger in the case of farms with agricultural income only compared to farms with both farm and off farm income. However, for almost all farm types part time holders were better off when off-farm income was taken into account (Table 31).

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