

2009 AGRICULTURAL CENSUS

The number of agricultural holdings in the Basque Country fell but they are also smaller

Greater role of women in the Basque agricultural sector

There were 16,445 agricultural holdings in the Basque Country in 2009, which was a net drop of 8,293 farms with respect to 1999 (-33%) in homogenous terms, according to the provisional 2009 Agricultural Census prepared by EUSTAT. This downturn was in all three provinces and was headed by Bizkaia (-37%), followed by Álava (-33%) and Gipuzkoa (-30%).

The average total surface area and the Used Agricultural Surface Area (SAU) of the agricultural holdings of the Basque Country was 16.9 hectares and 12.3 hectares, respectively, which was up 18% compared to 1999. Significant differences could be observed between Álava (29.7 ha and 28.3 ha) and the other two provinces, Bizkaia (9.5 ha and 6.6 ha) and Gipuzkoa (18.4 ha and 9.5 ha).

Number of farms and agricultural surface area classified by type of use and province 2009

	BASQUE COUNTRY		ALAVA		BIZKAIA		GIPUZKOA	
	Op.	Ha.	Op.	Ha.	Op.	Ha.	Op.	Ha.
OPERATIONS WITHOUT LAND	35		12		14		9	
F FARMS WITH LAND								
(TOTAL LAND)	16.410	277.234	3.534	105.433	7.075	67.524	5.801	104.277
Tilled land	14.478	78.472	3.205	69.047	6.110	5.458	5.163	3.967
Herbaceous	12.290	61.612	2.342	55.790	5.339	3.403	4.609	2.418
Fruit trees	9.575	2.094	930	103	4.566	809	4.079	1.182
Olive trees	369	124	228	112	92	1	49	10
Vine yard	1.698	14.567	1.161	13.004	411	1.225	126	339
Nurseries and other woody crops	130	76	31	38	55	21	44	17
Land for permanent grazing	13.730	122.976	1.561	30.712	6.671	40.997	5.498	51.267
Fields and permanent grassland	13.619	120.898	1.542	30.241	6.621	40.511	5.456	50.146
Other surfaces for grazing	471	2.078	81	472	153	485	237	1.121
Other land	12.018	75.777	2.237	5.672	5.018	21.065	4.763	49.040
scrubland and heaths	1.044	2.666	318	601	298	853	428	1.212
Baso-zuhaitzen espezieak	8.186	72.134	632	4.797	3.650	19.827	3.904	47.511
Other surfaces	7.092	976	1.900	274	2.414	384	2.778	318
Used agricultural surface area	16.352	201.457	3.522	99.761	7.046	46.459	5.784	55.237

Source: Eustat Agricultural Census 2009

The concentration of livestock continues on livestock farms

In 2009, the number of livestock farms fell for all types of livestock in the Basque Country, even though the average number of head per farm increased in all types of livestock.

The most important decreases were for milking cows and pigs. Over the last decade, the number of farms with dairy cattle and breeding sows fell by 68.5% and 68.2%, respectively. However, the number of dairy cattle per farm fell from 13 in 1999 to 26 in 2009 (+100%) and the number of breeding sows per farm rose from 9 to 10 in the same period (+11%).

Special mention should be made of the number of farms with meat cattle (-33%), while the number of head of these animals per farm rose from 8 to 11 (+30%). The rise in the number of horses (+25%) and the lack of variation in the number of laying hens are noteworthy. The number of animals per farm also increased in both cases.

Number of livestock farms and animals by type and province 2009

	BASQUE COUNTRY		ALAVA		BIZKAIA		GIPUZKOA	
	Op.	Heads	Op.	Heads	Op.	Heads	Op.	Heads
Bovines	5.946	135.448	674	36.565	2.685	49.469	2.587	49.414
Ovines	4.546	271.433	521	63.994	1.859	65.331	2.166	142.108
Caprines	1.616	21.549	151	3.603	896	12.250	569	5.696
Porcines	902	16.102	86	8.900	463	2.496	353	4.706
Equinos	3.504	19.249	412	4.501	1.671	7.450	1.421	7.298
Poultry	6.304	1.596.636	640	158.680	2.625	782.026	3.039	655.930
Mother rabbits	1.858	29.957	147	2.069	926	14.579	785	13.309
Bee hives	205	2.650	72	874	62	1.302	71	474

Source: Eustat. Agricultural Census 2009

Fewer young people and more women running agricultural holdings

The form adopted regarding the legal status of the agricultural holdings remained practically unchanged between 1999 and 2009, with around 95% owned by private individuals and 5% by legal entities. Slightly over 15% farms in Álava were legal entities, while they accounted for between 2 and 3% of the total holdings in Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa.

The average age of the person in charge of the agricultural holding was 57 years old in the Basque Country as a whole. The average age was 54 in Álava, 60 in Bizkaia and 59 in Gipuzkoa. Even though the average age of the person running the farm between 1999 and 2009 remained practically unchanged, the number of young people (people under 40 years old) running a farm decreased in relative importance over the last decade, as it fell by approximately 3 percentage points. The group in the 40-65 age bracket rose by nearly 5 points, while those aged over 65 years old fell slightly by around 2 percentage points.

The number of women as the person at the head of running the farm rose from 24.4% of agricultural holdings in 1999 to 30.9% in 2009. Furthermore, increases were likewise recorded in the number of women running the farms in the three provinces, in the different age brackets (under 40, between 40 and 65, and over 65 years old) and in holdings that were legal entities and owned by private individuals.

Gender and age of the person running the farm. 1999 and 2009

	TOTAL	MAN		WOMAN	
		Num.	%	Num.	%
CENSUS 1999					
TOTAL	24.700	18.679	75,6	6.021	24,4
<40 years	3.126	2.546	81,4	580	18,6
40 - 65	12.944	9.834	76,0	3.110	24,0
>65 years	8.630	6.299	73,0	2.331	27,0
CENSUS 2009					
TOTAL	16.445	11.365	69,1	5.080	30,9
<40 years	1.626	1.253	77,1	373	22,9
40 - 65	9.393	6.579	70,0	2.814	30,0
>65 years	5.426	3.533	65,1	1.893	34,9

Source: Eustat. Agricultural Census 2009

The average workload per farm rose from 0.7 AWUs in 1999 to 0.9 AWUs 2009 (1 AWU – Annual Work Unit – is equivalent at least to 228 full days or 1,826 hours). The number of farms with work loads over 1 AWU/agricultural holding fell in the last decade. Thus, 40% of the farms in the 2009 Census had work loads over 1 AWU, while they represented 42% in 1999. This trend did not only apply at the level of the Basque Country as a whole, but also in each and every one of the province (in particular in Álava), and irrespective of the legal status of the farm and the age of the person running the agricultural holding.

In 2009, around 7% of the farms in the Basque Country declared that they required labour as all the people working on the holding were overworked, either because the tasks were not properly carried out as they did not have enough time or because those tasks were not

performed. Furthermore, 15% of farms that needed temporary workers found it difficult to contract (due to availability or qualification of the workers) and 12% of the farms that needed indefinite workers also faced the same difficulties.

New challenges: diversification of activities, product transformation, agro-environmental measures, organic farming,...

Other complementary activities took place in roughly 30% of the farms of the Basque Country, using the resources of the holding itself. These activities include those related to forestry (present in 24% of the agricultural holdings), transformation of agricultural products (6.4%) and those linked to tourism, accommodation and other recreational activities (1.5%).

Furthermore, 20% of Basque agricultural holdings have benefited from some rural development measure during the last three years. Mention should also be made of the number of agricultural holdings implemented agro-environmental measures (8%), modernising holdings (3%) and the measures related to the increase of the value added of forestry and agricultural products (2%).

Organic farming, even though it is still in its early stages, is growing in importance in the Basque Country. According to the 2009 Agricultural Census, the number of agricultural holdings registered in the Organic Farming Regulatory Board stood at 126 and the declared surface area is 718 ha.

Methodological note: The data refers to the agricultural campaign between 1 October 2008 and 30 September 2009, the 2009 agricultural year. The population sphere refers to agricultural holdings with at least: 1 ha of Used Agricultural Surface area (SAU); 0.2 ha used for growing vegetables, flowers and ornamental plants outside and production under glass or crops in greenhouses or irrigated fruit trees (including citrus trees) or nurseries; 0.1 ha used for growing vegetables in greenhouses; 0.1 ha for growing flowers and ornamental plants in greenhouses; 0.5 ha used for growing tobacco; 0.5 ha for growing hops or cotton; the agricultural holdings that had one or more Livestock Units (LG) with a Total Gross Margin (TGM) equal or greater than 0.75 European Size Units (1 ESU = €1,200).

This operation has been carried out in conjunction with the Spanish National Statistics Institute (INE) in the Basque Country and with the Basque Government's Department for the Environmental, Land Planning, Agriculture and Fisheries.

The data included are provisional and are for agricultural holdings whose owners reside and have the holding in the Basque Country.

The criteria established for the 2009 Agricultural Census, which has limited the population sphere with regard to the 1999 Agricultural Census, as described above, have been considered in the inter-census comparison.

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