

The size of agricultural operations in the Basque Country increases, for both livestock and crop farming

Fewer young people work in the Basque agricultural sector

The number of agricultural operations recorded during the 2009 census was 16,554, a fall of 32.8% compared to census records for 1999 according to the definitive data produced by Eustat in its 2009 Agricultural Census.

The amount of used agricultural land (UAL) fell by over 65,017 hectares (25.5%) since 1999. At the 2009 census, UAL stood at 190,273 hectares in total.

The drop in UAL was reflected in both cropland (down 6.4% compared to figures from the previous census) and permanent pastureland (down 34.9%).

The average number of annual work units (UTA) per establishment also fell between 1999 and 2009, by 7.2%.

Table 1. Main results. Basque Country

	2009	1999(*)	2009/1999 Δ %
Number of censured agricultural holdings	16.554	24.640	-32,8
Total surface Censured (ST)	261.700	472.459	-44,6
Agricultural area utilised (SAU)	190.273	255.290	-25,5
Tilled land (TL)	78.811	84.193	-6,4
Herbaceous and fallow (1)	62.056	69.521	-10,7
Fruit	1.981	2.544	-22,1
Olive	147	185	-20,5
Vineyard	14.544	11.899	-22,2
Other woody plants	83	44	-88,6
Permanent grazing	111.462	171.097	-34,9
Annual Work Units (AWU)			
Total	14.768	23.737	-37,8
Family labour	13.658	21.092	-35,2
Non-family labour	1.110	2.646	-58,0
Indicators Structural			
ST Average per operation	15,8	19,2	-17,6
SAU Average per operation	11,5	10,4	10,9
UTA Average per operation	0,9	1,0	-7,4

(*) Data referring to the population studied in 2009. See methodological note

(1) including and market gardens

Source:EUSTAT.Agricultural Census 2009

Livestock Farming

The number of operations for each type of livestock fell between 1999 and 2009, with the largest falls registered in pig farms (down 68.9%), poultry farms (down 39.7%) and cattle farms (down 35.5%). The number of farming operations involving sheep and goats fell by 5% to 10%, while those involving horses and other equines fell by 19.9%.

However, during the period between the two censuses the average number of animals per operation rose for all types of livestock with the exception of sheep, which fell by 8.5%. The largest increases were seen in cattle farms (an average of 88.3% more animals per operation), equine operations (56.4% more) and poultry operations (44.5% more).

By type, the greatest quantity of animals was found in the poultry sector, at almost 1.57 million, followed by sheep at 272,167 and cattle at 136,246.

From 1999 to 2009 the number of animals increased for equine operations (25.3%), cattle operations (21.4%) and those involving goats (11.1%). However, this figure fell for pigs (down 57.7%), sheep (down 13.3%) and poultry (down 12.9%).

Table 2. Number of livestock operations and number of animals per operation. Basque Country

	2009	1999(*)	2009/1999 Δ %
Bovines			
Agricultural holdings	5.930	9.197	-35,5
Heads	136.246	112.206	21,4
Heads/Agricultural holding	22,98	12,20	88,3
Ovines			
Agricultural holdings	4.539	4.790	-5,2
Heads	272.167	313.896	-13,3
Heads/Agricultural holding	59,96	65,53	-8,5
Caprines			
Agricultural holdings	1.605	1.778	-9,7
Heads	21.547	19.402	11,1
Heads/Agricultural holding	13,42	10,91	23,0
Porcines			
Agricultural holdings	898	2.891	-68,9
Heads	16092	38.067	-57,7
Heads/Agricultural holding	17,92	13,17	36,1
Birds			
Agricultural holdings	6.299	10.444	-39,7
Heads	1.596.474	1.831.882	-12,9
Heads/Agricultural holding	253,45	175,40	44,5
Equines			
Agricultural holdings	3.444	4.298	-19,9
Heads	19.255	15.366	25,3
Heads/Agricultural holding	5,59	3,58	56,4

(*) Data referring to the population studied in 2009. See methodological note

Source: Eustat. Agricultural Census 2009

Fewer young people participating and more women heading agricultural operations

Throughout the last decade the number of young people (less than 40 years of age) at the head of agricultural operations has decreased in relative terms by approximately 3%. The corresponding figure for those aged between 40 and 65 rose by almost 5%, while that for the over-65s registered a slight fall of around 2%.

The number of operations headed by women increased by 6% to an overall total of 31%, with increases recorded throughout the three provinces and across the different age ranges. In terms of age, the highest percentages of both male and female bosses were found in the 40 to 65 interval.

Table 3. Gender and age of the heads of the operations, Basque Country Autonomous Region

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CENSUS	Age Range	TOTAL	MAN		WOMAN	
			Núm.	%	Núm.	%
1999 (*)	<40 years	3.127	2.546	13,6	581	9,6
	40 - 65 years	13.671	10.372	55,5	3.299	54,8
	>65 years	7.905	5.762	30,8	2.143	35,6
	TOTAL	24.703	18.680	100,0	6.023	100,0
2009	<40 years	1.586	1.229	10,7	357	7,0
	40 - 65 years	9.973	6.981	60,9	2.992	58,7
	>65 years	4.995	3.250	28,4	1.745	34,3
	TOTAL	16.554	11.460	100,0	5.094	100,0

(*) Data referring to the population studied in 2009. See methodological note

Source: Eustat. Agricultural Census 2009

Methodological note: the data refer to the 2009 farming season, i.e. beginning on the 1st of October 2008 and ending on the 30th of September 2009. The population field refers to agricultural operations with at least: 1 ha of used agricultural land (SAU); 0.2 ha dedicated to vegetables, flowers and ornamental plants cultivated in the open air, under cover or in greenhouses, or fruit trees (including citrus fruits) that are irrigated or cultivated in nurseries; 0.1 ha dedicated to vegetables in greenhouses; 0.1 ha dedicated to flowers and ornamental plants in greenhouses; 0.5 ha dedicated to tobacco; 0.5 ha dedicated to hops or cotton; and for agricultural operations that were registered in the 1999 Agricultural Census, one or more animal units (AU) with a total gross margin (TGM) equal to or greater than 0.75 European Size Units (ESU: 1 ESU = €1,200).

This operation has been carried out in collaboration with the Spanish Statistics Institute (INE) in the Basque Country Autonomous Region and the Basque Government's Department of the Environment, Territorial Planning, Agriculture and Fishing.

For the comparison between censuses the criteria established for the Agricultural Census 2009 were taken into account, namely the limitation of the population field in relation to that of the Agricultural Census 1999, as described above.

Para más información:

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