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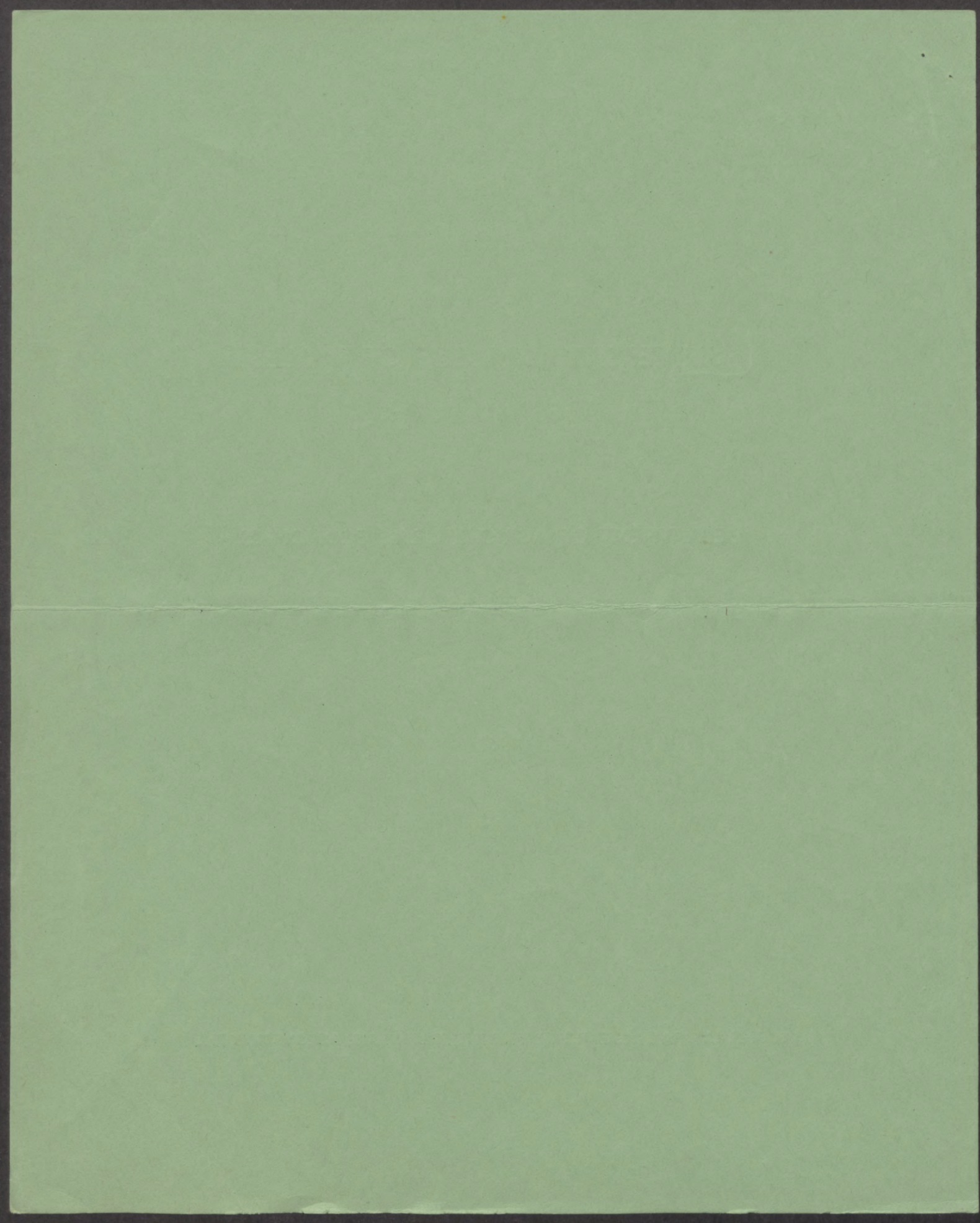
FARM LABOUR COSTS IN WALES 1946-7.

by

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In farming the output of work by individual workmen or by each farm group of workers varies according to the managerial ability of the manager, the efficiency and willingness of the workmen, adequacy of implements or tools provided, the lay-out, and soil and other physical characteristics of the farm. The importance of the labour factor in the management of the farm can easily be understood when it is realised that the labour bill alone represents something like one-third of the total farm payments. Thus, the profitable utilisation of the labour staff assumes great importance at the present time. The only desirable method of decreasing the share of wages in the cost of production is to increase the output per worker while maintaining wage rates.

Over a period of two years, from September 1945 to September 1947, a study was made of the labour costs on thirty-two individual farms scattered over a wide area of Wales. Eighteen of these farms specialised in milk production and fat lambs; the remaining farms were mainly concerned with the production of store and fat cattle, lambs and pigs. These sample farms averaged, in 1946, 264.7 acres of cultivated land and 134.6 acres of rough grazings. In 1947 the average size of the cultivated area per farm was 281.9 acres, and of the rough grazings 143.0 acres.

The utilisation of land on these sample farms followed much the same pattern as for Wales as a whole; that is, in 1946-7 the acreage under cereal crops, pulse crops, potatoes and roots decreased, that under permanent grass increased slightly, and there was an increase of 11 per cent on the 1945-6 acreage sown down with temporary grasses.

There were some differences in the cropping plan on the two types of farm. On the store and fat cattle farms, the acreage under cereals, potatoes and roots in 1946-7 was larger than in 1945-6 and that under permanent grass was smaller, but the acreage of land sown down with temporary grasses rose by 55 per cent. On the other hand, on the milk-producing farms, there was a marked increase in the acreage under pulse crops, a 15 per cent rise in the permanent grassland, but nearly 10 per cent fall in the acreage allotted to temporary grasses. Rough grazings increased in extent on all sample farms in 1946-7, though there was a decrease in acreage on the store and fat cattle farms.

The situation with regard to livestock on the sample farms was rather different from that prevailing throughout Wales. According to the 4th June returns the numbers in the dairy herds (cows and heifers in milk, cows in calf but not in milk, and heifers in calf) on all sample farms had increased slightly in 1946-7; this increase was due to an increase in the number in the dairy herds maintained on the store and fat cattle farms, for the numbers on the milk-producing farms showed a decrease in that year. For all sample farms all other classes of livestock, except horses, showed an increase. The numbers of breeding sows on the store and fat cattle farms increased considerably but fell by nearly 10 per cent on the milk-producing farms. On the other hand, the total number of pigs declined on the store and fat cattle farms, but increased

four-fold on the milk-producing farms. The sheep population on both types of farms showed an increase on the 1945-6 figures. The poultry on the store and fat cattle farms showed a decrease in numbers similar to that in Wales as a whole, but on the milk-producing farms there was nearly 40 per cent increase.

On these farms the decline in the numbers of agricultural workers in 1946-7 was more marked than in Wales as a whole, more especially on the farms specialising in milk and fat lambs. Here the numbers were nearly 7 per cent less than in 1945-6. The number of adult male hired workers increased slightly in the later period on the milk-producing farms but this was more than counterbalanced by a considerable decrease in the numbers of youths employed. The figures for males over 21 hired on the store and fat cattle farms were slightly smaller in 1946-7, but those of youths showed little change. Over all sample farms the numbers of adult male workers employed remained thus approximately the same, but the numbers of male workers under 21, and the numbers of prisoners of war dropped sharply on all farms, as did the number of Women's Land Army members employed on the farms producing milk and fat lambs. On the other hand, the increase in the number of male labourers casually employed was considerable.

Changes in the Distribution of Labour on the Sample Farms. Though the numbers in the dairy herds were higher in 1946-7 on the store and fat cattle farms, the number of men classified as cowmen on both types of farm decreased. Similarly, despite the increase in the numbers of sheep carried on the store and fat cattle farms, the number of men classified as shepherds was smaller. This decline in number of specialised workers was counterbalanced on the store and fat cattle farms by an increase in the numbers of general labourers both under and over 21 years. On the other hand the decrease in the number of carters on the store and fat cattle farms was accompanied by an increase in the number of tractor drivers, which indicates development in mechanisation. On the milk-producing farms, though the numbers of tractor drivers over 21 remained the same in both period, there were fewer under 21 years hired in the second period. General labourers under 21 years were also smaller in numbers on these farms in 1946-7.

As Table 1 indicates, the average number of hired workers per farm showed a decrease in 1946-7 as compared with 1945-6, largely due to the decline in the numbers of prisoners of war. The numbers of family workers showed no change.

Table 1.

Distribution of Workers per Farm.

Class of Worker,	1945-6.			1946-7.			Index Figures, 1945-6=100		
	Store & Fat	Milk & Fat	All Sample	Store & Fat	Milk & Fat	All Sample	Store & Fat	Milk & Fat	All Sample
	Cattle	Lambs.	Farms.	Cattle	Lambs.	Farms.	Cattle	Lambs.	Farms.
1. Regular Hired Labour:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Males 21 +	3.9	4.3	4.1	3.8	4.4	4.1	96.4	102.6	100.0
" under 21	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.6	100.0	72.7	94.7
Women and Girls	-	0.1	0.1	-	0.1	0.1	-	100.0	100.0
Women's Land Army	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.3	100.0	66.7	75.0
Prisoners of War	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.1	0.3	0.2	66.7	33.3	43.8
2. Casual:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Male	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	150.0	125.0	133.3
Female	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.3	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total Hired	5.5	6.7	6.2	5.3	6.3	5.9	96.2	93.4	95.2
3. Family:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Farmer and Wife	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	100.0	100.0	100.0
Relatives	0.3	0.7	0.5	0.4	0.7	0.5	125.0	103.3	112.5
Grand Total	6.6	8.2	7.5	6.5	7.8	7.2	97.8	95.2	96.3

The total amount of working time put in by these workers also decreased compared with the total number of weeks worked on these farms in 1945-6. For all hired labour the decrease was 1.4 per cent; for both hired and family labour (including the farmers and their wives) the decrease was nearly 2 per cent. This decrease, coupled with the increase in acreage, gave, on average, a smaller number of working weeks per 100 acres on all sample farms in 1946-7. As might be expected, the group of farms specialising in store cattle required less labour per 100 acres both of the cultivated land and of the total area, but it will be noted too that the average number of weeks worked by both regular hired labour, and by all labour, on every 100 acres of land has fallen for both groups of farms.

Table 2.

Distribution of Working Weeks per 100 Acres.

Type of Farm.	Number of Farms.	Year ending September, 1946.				Year ending September, 1947.			
		All Labour inc.		All Labour inc.		All Labour inc.		All Labour inc.	
		Hired Labour.	Farmer & Wife.	Hired Labour.	Farmer & Wife.	Hired Labour.	Farmer & Wife.	Hired Labour.	Farmer & Wife.
		Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
		Cultiv. Area.	Total Area.	Cultiv. Area.	Total Area.	Cultiv. Area.	Total Area.	Cultiv. Area.	Total Area.
		Weeks	Weeks	Weeks	Weeks	Weeks	Weeks	Weeks	Weeks
Store and Fat									
Cattle	14	97.7	52.9	117.9	63.8	85.7	46.1	105.9	57.1
Milk & Fat Lambs	18	106.5	86.3	143.1	115.9	103.0	84.6	135.0	110.9
All Farms	32	102.7	68.4	132.1	88.0	95.1	63.0	121.7	80.7

This fact is confirmed by a study of Table 3, which shows the average amount of time contributed per 100 acres by each category of worker.

Table 3.

Distribution of Working Weeks per 100 Acres according
to Category of Worker.

Class of Worker.	: Year ending September, 1946.				: Year ending September, 1947.			
	: Store and Fat		: Milk and Fat		: Store and Fat		: Milk and Fat	
	: Cattle Farms.		: Lamb Farms.		: Cattle Farms.		: Lamb Farms.	
	: Total :	: Total :	: Total :	: Total :	: Total :	: Total :	: Total :	: Total :
	: Cultiv.:	: Total :	: Cultiv.:	: Total :	: Cultiv.:	: Total :	: Cultiv.:	: Total :
	: Area. :	: Area. :	: Area. :	: Area. :	: Area. :	: Area. :	: Area. :	: Area. :
	: Weeks :	: Weeks :	: Weeks :	: Weeks :	: Weeks :	: Weeks :	: Weeks :	: Weeks :
Bailiffs & Foremen	: 10.7 :	: 5.8 :	: 6.2 :	: 5.0 :	: 9.0 :	: 4.8 :	: 7.1 :	: 5.8 :
Tractor Drivers	: 5.1 :	: 2.7 :	: 10.0 :	: 8.1 :	: 6.0 :	: 3.3 :	: 9.8 :	: 8.0 :
Cowmen	: 15.0 :	: 8.2 :	: 23.2 :	: 18.8 :	: 13.0 :	: 7.0 :	: 21.1 :	: 17.3 :
Carters	: 14.6 :	: 7.9 :	: 11.9 :	: 9.6 :	: 10.6 :	: 5.7 :	: 11.5 :	: 9.5 :
Other Stockmen	: 3.5 :	: 1.9 :	: 4.1 :	: 3.4 :	: 3.3 :	: 1.8 :	: 5.3 :	: 4.3 :
General Labourers	: 24.7 :	: 13.4 :	: 24.1 :	: 19.5 :	: 24.5 :	: 13.2 :	: 26.5 :	: 21.8 :
All Adult Males	: 73.6 :	: 39.9 :	: 79.5 :	: 64.4 :	: 66.4 :	: 35.8 :	: 81.3 :	: 66.7 :
Youths under 21	: 10.0 :	: 5.4 :	: 9.2 :	: 7.4 :	: 11.1 :	: 5.9 :	: 7.8 :	: 6.4 :
Women and Girls	: - :	: - :	: 2.3 :	: 1.9 :	: - :	: - :	: 2.2 :	: 1.8 :
Women's Land Army	: 4.9 :	: 2.6 :	: 8.3 :	: 6.7 :	: 4.2 :	: 2.3 :	: 4.8 :	: 4.0 :
Prisoners of War	: 9.2 :	: 5.0 :	: 7.2 :	: 5.9 :	: 4.0 :	: 2.2 :	: 6.5 :	: 5.4 :
Displaced Persons	: - :	: - :	: - :	: - :	: - :	: - :	: 0.4 :	: 0.3 :
All Reg. Hired Labour	: 97.7 :	: 52.9 :	: 106.5 :	: 86.3 :	: 85.7 :	: 46.2 :	: 103.0 :	: 84.6 :
Casual:								
Males	: 2.4 :	: 1.3 :	: 4.3 :	: 3.5 :	: 2.2 :	: 1.2 :	: 3.9 :	: 3.2 :
Females	: 2.6 :	: 1.4 :	: 5.3 :	: 4.3 :	: 3.1 :	: 1.7 :	: 4.0 :	: 3.3 :
Family Labour:								
Relatives	: 6.4 :	: 3.4 :	: 14.0 :	: 11.3 :	: 5.3 :	: 2.9 :	: 13.2 :	: 10.9 :
Farmer and Wife	: 8.8 :	: 4.8 :	: 12.9 :	: 10.5 :	: 9.6 :	: 5.1 :	: 10.9 :	: 8.9 :
Total Labour	: 117.9 :	: 63.8 :	: 143.0 :	: 115.9 :	: 105.9 :	: 57.1 :	: 135.0 :	: 110.9 :

The greater part of the work was performed by regular hired adult male labour, the greatest proportion of this being provided by general labourers, with cowmen, carters, tractor drivers and other stockmen following in that order of importance. More use of bailiffs and foremen was made within the group of store and fat cattle farms than was the case with the other group of farms. It will be remarked, too, that, though the hours worked per 100 acres by adult males on the store and fat cattle farms decreased in 1947, there was a slight increase on the milk-producing farms, but this increase was more than offset by the decrease in the working time put in by youths under 21, by the Women's Land Army, and by prisoners of war. Amongst the store and fat cattle farms, the