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WITHDRAWN

FARM COSTS OF HIRED LABOUR IN

WALES DURING 1943-4.

by

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1945.

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FARM COSTS OF HIRED LABOUR IN WALES DURING  
1943-4.

191 X During the first few years of this war farmers in Wales increased the area under tillage crops by ~~20~~ <sup>25</sup> per cent, and although it became necessary during this last farming year to re-seed to leys a large proportion of the land ploughed up in 1939-40, the tillage area has been maintained at about the 1943 acreage. There was, during 1943-4, a further small reduction in the acreage of permanent pasture but with an increase of about one-third in that of rotational grasses the total of <sup>CULTIVATED</sup> cultural grass for grazing and hay was greater than in the previous year.

The following table shows the utilisation of land on thirty-two farms for which special information relating to costs of labour was collected:-

1943-4.

	: Total	:
	: Cultivated	: Total
	: Area.	: Area.
	:	:
	: %.	: %.
Tillage	: 31.0	: 22.3
Rotational Grasses	: 20.3	: 14.6
Permanent Pasture	: 48.7	: 35.0
Rough Grazings	: -	: 28.1
<u>Acres per farm:</u>	:	:
Cultivated Area	: 286	: 286
Rough Grazing	: -	: 112
	:	:
Total	: 286	: 398

The information relating to labour on these farms is not quite representative of the conditions in Wales as a whole. The farms were selected because of their size and the fact that the labour used on them was mainly or wholly hired. The information was primarily needed for measuring changes in the farm costs of labour. These changes are affected partly by adjustments which have been made in the ordinary weekly contract rates of wages, partly by variations in the numbers and classes of workers employed and also partly by some increase in the overtime employment. But the results described, while providing very useful information on the importance of these changes, are not to be taken as indicating a general picture of the actual costs of labour on the small farms of Wales.

Supply of Labour. The total recorded agricultural labour force in Wales in June 1944 was 23 per cent greater than in 1939. It was over 12 per

cent greater than that recorded in the previous year\*. There have been no important changes in the number of men in regular employment. The number of boys forming part of the normal complement of farms has been reduced by about 9 per cent and the number of women, other than W.L.A., in continuous employment on the same farms has increased by about 13 per cent. The number of workers casually employed by farmers has increased by nearly 50 per cent. Members of the W.L.A. recorded as working in Wales in 1944 numbered nearly 2,500, and nearly 2,200 prisoners of war were engaged on farm work in the Principality.

In 1939 women and girls on farms in Wales represented nearly 18 per cent of all workers. By 1944 their numbers had risen by more than 50 per cent and they then represented over one-fifth of the total. Members of the W.L.A. accounted for less than 60 per cent of the increase in female workers, the balance being made up by a rise in the number of women and girls living in rural areas who had taken up farm work. The total number of hired workers in 1944 represented approximately 2 per 100 acres of crops and grass. The average number of workers employed on the specially recorded farms was 7.3 per farm and 2.5 per 100 acres of crops and grass.

	Per Farm.	Per 100 acres of Cultivated Land.
<u>Regulars:</u>		
21 and over	4.0	1.4
under 21	0.7	0.2
women and girls	0.5	0.2
Women's Land Army	1.0	0.3
Prisoners of war	0.3	0.1
<u>Casuals:</u>		
Men	0.5	0.2
Boys and youths	-	-
Women and girls	0.3	0.1
<u>Total</u>	<u>7.3</u>	<u>2.5</u>

In 22 of the cases farmers and their wives helped with the manual work, and 12 sons and 2 daughters were also included.

Nine of the recorded farms provided regular employment for women, including members of the W.L.A., and an equal number employed prisoners of war.

\* The return of labour on farms on the 4th June 1944 was in different form from the returns obtained in previous years. The change has resulted in a somewhat fuller enumeration and has tended to transfer some classes of workers from the "casual" to the "regular" class.

This enquiry has now been continued for four years and the following summary shows the percentage distribution of weeks worked by each of the main classes of persons regularly employed on these farms.

Per cent. of Total Weeks.

Year.	No. of Farms.	Males.		Women & Prisoners:		Total.
		years & over.	Under 21.	Girls.	of War.	
		%.	%.	%.	%.	
1939-40	44	84.1	14.1	1.8	-	100.0
1940-41	47	82.7	12.7	4.6	-	100.0
1941-42	42	78.0	11.9	10.1	-	100.0
1942-43	36	76.3	10.5	11.6	1.6	100.0
1943-44	32	70.7	9.9	15.0	4.4	100.0

These results show a steady fall in the proportionate amounts of total time in work-weeks accounted for by men and boys, and an increase in that credited to women and girls. The introduction of prisoner-of-war labour as part of the regular complement of farms during the last two years is also indicated.

The actual total number of weeks worked per farm by each of the main classes of regular workers is shown in the following table:-

Employment per farm in Person-weeks.

	1940-1	1941-2	1942-3	1943-4
	No.	No.	No.	No.
Bailiffs and Foremen	13.3	12.5	13.1	14.6
Tractor Drivers	8.7	6.4	6.7	15.8
Shepherds	10.7	10.7	11.3	11.3
Carters	52.5	55.1	53.2	45.6
Cowmen	56.9	53.8	52.7	51.8
Other Special Workers	5.3	3.7	3.8	3.3
Labourers	54.4	72.0	60.5	57.3
	202.8	214.2	201.3	199.7
Youths and Boys	31.3	32.7	27.8	28.0
Females: Full-time	11.2	27.6	30.6	42.5
Prisoners of War	-	-	4.3	12.4
Total	245.3	274.5	264.0	282.6
Per 100 acres cultivated crops and grass	80	95	99	99

It will be seen that the number of weeks of work done per farm by men in this last year was about the same as in the previous one. The amount of work done per farm by women and girls in 1943-4 was nearly four times greater than that recorded in 1940-41. The weeks worked by prisoners of war averaged 12 per farm. The total weeks worked by all workers amounted to 99 per 100 acres, and were nearly 24 per cent more than those recorded on similar farms in 1940-41.

Although the number of weeks of work done per farm by men was nearly the same as in the previous year, and was only four weeks less than that shown for the records examined in 1940-1, it represents a much smaller proportion of the total for all classes of regular workers. A full comparison of the results from records collected during the last ~~three~~ <sup>four</sup> years is given below:-

Importance of work done by each Class of  
Regular Worker. (Per cent of total weeks  
worked by all).

	1940-1	1941-2	1942-3	1943-4
	%	%	%	%
Balliffs and Foremen	5.4	4.5	5.0	5.2
Tractor Drivers	3.5	2.3	2.6	5.6
Shepherds	4.4	3.9	4.3	4.0
Carters	21.4	20.1	20.1	16.1
Cowmen	23.2	19.6	20.0	18.3
Other Special Classes	2.6	1.4	1.4	1.1
General Labour	22.2	26.2	22.9	20.3
Youths and Boys	12.7	11.9	10.5	9.9
Females (Full-time)	4.6	10.1	11.6	15.0
Prisoners of War	-	-	1.6	4.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The records for 1940-1 showed that nearly 83 per cent of the total weeks worked by regular workers were accounted for by men; less than 13 per cent by youths and boys; and less than 5 per cent by women. In contrast, the information for this last year shows these approximate percentages: 71, 10, and 15 respectively, with the addition of just over 4 per cent worked by Prisoners of War.

Wages and Earnings. In January, 1944, the National minimum weekly wage of £3. 5. 0. for ordinary adult male workers became operative; it amounted to an increase of rather more than 8 per cent on the previous minimum of £3. Since August 1939 the minimum rates have increased by 96 per cent.

The actual contract wages received by workers tend to be somewhat higher than the minimum. This is shown in the following summary, which relates to

conditions at the beginning of each of the last six Septembers:-

Average of Minimum and Contract Rates of Wages.

September:	Average of Minimum Rates		Contract Wage.		Difference.	All Adult Males including Special Classes.	
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.		Contract Wage.	Difference.
1939	33. 3	36. 6	3. 3	40. 10	7. 7		
1940	48. 0	50. 11	2. 11	53. 3	5. 3		
1941	48. 0	50. 0	2. 0	53. 3	5. 3		
1942	60. 0	62. 9	2. 9	66. 4	6. 4		
1943	60. 0	63. 8	3. 8	67. 6	7. 6		
1944	65. 0	70. 2	5. 2	75. 1	10. 1		

The increase in the margin between minimum and contract wages supports a general impression that, because of the greater demand for workers, farmers have recently been obliged to offer rates appreciably higher than the minimum.

Comparison of weekly rates, payable to each class of adult worker at the outbreak of war and during last September, shows these results:-

Weekly Contract Wages of Adult Male Workers.

	September		1939 = 100.
	1939.	1944.	
	s. d.	s. d.	%.
Bailiffs and Foremen:	48. 4	86. 4	179
Tractor Drivers	45. 11	72. 5	158
Shepherds	41. 5	83. 3	201
Cowmen	42. 11	80. 1	187
Carters	39. 9	71. 6	180
General Labourers	36. 6	70. 2	192
<u>Average</u>	<u>40. 10</u>	<u>75. 1</u>	<u>184</u>

The increase in contract wages during the period is shown as 84 per cent, rather less than the increase in the legal minimum, but for shepherds the

rate has doubled.

The average of weekly contract wages paid to each of the main classes of men over the full year 1943-4 varied between 68s.4d. for general labourers and 83s.4d. for bailiffs. The weekly rates for 1943-4 showed a general increase of 18s.10d. or 35 per cent over those paid in 1940, and of 67 per cent over those paid in 1939-40.

Average Weekly Contract Wages.

					1943-4
					Increase
	1940-1	1941-2	1942-3	1943-4	on 1940-1
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Bailiffs and Foremen	59. 7	68. 9	70. 9	83. 8	24. 7
Tractor Drivers	54. 10	63. 5	63. 3	71. 7	16. 9
Shepherds	55. 7	64. 1	71. 2	81. 10	26. 3
Carters	52. 4	61. 0	65. 4	69. 9	17. 5
Cowmen	55. 1	65. 5	68. 9	78. 5	23. 4
General Labourers	51. 0	59. 5	61. 7	68. 4	17. 4
Average	54. 8	63. 6	66. 11	73. 6	18. 10

The increase has been greatest for bailiffs, shepherds and cowmen, that is for those who occupy the most responsible positions on the farms. There has been a considerable growth in the demand for tractor drivers, but the special attractions of the work seem to have enabled farmers to find men without offering any particular inducements in the form of exceptionally high weekly wages.

The actual weekly earnings are affected by overtime and bonus payments and also by lost time. Overtime payments amounted to just over £24, and loss of wages due to lost time to £5, on each farm. The average weekly earnings, in the last four years, of each class of adult male worker for which information is available is as follows:-

Average Weekly earnings.

					1943-4
					Increase
	1940-1	1941-2	1942-3	1943-4	on 1940-1
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Bailiffs and Foremen	60. 0	69. 4	72. 3	84. 6	24. 6
Tractor Drivers	56. 1	64. 9	69. 5	74. 1	18. 0
Shepherds	56. 8	66. 2	73. 4	86. 3	29. 7
Carters	52. 9	62. 6	67. 2	71. 7	18. 10
Cowmen	57. 8	66. 5	70. 8	80. 4	22. 8
General Labourers	51. 7	60. 1	63. 6	70. 2	18. 7
Average	55. 10	64. 11	69. 5	75. 6	19. 8



The increase in weekly earnings over the four years, as shown by collected records, varied between 18s. for tractor drivers and 29s.7d. for shepherds.

Differences between contract wages and weekly earnings in each of the four years have on an average varied between 1s.2d. in 1940-1 and 2s.6d. in 1942-3. Last year earnings were 2s. higher than contract wages.

Excess of Average Weekly Earnings over  
Contract Rates.

	1940-1	1941-2	1942-3	1943-4
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Bailiffs and Foremen:	0.11	0.7	1.6	0.10
Tractor Drivers	1.3	1.4	6.0	2.6
Shepherds	1.1	1.11	2.2	4.5
Carters	1.5	1.6	1.10	1.10
Cowmen	2.7	1.0	1.11	1.11
General Labourers	0.7	0.8	1.11	1.10
Average	1.2	1.5	2.6	2.0

The differences for carters, cowmen, and general labourers, the three groups which constitute the bulk of the labour force on these farms, remained approximately the same in each of the four years. For 1943-4 the extra earnings from overtime work and bonus payments amounted on an average to just over 2s.5d. per week, but lost time reduced this to 2s.

The average age of youths and boys employed on the recorded farms in each of the last five years has been subject to some variation, and comparisons between their average weekly earnings in each year have to be made with caution.

Average Contract Weekly Wages and Earnings of  
Boys and Youths (under 21 years).

	Contract.	Earnings.	Diff- erence.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
1939-40	27.11	28.1	0.2
1940-41	34.1	34.3	0.2
1941-42	36.6	38.3	1.9
1942-43	43.5	44.3	0.10
1943-44	51.4	51.6	0.2

The average contract wage of male workers under 21 years in 1939-40 was 63 per cent of that of adult workers; last year it was 68 per cent. Differences between contract wages and earnings showed wider yearly fluctuations than did those for wages and earnings of men.

Average weekly contract wages and earnings of women, for which figures are available for the farms recorded during the last four years, tended to approximate to those of youths and boys. They were:-

Contract Wages and Earnings of Women.

Year.	Contract Wage.	Earnings.	Difference.
:	s. d	s. d	s. d
1940-1	34. 3	34. 7	0. 4
1941-2	35. 2	36. 2	1. 0
1942-3	46. 4	47. 11	1. 7
1943-4	51. 0	52. 10	1. 10

It would appear however that women had more opportunity of increasing their earnings by overtime employment since the difference between the contract wage and earnings tended to be greater.

Costs of Labour per Farm and per 100 Acres.

The total cost of labour per farm in 1943-4 amounted to £1,110.11. 0 as compared with £977. 9. 0. in the previous year. Costs per 100 acres of crops and grass were £387.14. 0. and £350. 6. 0. respectively.

Total expenditure on adult males represented just under 68 per cent of that on all labour. Compared with the records for 1940-1 the increase in the cost of this class of worker per 100 acres was just over 46 per cent. The cost of labour done by youths and boys was 35 per cent higher than that recorded in 1940-1.

## Yearly Costs of Labour per Farm.

	1940-1.	1941-2.	1942-3.	1943-4.	Per cent of Total Costs
	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	%.
<b>Adult Male Employees:</b>					
Bailiffs & Foremen	39.15.10	43. 5. 9	47. 9. 7	61.16. 3	5.6
Tractor Drivers	24. 8. 5	20.13. 0	23.16. 2	58.11.10	5.3
Shepherds	30. 9. 3	35. 5.10	41. 9. 4	48.13. 1	4.4
Carters	138. 8. 0	172. 5. 0	178.13. 9	163. 1. 8	14.6
Cowmen	158. 5. 3	178.18.10	186. 0. 6	208. 1. 2	18.7
Other Special Classes	17. 5.11	11. 7.10	12.15. 6	10.15. 9	1.0
Ordinary Labourers	140. 6. 9	216. 5. 5	191.19. 4	201. 2. 0	18.1
<b>Total Adult Males</b>	<b>548.19. 5</b>	<b>678. 1. 8</b>	<b>682. 4. 2</b>	<b>752. 1. 9</b>	<b>67.7</b>
<b>Other Employees:</b>					
Youths and Boys	53.11. 8	59. 9. 9	61.13. 7	72. 2. 9	6.5
Prisoners of War	-	-	9. 0. 8	28.18. 1	2.6
Females (Full-time)	19. 8. 1	47.10. 5	73. 4. 9	112. 5. 0	10.1
" (Domestics)	9.14. 8	19. 1. 6	25. 6. 4	25. 3. 9	2.3
Casual Labour	29.16.11	72.15. 9	84.19. 2	66.18.11	6.0
Family Labour	6.17. 0	21. 8. 7	40.19.11	53. 0.10	4.8
<b>Total Hired Workers:</b>	<b>668. 7. 9</b>	<b>898. 7. 8</b>	<b>977. 8. 7</b>	<b>1110.11. 1</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Costs of labour per 100 acres of crops and grass amounted to £387.14. 6, of which £345.16. 6. was in respect of regular hired workers, £23. 7. 7. in respect of casual workers, and £18.10. 5. in respect of members of farmers' families.

## Cost of Labour per 100 Acres Cultivated Crops &amp; Grass.

	1939-40.	1940-1.	1941-2.	1942-3.	1943-4.
	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.	£. s. d.
<b>Regular Labour:</b>					
Adult Males	159.14.10	176.18. 8	226.15. 6	244. 9. 0	258.17. 5
Boys	16.12.10	17. 5. 5	19.18. 3	22. 2. 0	37.13. 2
Prisoners of War	-	-	-	3. 4. 9	10. 1.11
Women	6.19. 0	6. 5. 1	22. 0. 3	35. 6. 3	39. 4. 0
<b>Total</b>	<b>183. 6. 8</b>	<b>200. 9. 2</b>	<b>268.14. 0</b>	<b>305. 2. 0</b>	<b>345.16. 6</b>
Casual	7.12. 6	9.12. 5	24. 7. 3	30.10. 9	23. 7. 7
Family	3. 2. 5	2. 4. 2	7. 3. 4	14.13. 7	18.10. 5
<b>Total</b>	<b>194. 1. 7</b>	<b>212. 5. 9</b>	<b>300. 4. 7</b>	<b>350. 6. 4</b>	<b>387.14. 6</b>
<b>Contract Work</b>	<b>3. 7. 2</b>	<b>7. 8. 7</b>	<b>8.13.10</b>	<b>14. 5. 9</b>	<b>11. 6. 7</b>

Expenditure on casual labour was highest in September and lowest in December. It was generally high from July to October, and low during December and the interval between spring cultivations and sowings and the hay harvest.

The total cost of all hired and family labour, per 100 acres, in 1943-4 was nearly double the amount recorded in 1939-40; that of hired only had increased by about 93 per cent. Nearly half of this increase was due to a rise in wages; a slightly smaller part can be accounted for by the larger numbers of workers employed; and about one-tenth was the result of further overtime.

Contract Work. Cost of work done on contract by private contractors and the War Agricultural Executive Committees was approximately £30 per recorded farm, and was about £10 less than in the previous year. In 1940-1, the cost per 100 acres of cultivated crops and grass was £7. 8. 7; in 1942-3, £14. 5. 9; and, during this last year £11. 0. 7. The greater part of the contract work related to the use of machinery and workers for threshing. Contract work on ploughing and cultivations accounted for only about one-sixth of the total.

Conclusions. The collected information shows that the average weekly contract wage of men during the year 1943-4 was 67 per cent greater than that shown in the records collected during 1939-40. But as previously stated a ~~comparison of~~ weekly contract wages in September 1944 were 84 per cent higher than those paid in September 1939. During 1943-4 the amount of labour used per 100 acres was 17 per cent greater than in 1939-40 and 24 per cent more than that used in 1940-1.

The costs of labour per 100 acres have doubled during the five years. About two-thirds of this increase is due to higher wages and the remainder to a rise in the number of workers and an extension of overtime employment.

