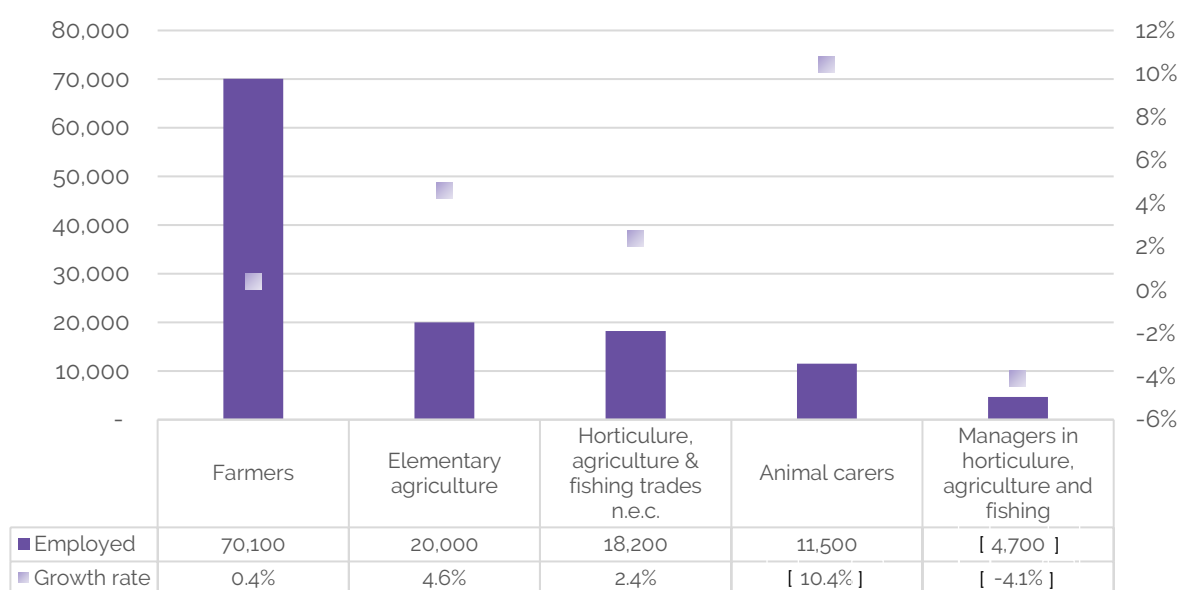


10.10 Agriculture & Animal Care Occupations

Figure 10.10 Annual Average Employment (2024) & Annual Average Growth Rates (2019-2024)



Overall employment	124,500
Share of total workforce	5.0%
Main sectors of employment	79% - Agriculture sector [7%] - Administrative and support services
Employment growth	+10,600 between 2019 and 2024 +1.8% on average annually (compared to +3.4% for total workforce)

2024	% Female Q4	% Full-time Q4	% Aged 55 years & over Q4	% Irish citizens Q4	% Third level graduates Q4	Number of new employment permits	Recruitment Agency Survey
Managers in horticulture, agriculture and fishing	...	...	...	...	...	42	
Farmers	10%	82%	63%	99%	19%		
Horticulture, agriculture & fishing trades n.e.c.	...	63%	57%	86%	...		
Elementary agriculture	...	[46%]	[24%]	84%	...	714	
Animal carers	[63%]	[75%]	...	77%	[49%]	193	
Overall total	17%	74%	50%	93%	22%	949	

Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO (LFS) data, DETE, and SLMRU Recruitment Agency Survey (RAS)
Numbers in square brackets should be treated with caution; an ellipsis (...) denotes numbers too small to report

Overall Outlook for these Occupations

Employment growth over the five-year period was below average, with almost no growth since 2023. Despite this, there was a relatively high volume of both recent job hires and recent job leavers, indicating that there is a level of job churn and also that job opportunities are occurring despite the low employment growth, although this is most likely concentrated in elementary agricultural roles. The number of new employment permits issued for these roles increased in 2024 compared to 2023 with new quotas being released; there was also a relatively high volume of permits renewed.

Over a third of persons employed in these occupations held at most a lower secondary education, the highest share across all occupational groups. Upskilling/reskilling may be needed to ensure those working in agricultural roles have the skills and knowledge to adapt to new work practices designed to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to climate change. With half of persons employed in these occupations aged 55 years and over, without a high level of replacement, employment is likely to see declines in future years.

Agriculture will play a key role in reducing carbon emissions and adapting to climate change, including the need to maintain and increase food production and improve biodiversity according to Teagasc's Climate Action Strategy.¹

Occupation	Economic summary
Managers in horticulture, agriculture and fishing	Numbers employed in this occupation are too small to allow for detailed analysis, with marginal annual declines in employment since 2021. New employment permits issued related mainly to farm managers (including dairy and pig farming) with a small number related to foresters.
Farmers	Farmers were the fifth largest occupation in the Irish economy in 2024. There have been some small fluctuations in employment over the five-year period, although employment in 2024 was only marginally above 2019 levels. Most employed as farmers were male, almost two-thirds were aged 55 years and over, and 38% held at most a lower secondary education. Farmers will have a key role in Ireland's Climate Action targets in the context of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the need for an adaptation of farming practices to be more resilient to the impacts of climate change; as such, upskilling/reskilling will likely be a key requirement to adjust to these changes.
Horticultural, agricultural & fishing trades n.e.c. (e.g. gardeners)	Employment growth was below average for this occupation, with little growth between 2023 and 2024. Almost half were employed in the administrative services sector with the remainder primarily employed in agriculture and other NACE sectors. A relatively high share (37%) of persons employed in this occupation were employed part-time. This occupation also had a high share employed who were aged 55 years and older which will likely lead to higher replacement demand in the coming years and job opportunities even in the absence of employment growth. Coillte's commitment to promoting the use of wood products to facilitate an increase in the level of timber-framed homes from 20% to 80% by 2050 has the potential to lead to increased demand for skilled workers in the forestry and wood processing sector, although likely to be small in number. ²
Elementary agriculture	Employment growth was above average for elementary agriculture occupations with numbers employed growing annually for all years excluding in 2022. Most employed were male, a third held at most a lower secondary education, and almost a quarter were aged 55 years or older. A further 37% were aged 15-24 years and over a half were employed part-time which suggests that a share of persons employed were also in full-time education. This may be leading to a level of job churn which is in turn a contributing

¹ <https://www.teagasc.ie/media/website/publications/2022/Teagasc-Climate-Action-Strategy-2022-2030-web.pdf>

² Coillte (2022). [A Greener Future for All. Annual Report 2022](#)

	factor for the high volume of vacancy posts on DSP Jobs Ireland. In addition to the 714 new employment permits issued for farm assistants (dairy, pig) and horticulture operatives (including mushroom harvesters), 424 renewal permits were issued. The increased adoption of automated processes could reduce issues with sourcing personnel for some of these roles. ³ A seasonal employment permit was introduced earlier this year which aims to alleviate issues in areas such as horticulture.
Animal carers (including vets)	Annual employment growth over the five-year period was above average, with steady growth since 2022. This is the only agriculture-related occupation where females accounted for the higher share in employment. A higher than average share were employed part-time and approximately half held third level qualifications. DSP Jobs Ireland vacancy posts related to equine workers (e.g. work riders), zookeepers and dog groomers and employment permits were issued for work and exercise riders.

³ <https://assets.gov.ie/229861/gd3aa8c0-b2b8-4b71-9341-b154b1e7ac20.pdf>