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# Farm Structure Survey 2020: Agricultural and forestry holdings increased in size

## Rise in organic agriculture

Vienna, 2022-07-12 – A total of 420 018 people worked on 154 953 agricultural and forestry holdings in Austria in 2020. The majority, 57 %, were secondary activity farms with part-time farmers as holders. The average size of these farms was 44.9 ha, total area, as reported by Statistics Austria. Livestock was present at 82 001 of the farms and 24 809 holdings were organic farms.

“The trend towards fewer, but larger farms in Austrian agriculture and forestry continues. Overall, the number of farms has decreased by 11 % in the past decade, whereas the average area used for agriculture has increased by 26 %. Families continue to be the backbone of the Austrian agricultural economy, where four out of five workers are family members. The trend towards organic farming continues as well: 22.4 % of farms are managed according to organic standards, compared to 15.1 % in 2010”, stated Statistics Austria Director General Tobias Thomas.

### Reduction in agricultural and forestry holdings

With 154 953 farms in total, the number of holdings in 2020 decreased by 11 % compared to the previous agricultural census of 2010. Of that total number, 110 781 holdings had land for crop production and/or livestock. However, due to methodological changes, the results of 2010 and 2020 have to be compared with caution.

### Farms are increasing in size

Austrian agricultural sector still is small-scale compared to other EU countries, but the trend towards larger farms continues steadily: whereas holdings had an average area of 42.6 ha in 2010, it was 44.9 ha in 2020. Similarly, the average utilized agricultural area (consisting of arable land, kitchen gardens, permanent crops and permanent grassland) expanded from 18.8 ha to 23.6 ha.

Animal husbandry showed a similar change: whereas the average Austrian farm had 28 cattle ten years ago, this number had risen to 34 cattle in 2020. For pigs, the average amount increased from 85 in 2010 to 112 in 2020. During that same time period, the average number of sheep increased from 27 to 33, and the amount of goats from 8 to 12.

### Structure of the agricultural and forestry holdings

Out of 154 953 farms, 36 % were run as main activity farms and 57 % as secondary activity farms. Both of these types, or a combined total of 93 %, are family farms – the vast majority of Austrian holdings. The remaining 7 % are holdings owned by joint shareholders or other legal persons. In 2010, 39 % of the holdings were main activity farms and 54 % were secondary activity farms.

In 2020, a total of 420 018 people (+2 % compared to 2010) were employed in agriculture and forestry, of which 336 015 (-4 %) were family members and 84 003 (+31 %) were non-family members. The increase in non-family members was mainly due to temporary labour, i.e. persons who are not employed on the farm all year round. More than one third (35 %) of the farms were managed by women. In 2010, the share was 34 %.

## Organic agriculture

The trend towards organic farming continues as well. According to the final results of the agricultural census of 2020, 24 809 holdings are organic farms, i.e. 22.4 % of the agricultural holdings in Austria managed their farms based on regulations on organic agriculture. In 2010, the total had been 21 180 organic farms, an increase of 3 629 holdings (+17 %) over the past ten years. The utilized agricultural area used for organic production amounted to 682 345 ha in 2020, resulting in an average size of 27.5 ha. Ten years earlier, organic holdings farmed on average 21.1 ha of land.

**Methodology, definitions:** The Farm Structure Survey 2020 was conducted as a census in all EU Member States and was obligatory. It was financed by the European Union, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Regions and Tourism and Statistics Austria. The census was held with the reference date 1 March 2020 according to Regulation (EU) 2018/1091 as well as the national regulation BGBl. II Nr 279/2019. An online survey was used. The online form was completed independently by the respondents. If this was not possible, holdings applying for funding could make use of a support service provided by the Agricultural Chambers at the district level. Respondents not claiming any funding could alternatively opt for a telephone survey done by Statistics Austria.

**Revision of the thresholds:** The threshold for the agricultural census 2020 was set at three hectares of utilized agricultural area (except for specialty crops) and three hectares of forest.

**Use of administrative data:** Administrative data were used to the maximum possible extent. Any variables not available as administrative data were collected from the respondents.

**Total area:** Agricultural and forestry area as well as non-productive areas of the holding.

**Utilized agricultural area:** arable land, kitchen gardens, permanent crops, permanent grassland.

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