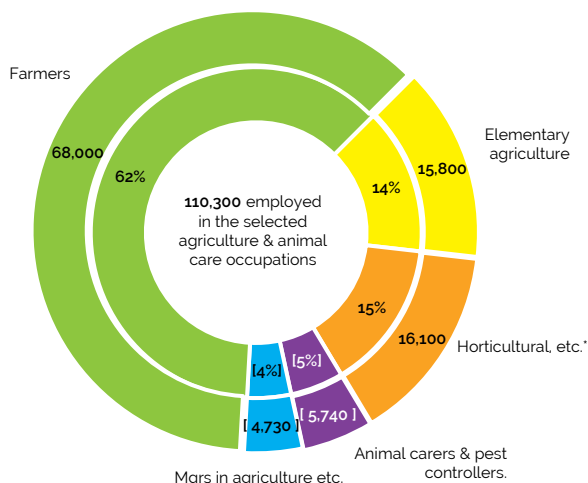


9.10 Agriculture & Animal Care Occupations

Overall employment: Approximately 110,000 persons (87% male) were employed in the selected agriculture and animal care occupations, representing 4.7% of the national workforce.

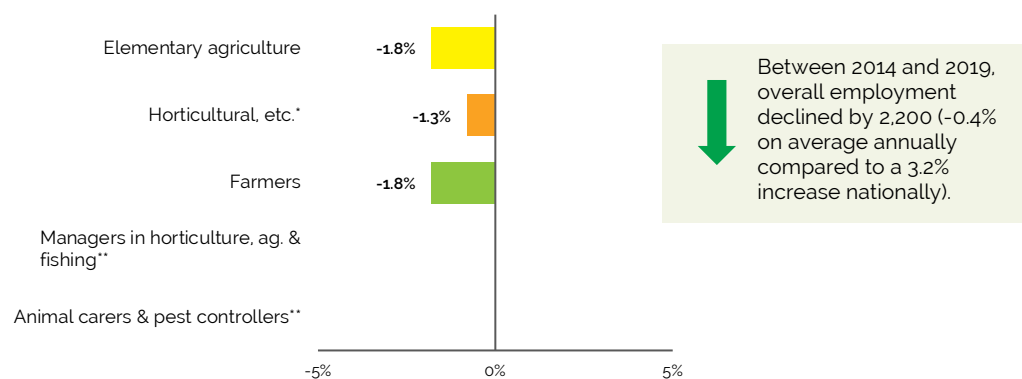
- **Sector:** 85% of overall employment was concentrated in the agriculture sector
- **Employment growth (5-year):** Between 2014 and 2019, overall employment declined by 0.4% (or 2,200 persons) on average annually
- **Age:** The 25-54-year age group accounted for 46% of persons employed. Almost half of those employed were aged 55 years and above, more than twice the national average of 19%
- **Education:** These occupations had the highest share of persons employed with a lower secondary education or less, at 45% compared to 12% nationally; 15% had attained a third level qualification
- **Full-time/part-time:** Over 80% of agriculture & animal care workers were in full-time employment
- **Nationality:** The share of non-Irish workers was well below the national average of 17%, while 95% of workers were Irish nationals.

Numbers employed, 2019 (annual average)



[] Numbers in brackets are small and should be treated with caution

Average growth rates (%) 2014-2019



Source: SLMRU (SOLAS) analysis of CSO data

*See detailed occupation description in table below

**Animal carers & pest controllers and managers in horticulture, agriculture and fishing too small in the period 2014-2017 to calculate growth rate

Overall Outlook for these Occupations

Employment in agriculture and animal care occupations has been declining in recent years, driven primarily by a fall in the number of farmers. These occupations are forecast to experience a fall in employment of 7%, or 8,000 persons, on average annually in 2020 when compared to 2019. The impact of both COVID-19 restrictions and Brexit are likely to affect those employed in elementary agricultural roles (e.g. mushroom and fruit pickers) and horticultural, agricultural and fishing trades (such as gardeners). Issues in terms of disincentives to engage in low paid work, availability of supply through inward migration and a fall in exports is likely to impact employment numbers for these occupations. Declines in employment numbers for farmers is more likely to relate to a demographic effect with a high share in the older age cohort.

Occupation	Economic summary
Managers in horticulture, agriculture and fishing	Numbers employed in this occupation are too small to allow for any analysis.
Farmers	The number of farmers has been declining in recent years; this is expected to continue given the older age profile of this occupation (over half of farmers are aged 55 years or more). While COVID-19 restrictions have not affected farming activity levels, the reduced demand will likely lead to a knock-on effect on family farm incomes rather than employment levels.
Horticultural, agricultural & fishing trades n.e.c.	Employment in this occupation has declined over the five-year period. Gardeners, who account for the largest share of employment in this occupation, may have been impacted initially by COVID-19 restrictions, although they would have been one of the first to return to employment once restrictions were eased.
Elementary agriculture	Employment fell in this occupation over the five-year period, although increases occurred between 2018 and 2019. Despite this, employers have had difficulty in sourcing candidates in Ireland with over 500 new employment permits issued for this occupation in 2019, primarily for mushroom harvesters and fruit pickers. This occupation has been identified as being at high risk of automation although this may depend on businesses having the resources to invest in new technology. Supply of labour may be reduced due to global mobility restrictions as a result of COVID-19.
Animal carers & pest controllers	Numbers employed in this occupation are too small to allow for any analysis.

**For detailed table see Appendix A*