

**REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE AGRICULTURAL WAGES BOARD FOR  
NORTHERN IRELAND UNDER THE AGRICULTURAL WAGES (REGULATION)  
(NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1977**

FOR THE TWO YEARS ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

*Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly under Article 12 of the Agricultural Wages  
(Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 1977 by the Department of Agriculture and Rural  
Development for Northern Ireland*

*18 January 2021*

## **REPORT ON THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE AGRICULTURAL WAGES BOARD FOR THE TWO YEARS ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019**

### **Constitution**

1. The Agricultural Wages Board for Northern Ireland (the Board) is constituted under the Agricultural Wages (Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 1977. The Board's functions are to fix the minimum rates of wages and certain other related matters, such as holiday remuneration for agricultural workers in Northern Ireland.

### **Agricultural Workforce**

2. The total number of persons working full and part-time in Northern Ireland farms at 1 June 2019 was 49,423, a slight increase on the 2018 total of 49,248. An increase was recorded in the categories of Total Farmers and Spouses while there was a decrease in the Other Workers categories. Further details of employment are set out in the appendix.

### **Activities of the Board**

3. The Board held three meetings in 2018 and three meetings in 2019. It made two Orders during this period. Order No. 98 in 2018 increased the minimum rate of wages for agricultural workers by 3.5% across Grades 2-6 from 1 April 2018. Grade 1 remained fixed, subject to National Minimum Wage/ National Living Wage provisions. Order No. 99 in 2019 increased the minimum rate of wages for agricultural workers at Grade 3 and 4 by 3% and Grades 5 and 6 by 2.75% from 1 April 2019. Grades 1 and 2 remained fixed, subject to National Minimum Wage/ National Living Wage provisions.
4. Copies of the Orders made by the Board are available from the TSO Online Bookshop at [www.tsoshop.co.uk](http://www.tsoshop.co.uk).

### **Ministerial Appointments and Reappointments**

5. There were no appointments made under Article 3 and Schedule 1 of the Agricultural Wages (Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 1977 in reporting years 2018 and 2019<sup>1</sup>.

### **Minimum Rates of Wages**

6. The tables below give details of the minimum hourly rates of gross wages payable to agricultural workers.

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<sup>1</sup> A public appointment competition was run in 2019 for an Independent Member of the Board but did not conclude within the reporting period to 31 December 2019.

### **Minimum Rates of Wages Payable from 1 April 2018:**

Order No. 98

|   | Rate per hour<br>£ |
|---|--------------------|
| Grade 1 – Minimum Rate<br>Applicable for the first 40 weeks cumulative employment | 6.88               |
| Grade 2<br>Standard Worker  | 7.42               |
| Grade 3<br>Lead Worker  | 8.16               |
| Grade 4<br>Craft Grade  | 8.76               |
| Grade 5<br>Supervisory Grade  | 9.26               |
| Grade 6<br>Farm Management Grade  | 10.04              |

### **Minimum Rates of Wages Payable from 1 April 2019:**

Order No. 99

|   | Rate per hour<br>£ |
|---|--------------------|
| Grade 1 – Minimum Rate<br>Applicable for the first 40 weeks cumulative employment | 6.88               |
| Grade 2<br>Standard Worker  | 7.42               |
| Grade 3<br>Lead Worker  | 8.40               |
| Grade 4<br>Craft Grade  | 9.03               |
| Grade 5<br>Supervisory Grade  | 9.51               |
| Grade 6<br>Farm Management Grade  | 10.32              |

### **Holiday Entitlement**

7. The minimum holiday entitlement for an agricultural worker is 5.6 weeks or 28 days (proportionally). An agricultural worker in continuous employment with the same employer for more than one year is entitled to a maximum of 29 days, made up of 28 days leave plus one additional day from a list of 14 public holidays.

### **Enforcement of Minimum Rates**

8. The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs is responsible for ensuring compliance with the provisions of the Agricultural Wages (Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 1977 and Orders made by the Agricultural Wages Board. Department Inspectors investigate complaints by workers about any matters within the remit of the Board's Orders. Complaints should be addressed to The Secretary,

Agricultural Wages Board, Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3SB.

### Complaints

9. There were no complaints received in the 2018 and 2019 reporting years.

### Costs of Administering the Order

10. The total costs of the Board's operations were:

Year ended 31 December 2018:           £ 22,531.79

Year ended 31 December 2019:       £ 24,187.08

### Members of the Board

11. The membership of the Board at 31 December 2019 was:

| <b>Name</b>             | <b>Position</b> | <b>Where they come from</b> |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Mr Rodger McKnight      | Chair           | Co. Antrim                  |
| Ms Patricia O'Callaghan | Independent     | Co. Down                    |
| Vacant                  | Independent     | N/A                         |
| Ms Joanne McWilliams    | Unite           | Co. Armagh                  |
| Mr Ronnie Corbett       | Unite           | Co. Tyrone                  |
| Mr Brian Hewitt         | Unite           | Co. Down                    |
| Mr Phil Nelson          | Unite           | Co. Down                    |
| Mr Peter McCrea         | Unite           | Co. Tyrone                  |
| Mr Keith Reynolds       | Unite           | Co. Down                    |
| Mr Wilbert Mayne        | UFU             | Co. Tyrone                  |
| Mr Crosby Cleland       | UFU             | Co. Down                    |
| Mr Thomas Douglas       | UFU             | Co. Tyrone                  |
| Mr Chris Osborne        | UFU             | Co. Down                    |
| Mr Roy Lyttle           | UFU             | Co. Down                    |
| Mr Robert McCloy        | UFU             | Co. Londonderry             |

**APPENDIX**

**Farm Labour (as indicated by the NI Agricultural Census Returns) <sup>2</sup>**

('000 workers)

|   | <b>2015</b> | <b>2016</b> | <b>2017</b> | <b>2018</b> | <b>2019</b> |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Farmers</b>                                  |             |             |             |             |             |
| Full-time                                       | 16.6        | 16.2        | 16.8        | 17.0        | 17.0        |
| Part-time                                       | 13.4        | 13.6        | 13.6        | 13.7        | 13.9        |
| <b>Total</b>                                    | <b>30.1</b> | <b>29.8</b> | <b>30.4</b> | <b>30.7</b> | <b>30.8</b> |
| <b>Farmers' Spouses</b>                         | <b>6.1</b>  | <b>6.4</b>  | <b>6.4</b>  | <b>6.5</b>  | <b>6.7</b>  |
| <b>Other Workers</b>                            |             |             |             |             |             |
| Full-time                                       | 3.5         | 3.2         | 3.4         | 3.4         | 3.4         |
| Part-time                                       | 4.0         | 4.2         | 4.3         | 4.3         | 4.5         |
| Casual/Seasonal                                 | 4.4         | 4.1         | 4.1         | 4.3         | 4.0         |
| <b>Total Other Workers</b>                      | <b>11.8</b> | <b>11.5</b> | <b>11.9</b> | <b>12.0</b> | <b>11.9</b> |
| <b>Total Farmers, Spouses and Other Workers</b> | <b>48.0</b> | <b>47.7</b> | <b>48.7</b> | <b>49.2</b> | <b>49.4</b> |
| <b>Decrease on Previous Year</b>                | <b>-</b>    | <b>0.6%</b> | <b>-</b>    | <b>-</b>    | <b>-</b>    |
| <b>Increase on Previous Year</b>                | <b>0.2%</b> | <b>-</b>    | <b>2.1%</b> | <b>1.1%</b> | <b>0.4%</b> |

<sup>2</sup> Figures may not sum due to rounding

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