

CLOSE TO THE LAND

INTRODUCTION

- This report presents selected findings from a small scale quantitative study carried out on behalf of the Irish Farmers Journal by Behaviour & Attitudes during July 2001.
- The research was designed to establish, among part-time farmers:-
 - Details of their farming involvement
 - And of their work “off farm”
 - The relative importance of both sources of income
 - Likely future trends in this regard
- Perceptions of the importance of keeping informed about farming matters.
- Frequency of reading the Irish Farmers Journal.
- Elements of the journal that are currently or potentially attractive to part-time farmers.

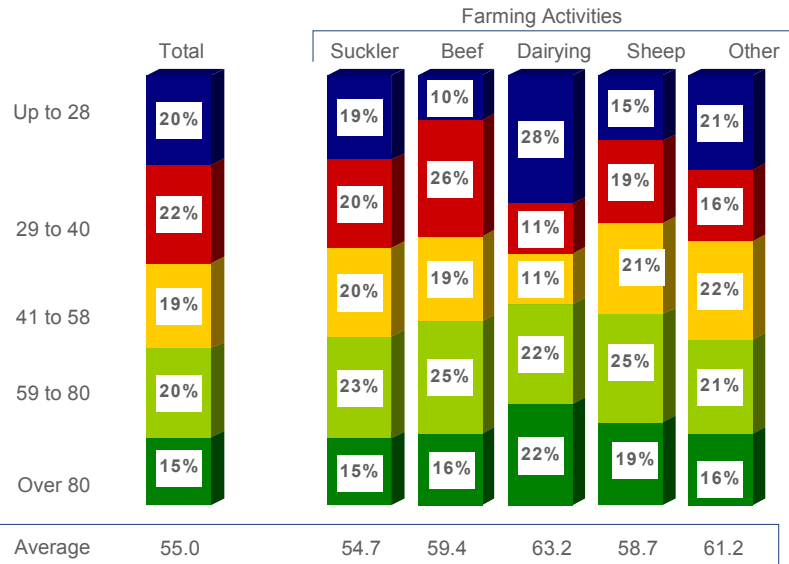
FIELDWORK

- All interviewing on the project was carried out between 25th June and 9th of July 2001.
- Fieldwork was conducted by trained members of the Behaviour & Attitudes fieldforce, working under supervision.

NOTE ON REPORT FORMAT

- Following on from this introduction we present brief summary of main findings from the research. This is then followed by a detailed charted presentation. The report is then completed by a full set of tabular results and the following technical appendices.
 - Appendix A = Analysis of Sample
 - Appendix B = Sampling Points
 - Appendix C = The Questionnaire

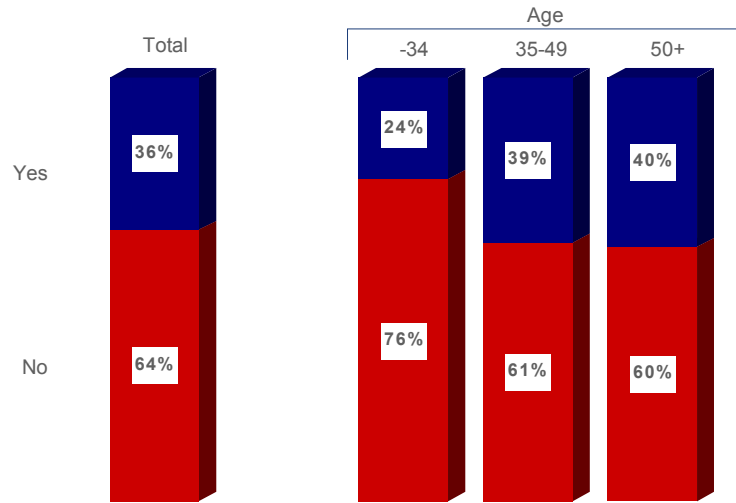
SIZE OF FARM HOLDING



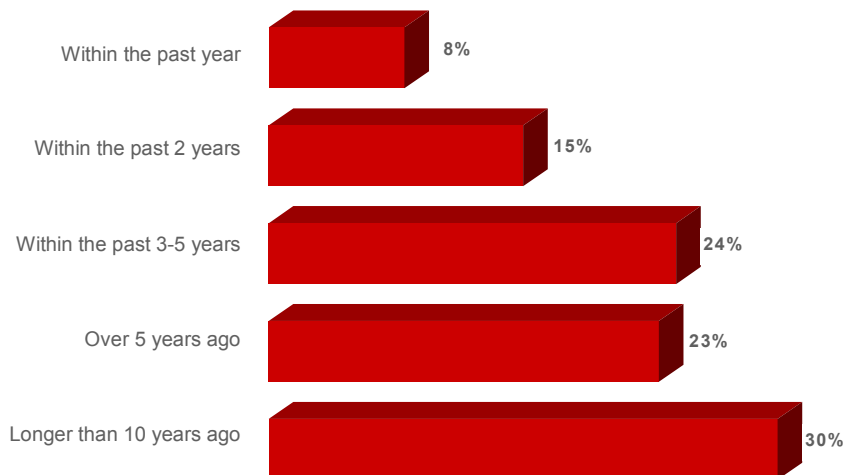
MAIN TYPE OF FARMING

	Total	Age		
		-34	35-49	50+
Dairying	12	19	11	8
Suckler Cows	46	38	45	53
Beef Cattle	39	46	37	37
Tillage	8	8	8	8
Sheep	17	13	22	14
Mixed	11	11	11	9
Horticulture	1	-	1	1
Horses	6	-	9	4
Other	3	-	4	5

EVER INVOLVED IN FARMING FULL-TIME?



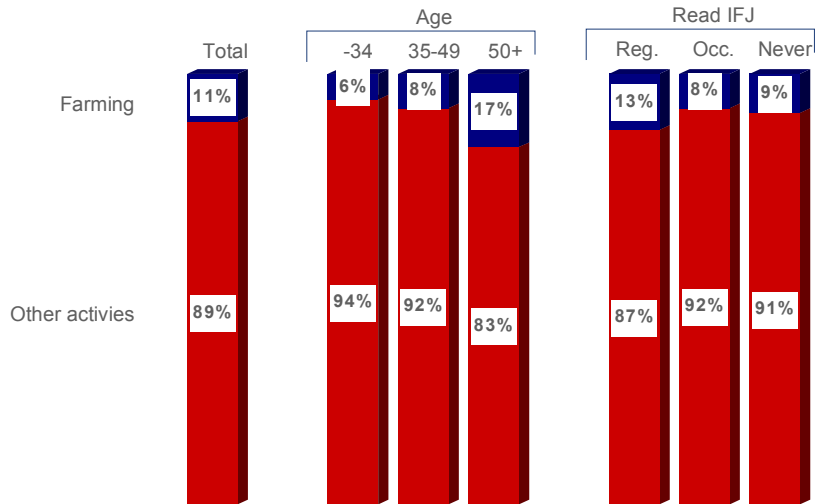
RECENCY OF FULL-TIME INVOLVEMENT (Base: All who have been involved in full-time farming)



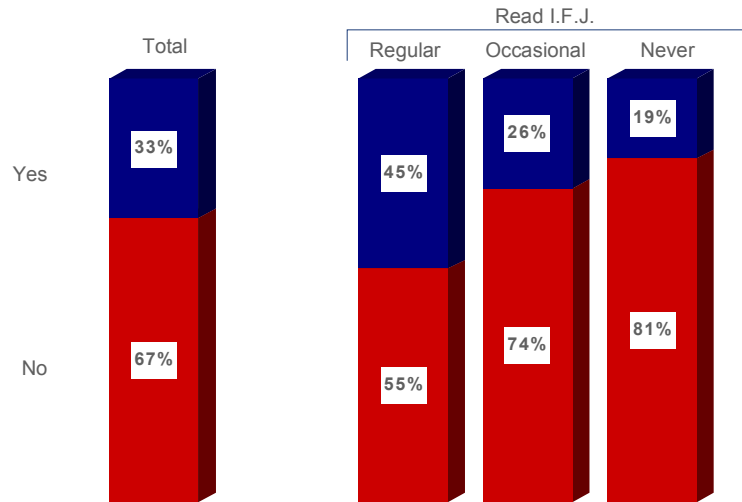
JOB OUTSIDE FARMING

	Total	Age		
		-34	35-49	50+
	%	%	%	%
a) Driver	9	10	8	11
b) Labourer	28	22	32	25
c) Garda/Teacher/nurse	8	5	8	9
d) Mechanic	5	10	5	3
e) Management	10	5	11	12
f) Builder	21	30	19	18
g) Sales Rep.	7	10	8	3
h) Auctioneers	1	-	1	2
i) Other	10	6	6	17

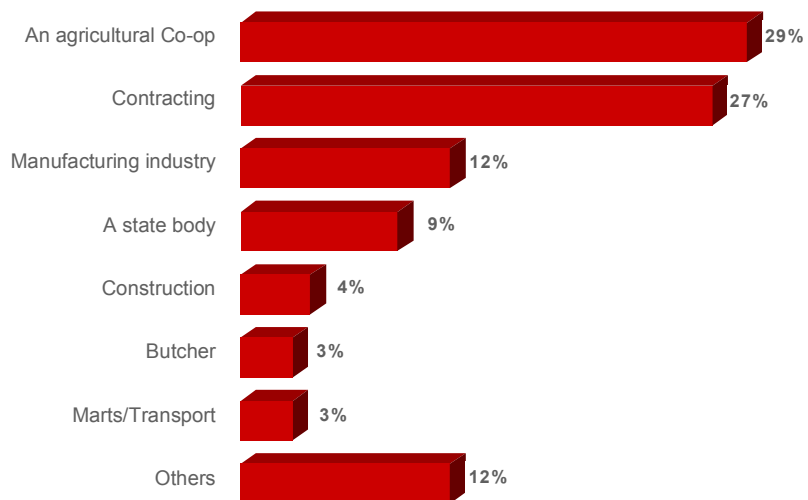
MAIN SOURCE OF INCOME



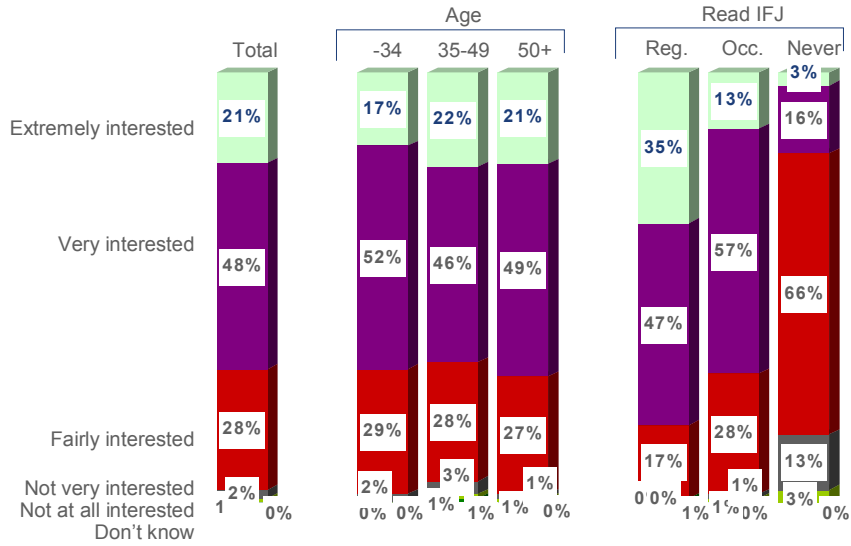
IS THE COMPANY YOU WORK FOR CONNECTED WITH FARMING IN ANY WAY?



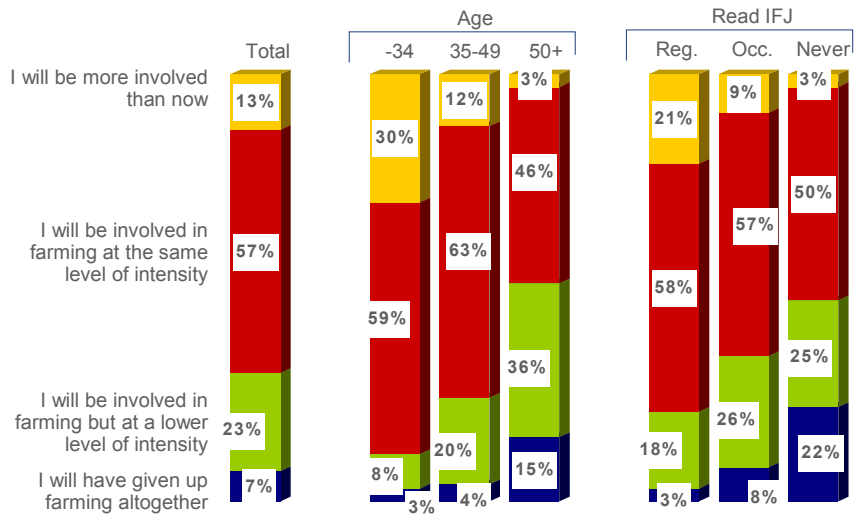
FIRMS CONNECTED WITH AGRICULTURE



LEVEL OF INTEREST IN AGRICULTURE AND FARMING



PROSPECTS – 5 YEARS TIME



SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS (1)

Farm Involvement

- The average size of holding among part-time farmers is perhaps surprisingly high – 55 acres on average.
- A third of part-time farmers claim to be farming 59 acres or more.
- Those involved in dairying tend to have larger than average farm sizes.
- The main types of farming activity engaged in by part-time farmers in our sample are:-
 - Suckler cows 46%
 - Beef cattle 39%
 - Sheep 17%
 - Dairying 12%
 - Mixed farming 11%

SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS (2)

- Those at the younger end of the spectrum tend to be more heavily involved in beef cattle while older part-time farmers have a stronger involvement in suckler cows.
- More than a third of part-time farmers claim to have been involved in full-time farming at some stage. This is more marked at the older end of the spectrum. Only a quarter of under 35 year olds have been involved in full-time farming.
- The indicator suggest that the rate of desertion from full-time farming has been pretty consistent over the last 5 years or so – about 8% per annum.

Jobs outside farming

- All of the respondents in our sample were recruited as having some occupation outside farming. A third were working with some business connected to farming in some way. Two-thirds were working in companies with no farming connection whatever.
- Most of the non-farming jobs held by people in our sample were in manual areas: Labourers, builders, drivers, mechanics etc. Only a very small proportion were involved in management or white collar occupations.

SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS (3)

- Younger people tended to be involved in the building trade. Those aged over 35 were more likely to describe themselves as labourers.
- For those whose firms have a farming connection, the main link tends to be via an agriculture co-op or through contracting of some kind.

Commitment to Farming

- The bulk of our part-time farmers still claim to be very interested in farming. About 7 in 10 describe themselves in this way.
- When people look to the future, on balance they tend to predict a slight reduction in the level of their involvement in farming. 30% indicate that they will be involved in farming at a lower intensity (or they will drop out altogether) in the next five years. By comparison, only 13% anticipate that their involvement in farming will grow.
- There is a distinct age difference evident here. Part-time farmers aged over 50 are very much inclined to see themselves as withdrawing from the process. Those aged under 35 are much more likely to have a positive disposition.