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Article

The increasing flexibility of the farm and horticultural workforce in England and Wales

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Abstract

This article highlights some important structural changes that have been taking place in the agricultural and horticultural workforce over recent years. While acknowledging the industry's distinctive need for flexibility in labour inputs, it is argued that these structural changes need to be seen in the context of wider trends in the economy as a whole. A review of the empirical evidence suggests that Atkinson's generalised model of the *flexible firm* provides a sound basis for understanding recent changes in the agricultural workforce. It is concluded that these changes have important implications for the Agricultural Wages Board as well as for organisations such as the National Farmers Union, Transport and General Workers Union, and Agricultural Colleges that service the needs of farm businesses and the farm workforce.



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