

## EXAMINATION OF FAMILY FARMS AND MACHINERY RING OPERATION IN ENGLAND

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### **Abstract**

*According to the original aim of our examinations with studying family farms include:*

- *arable land plant production farms,*
- *milking cow farms,*
- *mixed – arable land plant, fodder producing and animal husbandry – profile farms.*

*To our great pleasure by winning a significant grant, complying with the three profile in site farm examinations were extended to Great Britain which meant the inclusion of Scottish, Wales and Northern Ireland Farms, too.*

*Beyond the in site farm examinations in our Britain research the*

- *“CONTRACTOR” entrepreneurs and the*
- *“MACHINERY RING” machine centers were in focus.*

**Keywords:** *Family Farms, Machinery Rings, Contracting, Contractors*

## INTRODUCTION

### **History of Machinery Rings**

Machinery rings started in Germany in the 1950s where small scale farmers found they couldn't justify the costs of expensive equipment over a small acreage. Today there are 260 rings in Germany with 25 % of producers being members of a ring. Machinery rings have since spread over the continent although the nature of the rings varies from country to country; for example Holland has large scale rings with membership levels of 1000 producers whereas in France, the “C.U.M.A.s” there tend to be made up of only 5 or 6 neighbouring farmers who buy machinery between them (like a machinery syndicate).

Rings spread to the U.K. after Alistair Cranston, a producer from the Scottish borders on a rugby tour in Japan with the Scottish National team, saw rings in operation there.

Having followed this introduction to rings up with fact-finding tours onto the continent he was instrumental in establishing the Borders Ring in 1987.

The ring was aided by grant aid for formation costs over the first three years through Food from Britain (F.F.B.). This grant aid ceased in May 1991.

There are now 12 rings in Scotland, 18 in England and one in Wales. In Scotland it is estimated that 12 % of producers belong to a ring. (Brereton, 1992)

### **Examined Machinery Rings**

- *SASTAK Machinery Ring:*  
From 1991; started 30 members now more than 450 members
- *7Y Machinery Ring:*  
now more than 300 members

## **MATERIAL AND METHOD**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of our investigation is to analyse the British Family Farms and the use of MACHINERY RINGS as an option to reduce farm machinery costs. To examine the BRITISH FARMS an appropriate QUESTIONNAIRE form was made by us, the computer processing of which is now going on. The numbers of the examined farms are 50. MACHINERY RINGS were in focus, as well.

Our FARM QUESTIONNAIRE contains:

- *Personal Datas* (e.g.: education; other training e.t.c.)
- *Features of the Farm* (e.g.: owner occupied/rented Ha; what area of crops planted?)
- *Employment characteristics of the Farm* (e.g.: the number of persons whose labour is employed)
- *Contracting on the Farm* (e.g.: using contractors on the farm or undertaking any contracting for other farmers.)
- *Machinery of the Farm* (e.g.: Tractors, Combine Harvesters, Other Main Field Machinery's Make, Model, Horsepower, Age, Purchase New/Used)
- *Contact of Machinery Rings* (e.g.: member/not of any machinery rings; the role in the machinery ring: supplier/demander of labour/machinery)
- *Additional Questions* (e.g.: contact with any farmers groups, schemes of organisations e.t.c.)

**Places of examination:** - Shropshire; - Staffordshire; - Herefordshire; - Warwickshire; - Gloucestershire of ENGLAND.

### **Participated in the Examination**

- Harper Adams University College, Newport (U.K.)
- NFU – National Farmers Union

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *The advantages of the machinery rings:*

1. Offering possibility to the farmers to better utilisation of their machines, and to let them.
2. The machine ring offers one alternative never. The farmer is free to employ the same contractor continuously too after joining the machinery ring.
3. The machinery ring membership is advantageous in the case of changing a machine by a new one. In the case of a new, higher output machine the machinery ring can get surplus work to utilise that with increased efficiency. The machinery ring can give advice if it is worth to change the machine or not, as there is always a member in side the machinery ring who offers the given work less expensively.
4. Ensuring temporary worker helps the farmer family in case of illness.
5. First of all the organised contracting helps to control the costs.
6. The machinery ring eliminates the disadvantages coming from the occasional and sometimes less reliable work of some contractors.
7. The Managing Board surveys the machinery ring prices. These informative prices are usually below those of the contractors. According to the equivocal opinion of the several machinery ring directors and members the organisation offers good possibilities to reduce the manual and machine work costs by extending the scope of their activity.

Figure 1. demonstrates the ages of the Farmers on the examined 50 farms.

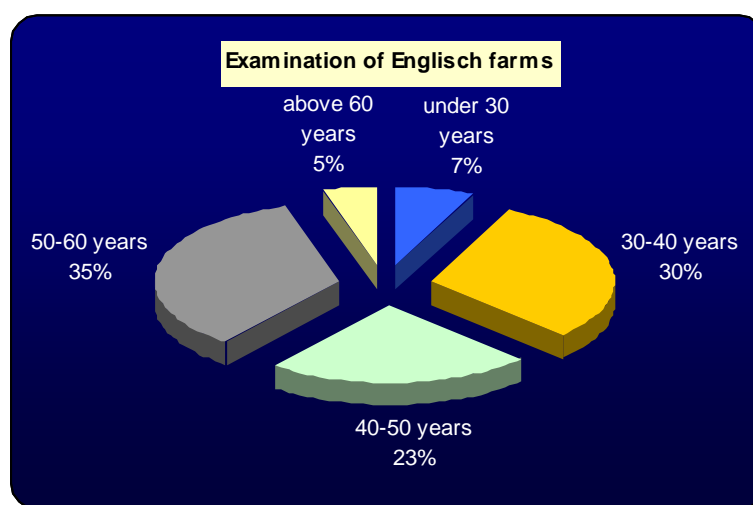


Figure 1. Ages of the Farmers on the examined farms

Figure 2. shows the qualification of the Farmers on the examined 50 farms.

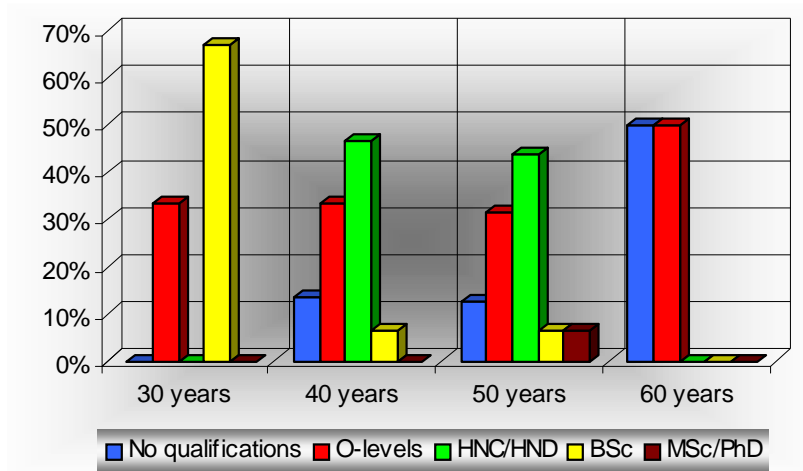


Figure 2. The qualification of the Farmers

Figure 3. demonstrates the categories of tractors on the examined farms.

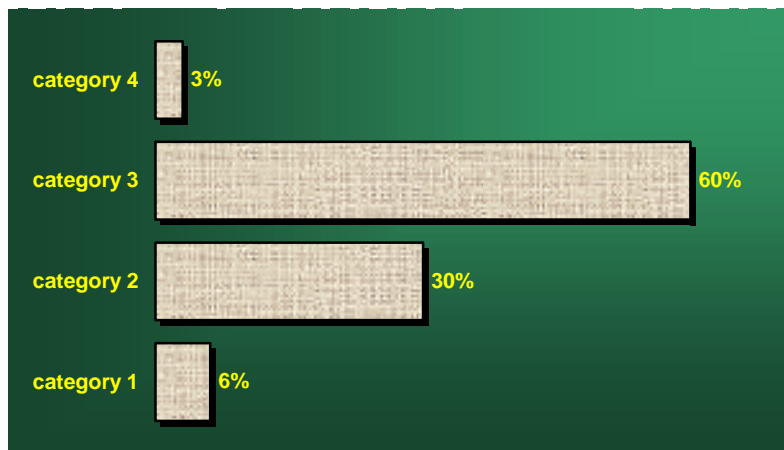


Figure 3. Categories of Tractors

Figure 4. shows the contracting work on the examined farms.

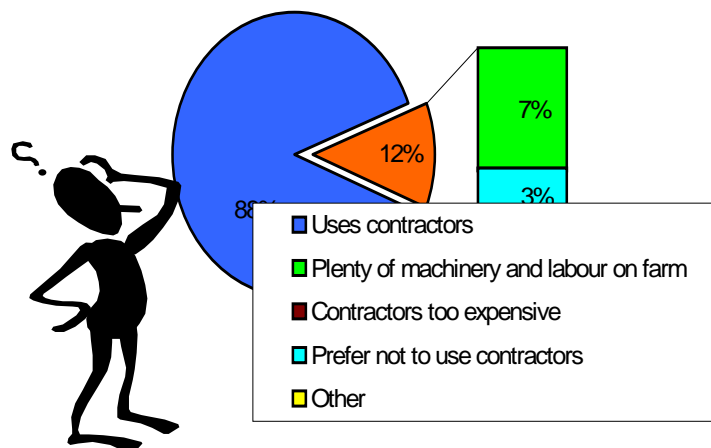


Figure 4. Contracting work on the examined farms

Figure 5. demonstrates the membership of the Machinery Rings.

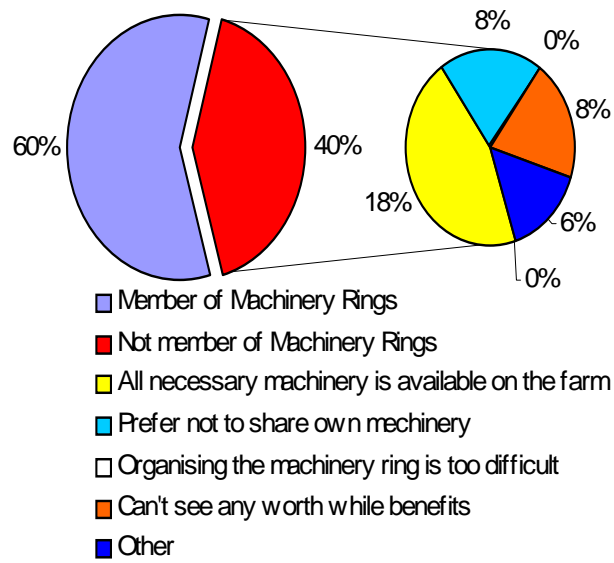


Figure 5. Membership of the Machinery Rings

Figure 6. shows the employment of the Machinery Ring's supply.

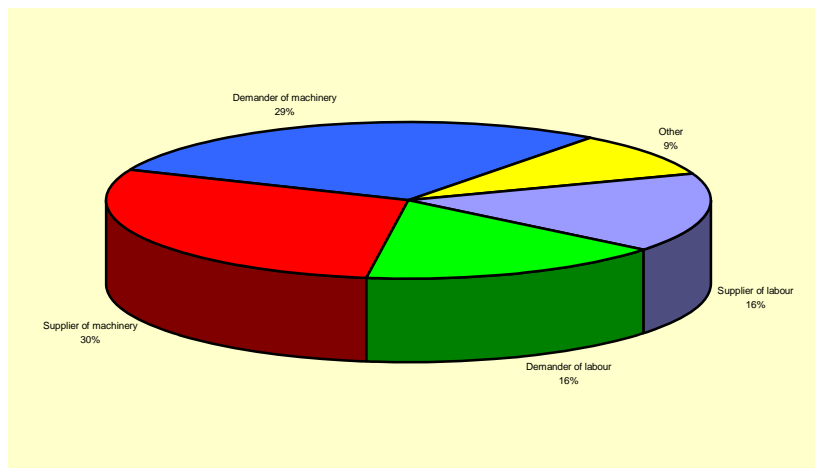


Figure 6. Employment of the Machinery Ring's supply

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