

Agriculture as a career

If you are considering a career in agriculture and are hoping to gain employment in the South Downs National park, this document will give you some interesting background information and begin to signpost you along your way.

Things to know about South Downs National Park Agriculture

- Around 85 per cent of land within the National Park is classified as agricultural (including some woodland)
- There are 928 registered commercial holdings within the SDNP (2010):
- The split between owned and rented is 60:40.
- 64 per cent of holdings are less than 100ha.
- 5 large private estates in West Sussex own 13.9 per cent (22,217ha) of the National Park area.
- 11.7 per cent (19,313ha) is owned or managed by public bodies and NGOs such as the Forestry Commission, National Trust, Brighton and Hove City Council and Eastbourne Borough Council.
- Arable crops cover 44 per cent of agricultural land.
- 37 per cent of agricultural land is in permanent pasture land.
- The remaining 19 per cent is made up of temporary grassland, rough grazing, woodland and other land. There are several major commercial growing enterprises including tree and plant nurseries and two commercial orchards, as well as 16 vineyards.

Livestock:

- 126,333 sheep, of which 67,948 were lambs under one year old.
- 46,356 cattle, of which 9397 were dairy cows, 7130 were beef suckler cows, 11,577 calves under one year old and 18,252 other cattle.
- 17,080 pigs.
- 1,197,424 poultry.

Source: Defra (2012) 2010 June Agricultural Survey, Defra

There are no abattoirs within the National Park but there are 12 within 50 kilometres of the boundary, including Laverstoke and Farnborough in Hampshire, Guildford in Surrey, and Heathfield and Henfield in Sussex. The main livestock markets for the region are at Hailsham, Salisbury and Ashford. Hailsham is the closest of these, 5 kilometres or so from

the eastern boundary of the National Park, whilst Salisbury is about 20 kilometres from the western end of the National Park.

Employment levels in agriculture

In 2010, agriculture employed in the region of 2921 people in the National Park, an increase of 282 from the 2009 June Survey figures. The majority of the increase was in the number of part-time farmers (see Table 5.1 for a breakdown). Mechanisation has caused the number of farm workers to fall dramatically since the 1950s when it is estimated that over 20,000 people were employed in agriculture.

Table 5.1 Breakdown of labour in agriculture

	2010
Farmers full time	613
Farmers part time	818
Salaried managers full time	135
Salaried managers part time	56
Employees full time	603
Employees part time	396
Casual workers	300
Total	2,921

Source: Defra (2012) 2010 June Agricultural Survey, Defra

Income levels in agricultural sector

Regionally, the average farm business incomes for 2010/11 varied from £24,176 for grazing livestock to £99,913 for cereals. This reflects higher prices for cereals and oilseed rape compared to the previous year, while average incomes fell by 19 per cent in the livestock sector. Farm income figures for the National Park are not available. The Single Payment Scheme (SPS) makes an important contribution to average farm incomes for many farm types.



What jobs might you do?

There are a number of routes into agriculture your specialism will affect the number of jobs that are available to you. For examples there are still large numbers of international workers being used in the horticultural sector and pigs.

Agricultural work can be very diverse here are just a few routes for you to explore:

Farm office work	Agricultural sales
Estate worker/manager	Agricultural fashion
Farm worker/manager	Agricultural event organizers
Livestock worker/manager	Farm education staff
Soil scientists and agronomists	Horticulturalist
To technical GIS specialists	Feed company employee/manager
Land agents	Feed Nutritionist
Chemists and spray specialists	Mechanic
Health and safety specialist	Plumber
Environmental Health officer	Electrician
Defra/government employee	Builder
Lecturer	



Where can you go for more information?

Once you have an idea of what your interests might be here are a few signposts to further support your career development.

There are a number of Further Education colleges who offer courses here are just a few for you to look at:

Plumpton agricultural college is based within the South Downs National Park in Sussex

<http://www.plumpton.ac.uk/>

Sparshot Agricultural College is just outside the national park in Hampshire

<http://www.sparsholt.ac.uk/>

There are many degree courses that support the agriculture sector by talking to one of the Further Education Colleges and researching the university prospectuses online you can often find out what qualifications you need.

Ucas is a good place to start to find out what courses are on offer in Higher Education

<http://search.ucas.com/>

Often the colleges and potential employers can be met at the local countryside shows or Ardingly in Sussex which holds the annual South of England agricultural show <http://www.seas.org.uk/summer-show/>

National organisations to be aware of

LANTRA is a government funded organisation that offers a range of information on agricultural career paths and training <http://www.lantra.co.uk/Industries/Agriculture.aspx>

NFU is the national farmers union and offers a range of services from insurance, membership to training and advice, including information on apprenticeships. <http://www.nfuonline.com/home/>

Career in farming is an industry led initiative to help guide you through your career

<http://www.careerinfarming.co.uk/>

To view films of people already working in agriculture go to <http://icould.com/stories/job-types/agriculture/>

