

Qz.03378

MR COLES

PART TIME FARMING

The Prime Minister asked yesterday morning about the figures on part-time farming in the Community. All the figures in paragraph 2 of my paper of 28 July are right. They are the published statistics from the European Commission. It is important, however, that the following figures (of which (1) and (4) were in my earlier paper) should not be confused:-

- (1) 36% of all Community farmers are fully occupied in farming for 100% of their full working time. The rest are underemployed, helping their families or friends on other farms or earning money outside agriculture.
- (2) 29% of all the persons working on farms are fully employed. This figure refers not to farmers only but to the total agricultural labour force (ie farmers, family workers, hired workers etc).
- (3) 29% (strictly speaking, 28.6%) of all the small farms in the Community are officially classified as full time. On the remaining small farms the farmers are underemployed, helping on other farms or earning money outside agriculture. Many of the small part-time farmers are old and, in British terms, would be considered as retired persons.
- (4) 27% of all Community farmers have a gainful activity outside their own farm eg employed as postmen, working in small factories.

These figures vary slightly from year to year or survey to survey.


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20 October 1983

cc: Sir Robert Armstrong