



# Farm Salary Survey Report

## An insight into remuneration packages and farm labour trends

Fourth Edition

May 2019

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## From the HR services team

Welcome to the fourth edition of the Rural Directions Farm Salary Survey Report. Thank you to all the farm businesses who have contributed their time and farm labour data to the compilation of this edition of the Farm Salary Survey. The Farm Salary Survey is only possible due to your ongoing support and assistance.

In 2018, 128 farm businesses contributed complete data sets to the Farm Salary Survey, which represents the highest participation rate that we have seen since the survey began. Data was contributed for 197 positions, compared to 119 positions in 2016. This rise highlights the increasing importance employers are placing on their people and HR practices. Utilising the findings from the Farm Salary Survey will contribute to your HR practices being consistent with, and competitive within the industry.

Rural Directions works with people and farm businesses to achieve their goals. We work with you to identify strategies, develop systems and support you in implementation. We understand people are one of your most important resources in your farm business. We also understand the challenges farm businesses face managing family and non-family labour. Our HR Services give you access to tailored practical human resource management support to suit your farm business. We encourage best practice human resource management, so you become recognised as an employer of choice.

Please contact our HR Services team if you wish to discuss any element of the Farm Salary Survey findings, at [hr@ruraldirections.com](mailto:hr@ruraldirections.com).

Copies of this report can be purchased for \$125 (GST inc).

Regards

Natasha Searle  
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On behalf of the HR Services Team

**Rural Directions Pty Ltd**  
**May 2019**

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## Summary of key findings

This is the fourth edition of the Rural Directions Farm Salary Report, written and delivered by the HR Services team. This survey process and corresponding report assists farm employers of family and non-family labour to assess their remuneration packages against like businesses.

Rural Directions supports our clients in this area. Our clients not only want to ensure they meet their legal obligations as an employer, but they also want to offer packages that are attractive to employees and contribute to retention. These factors, including compliance, attraction and retention, have meant farm employers are seeking information about the wages, benefits and packages that are being offered throughout their region.

The purpose of the Farm Salary Survey is to provide a current insight into farm labour remuneration packages. It looks beyond cash/wages, by exploring the trends associated with employing farm labour.

The survey was designed to assess multiple roles per business and addresses family and non-family labour. Roles focused on include Farm Manager, Assistant Manager/Overseer, Farm Operations Assistant/Farm Hand and administration/bookkeeping positions.

The survey was conducted online via Survey Monkey. All data was collated, analysed and reported on so that client confidentiality and anonymity was protected. The survey collected information for the 2017/2018 financial year.

The number of positions analysed in this report is 197. These positions were contributed by 128 farm businesses, of which 91% were South Australian based positions.

Most of the South Australian positions were based in the Northern & Yorke region, followed by Eyre Peninsula, SA Murray Darling Basin and South East. Broadacre cropping and extensive livestock production (sheep meat and/or wool and beef cattle) were the predominant enterprises associated with the positions contributed.

Of the positions, 70% were classified as permanent full-time. Of the full-time positions, 42% of these were Farm Operations Assistants/Farm Hands and 39% were Farm Managers.

Of the 197 positions, 46% were filled by family employees and 54% by non-family employees.

The Farm Salary Survey demonstrates the variation in remuneration packages which exist across the data set. Differences in total hours worked, how the individual is remunerated and how the position is classified, through to the level of non-cash benefits (provided annually as part of a package) or bonuses (offered sporadically) contributing to total remuneration package value were evident.

Overall, across all farm-based roles (Farm Manager, Assistant Farm Manager/Overseer and Farm Operations Assistant/Farm Hand) the cash component, on average, exceeded the Pastoral Award FLH5 base rates. Annually benchmarking remuneration packages with the relevant award is recommended.

The average annual cash component (not including compulsory superannuation) for Assistant Farm Managers and Farm Managers (across all classifications (including part-time and full-time)) ranged from \$65,800 - \$74,000 based on an average 46-hour week....

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## Contents

From the HR services team.....	II
Summary of key findings .....	III
Contents .....	V
Introduction.....	6
Methodology .....	7
Data interpretation.....	7
Wage data analysis.....	7
Multiselect questions.....	8
Which award?.....	8
Award versus market rate .....	9
Results.....	10
Demographics .....	10
Communicating expectations to employees.....	12
Job description.....	12
Remuneration package.....	12
Position roles and responsibilities .....	13
Farm Manager .....	13
Assistant Manager/Overseer .....	13
Farm Operations Assistant/Farm Hand .....	13
Administration/bookkeeping roles.....	14
Stationhand/Jackaroo/Jillaroo.....	14
Trainee/Apprentice.....	14
Hours of work .....	15
Recording time worked .....	15
Remuneration.....	16
Base wage .....	16
Effective hourly rate .....	18
Compensation for working 'reasonable additional hours' (overtime).....	20
Superannuation.....	22
Additional benefits.....	22
Bonuses .....	23
Salary increase .....	24
Qualifications and experience .....	26
Summary .....	28
What are your next steps?.....	30
Further information .....	31

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## Introduction

This is the fourth edition of the Rural Directions Farm Salary Report. This survey process and corresponding report assists farm employers of family and non-family labour to assess their remuneration packages against like businesses.

The minimum wages and conditions an employee (family or non-family employee) is entitled to is set out in awards. Unless an enterprise agreement, or other registered agreement is in place, all farm businesses are required to pay their employees Modern Award rates, as a minimum, and adhere to the National Employment Standards (NES).

Our work with clients shows employers not only want to ensure they meet their legal obligations, but they also want to offer packages that are attractive to employees and contribute to retention. These factors, including compliance, attraction and retention, have meant farm employers are seeking information about the wages and packages that are being offered throughout their region.

The purpose of the Farm Salary Survey is to provide a current insight into farm labour remuneration packages, beyond just cash/wages. It puts a value on all components of a remuneration package and explores the trends associated with employing farm labour.

The report outlines data on remuneration and benefits for farm-based positions including:

- Hours worked
- Salary or wages paid
- Additional benefits offered to employees
- Other employment related trends and observations.

With the latest insights into remuneration packages and farm labour trends, the survey will assist farm businesses to:

- Ensure compliance against the relevant award (the Modern Pastoral Award (2010) is the primary award referenced in this report) and the National Employment Standards
- Benchmark salaries against the market
- Review and identify employee benefits (reward for effort)
- Design competitive remuneration packages
- Attract and retain key staff for their business
- Plan for new positions
- Prepare budgets
- Utilise the data and key messages to apply in their own business to inform HR strategy and policy development.

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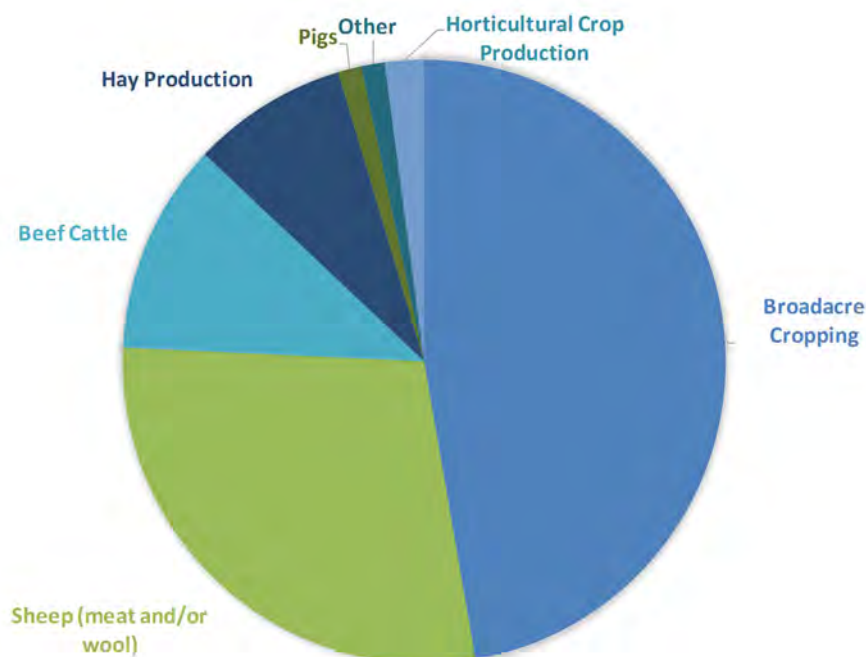


Figure 2. Enterprises represented by the positions contributed in the survey across all regions

Farm Operations Assistant/Farm Hand was the most common position analysed in this edition of the survey (48%), followed by Farm Manager and Assistant Manager/Overseer. 9% of the positions identified as administration/bookkeeping roles (Table 2).

Table 2. Positions represented

Row labels	Number	Percentage
Farm Operations Assistant/Farm Hand	95	48%
Farm Manager	57	29%
Assistant Manager/Overseer	26	13%
Administration/Book Keeping	17	9%
Station Hand/Jackaroo/Jillaroo	1	1%
Trainee/Apprentice	1	1%
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>100%</b>

Of the 197 positions collected, 70% of the positions were classified as permanent full-time. Of the full-time positions, 42% of these were Farm Operations Assistants/Farm Hands and 39% were recognised as Farm Managers. 12% of the positions were part-time, and the balance was casual or contract labour. The casual positions were filled predominantly by Farm Operations Assistants/Farm Hands (86%). Administration roles were the most predominant part-time role.

Of the 197 positions contributed to the survey, 46% were filled by family employees and 54% by non-family employees. Family employees are defined as an employee related to the farm business owners (Table 3).

Of the full-time positions contributed to the survey, the number of non-family employees exceeded family employees.

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