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ORGANIC STATISTICS 2011 UNITED KINGDOM

The latest National Statistics produced by Defra on the organic farming sector were released on 5 July 2012, according to the arrangements approved by the UK Statistics Authority. This release shows information gathered during 2011 for organic crops and livestock produced in the United Kingdom, and the numbers of organic producers / processors who are registered with Organic Certification Bodies in the UK.

The key results are:

Land areas (Tables 1 to 5)

The total area of organic land in the UK has shown a decrease of 9% between 2010 and 2011 to 656 thousand hectares. The cereals area has seen a similar decrease of 8% to 52 thousand hectares, while the vegetables area (including potatoes) has shown a slightly larger decrease of 13% over the year to 16 thousand hectares. Temporary and permanent pasture land make up the majority of organic land and therefore drive the change between 2010 and 2011, with temporary pasture showing a decrease of 7% to 116 thousand hectares and permanent pasture decreasing by 9% to 435 thousand hectares.

Livestock numbers (Tables 6 to 9)

There was mixed news for the UK organic livestock sector with sheep and pig numbers both showing increases on 2010, while cattle and poultry numbers both showed decreases. The sheep sector showed an increase of 18% to 1,162 thousand head, mainly due to large numbers of Welsh operators becoming fully organic. Organic pig numbers rose by 11% to 53 thousand head. Organic poultry numbers showed a large decrease of 27% to 3 million in 2011 as high feed and energy prices continue to increase the pressure on producers. Cattle numbers for the UK have fallen by 4% to 335 thousand head.

Producer / processor numbers (Tables 10 to 12)

The number of organic producer / processors has fallen again (by 5%) to around 6,900 at the end of 2011. All UK regions have shown decreases with Scotland and Yorkshire and the Humber both showing the largest percentage drop of 8%.

Please visit <http://www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/foodfarm/enviro/organics/> for more information from this survey. Alternatively, you can contact us on 01904 455332.

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Detailed results

Figure 1 shows organic crop areas over time from 2004 to 2011. The graph shows that for all crop types shown, areas have been in decline since 2009, with cereals showing the greatest rate of decrease.

Figure 1, Organic crop areas: UK

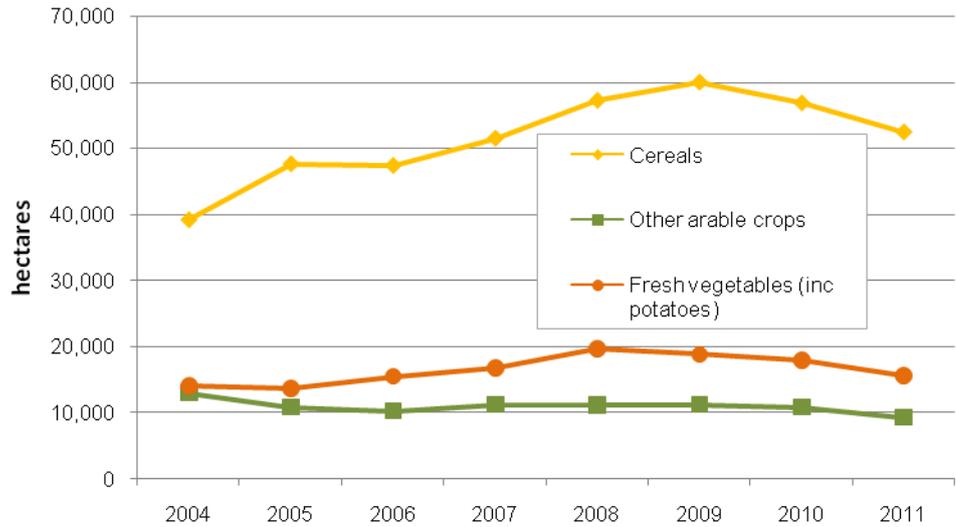


Figure 2, Organic livestock numbers: UK

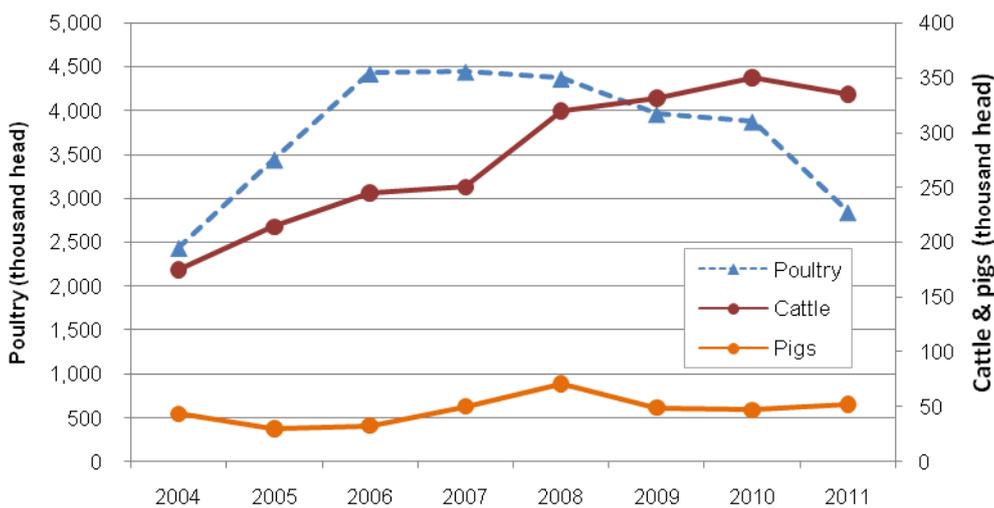
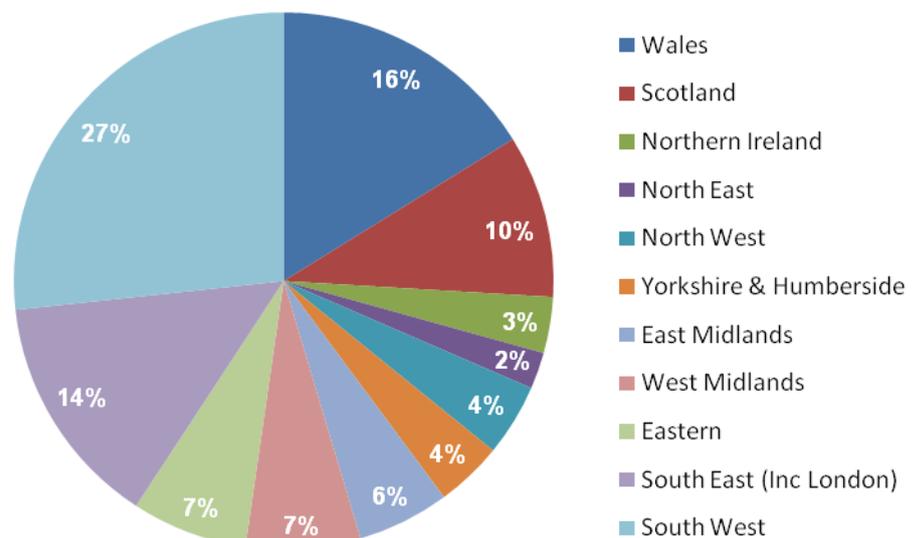


Figure 2 shows numbers of organic cattle, pigs and poultry over time from 2004 to 2011 (please note the dual axis due to the comparatively high numbers for poultry). Cattle and poultry numbers have both decreased over the previous year with poultry numbers showing a sharp decline due to high feed and energy prices and uncertainty of changing feed regulations. Pig numbers have levelled out over the last couple of years

Figure 3: Number of organic producers/operators by UK regions in 2011

Figure 3 shows the regional distribution of organic producers / processors in the UK. This clearly shows that South West region has the largest share of organic operators in the UK while the North East region contains the smallest number of organic operators. Regional distribution across the UK has shown very little change from 2010.



Organic statistics methodology

This statistical release contains data compiled from the UK Organic Certification Bodies. Each year, certifier bodies visit their registered farms to carry out annual inspections. During these inspections, certifiers record the crop areas and numbers of livestock present on the organic holding on that day.

The data collected during these inspections is sent to Defra each January, to form the annual return required under Eurostat Commission Regulation No. 889/2008 of 5 September 2008. The data also feeds into the 'Action plan to develop organic food and farming in England' which can be found at the following link:

<http://www.archive.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/growing/organic/policy/actionplan/index.htm>

The information collated by Defra is checked thoroughly before the figures are presented in this statistical release. Due to the nature of the inspections, the data is collected at varying times through the year. Therefore, the data presented here does not give an exact snapshot of organic farming at any specific time of year so should be treated with a degree of caution. Defra is very grateful to the inspectors and members in the UK's Organic Certification Bodies for the information collected in the annual returns each year.

Note

In this statistical release, unless specified otherwise, all data includes both in-conversion and fully organic holdings.

Organics overview

Only food that has been produced in accordance with organic standards by farmers/producers registered with an approved inspection body may be legally sold as 'organic' within the EU. The inputs and practices used in organic farming are strictly regulated in accordance with EU Regulation. Please see:

<http://www.archive.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/growing/organic/standards/index.htm>

for more details on organic standards and current legislation.

Key elements of organic farming systems

The main components of an organic farming system are the avoidance of artificial fertilisers and pesticides and the use of crop rotations and other forms of husbandry to maintain soil fertility and control weeds, pests and diseases. Livestock also form an integral part of the majority of organic farms, although there are some successful stockless systems. Organic standards do not allow intensively housed stock or systems where a large amount of total feed has to be bought in. Pigs and poultry must be managed extensively under an organic system, with extensive outdoor access.

Conversion

In most cases land must be managed organically for a minimum of two years (three years for top fruit orchards) before it is granted approved 'organic' status and is eligible for organic certification. Producers can then sell their produce as 'organic' and organic livestock breeding can commence.

For further information about organic farming, please see

<http://www.archive.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/growing/organic/index.htm>

Other relevant data sources

Data on national crop areas and livestock numbers are collected through the annual June Survey of Agriculture.

Results from this survey can be accessed at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/foodfarm/landuselivestock/junesurvey/>

The next update from the June Survey of Agriculture will be the publication of early crop areas for England on 16 August 2012. The provisional England results of crop and grassland areas and cattle, sheep and pig numbers will be published on 20 September 2012.

This organics statistical release will be updated in July 2013.

Table 1 Organic land areas timeseries (UK)

	2007	2008 ^(a)	2009	2010	2011	<i>Thousand hectares</i> % change 2011/2010
Cereals	52	57	60	57	52	-7.7
Other arable crops	11	11	11	11	9	-14.1
Fresh vegetables (inc potatoes)	17	20	19	18	16	-12.7
Fruit and nuts	2	2	2	2	2	-5.1
Herbaceous & ornamentals	1	6	6	6	6	-1.0
Temporary pasture	125	130	126	125	116	-6.9
Permanent pasture (inc. rough grazing)	452	494	496	479	435	-9.2
Woodland	11	6	7	8	8	2.5
Unutilised land	11	18	12	12	11	-12.1
Total organic land area	682	744	739	718	656	-8.7

(a) The large increase in the area of 'herbaceous & ornamental' plants is due to refinements in data recording systems rather than a genuine increase in area.

Table 2 Organic land areas timeseries (England)

	2007	2008 ^(a)	2009	2010	2011	<i>Thousand hectares</i> % change 2011/2010
Cereals	40	44	46	45	41	-10.8
Other arable crops	9	8	8	8	7	-12.0
Fresh vegetables (inc potatoes)	13	15	14	14	12	-15.8
Fruit and nuts	2	2	2	2	2	-2.6
Herbaceous & ornamentals	1	4	4	5	5	15.2
Temporary pasture	101	106	103	103	96	-6.8
Permanent pasture (inc. rough grazing)	165	185	187	199	173	-7.3
Woodland	9	4	5	6	6	25.8
Unutilised land	7	7	9	9	8	-9.2
Total organic land area	348	375	379	392	351	-7.3

(a) The large increase in the area of 'herbaceous & ornamental' plants is due to refinements in data recording systems rather than a genuine increase in area.

Table 3 Detailed organic land type 2011 (UK)

	<i>Hectares</i>				
	In conversion	Organic	Total	Total crop area at June 2011 ^(a)	Organic area as % of June area
Total cereals	1 175	51 303	52 478	3 075 240	1.7
Wheat	330	17 626	17 957	1 969 383	0.9
Barley	538	16 631	17 169	969 756	1.8
Oats	174	11 063	11 236	108 604	10.3
Rye, mixed corn and triticale	133	5 983	6 116	27 497	22.2
Other arable crops	432	8 889	9 321	1 275 955	0.7
Sugar beet	0	121	121	112 715	0.1
Fodder, forage and silage crops	351	6 386	6 738	69 182	9.7
Maize, oilseeds and protein crops	80	2 382	2 462	1 094 058	0.2
Fresh vegetables	245	13 594	13 839	128 679	10.8
Potatoes	25	1 801	1 826	146 123	1.2
Fruit and nuts	175	1 977	2 152	33 394	6.4
Herbaceous & ornamentals	461	5 653	6 114	11 258	54.3
Temporary pasture	5 816	110 306	116 121	1 277 840	9.1
Permanent pasture (inc. rough grazing)	24 402	410 543	434 945	9 858 274	4.4
Woodland	1 691	6 633	8 324	785 928	1.1
Unutilised land	2 493	8 375	10 868		
Total organic land area	36 914	619 073	655 987		

(a) Source: Defra June Survey of Agriculture

Table 4 Detailed organic land type 2011 (England)

	<i>Hectares</i>				
	In conversion	Organic	Total	Total crop area at June 2011 ^(a)	Organic area as % of June area
Total cereals	971	40 418	41 389	2 535 095	1.6
Wheat	327	15 775	16 102	1 816 560	0.9
Barley	362	11 800	12 162	614 502	2.0
Oats	152	7 515	7 667	80 460	9.5
Rye, mixed corn and triticale	129	5 329	5 458	23 573	23.2
Other arable crops	387	6 569	6 956	1 166 186	0.6
Sugar beet	0	121	121	112 715	0.1
Fodder, forage and silage crops	312	4 415	4 726	38 418	12.3
Maize, oilseeds and protein crops	75	2 034	2 109	1 015 053	0.2
Fresh vegetables	214	10 863	11 077	111 647	9.9
Potatoes	25	1 069	1 095	107 681	1.0
Fruit and nuts	169	1 925	2 094	29 420	7.1
Herbaceous & ornamentals	436	4 557	4 993	9 843	50.7
Temporary pasture	5 248	90 856	96 105	620 268	15.5
Permanent pasture (inc. rough grazing)	14 117	159 047	173 164	3 735 520	4.6
Woodland	1 578	4 623	6 200	304 865	2.0
Unutilised land	2 274	5 639	7 913		
Total organic land area	25 418	325 566	350 984		

(a) Source: Defra June Survey of Agriculture

Table 5 Organic land areas by UK region 2011*Thousand
hectares*

	In conversion	Organic	Total (ha)	Total agricultural area ^(a) at June 2011 ^(b)	Organic area as % of total agricultural area
UK	37	619	656	17 064	3.8
England	25	326	351	8 915	3.9
Wales	2	120	123	1 533	8.0
Scotland	5	165	170	5 625	3.0
Northern Ireland	4	8	12	991	1.2
North East	3	28	31	572	5.4
North West	1	16	18	885	2.0
Yorkshire & Humberside	1	13	13	1 074	1.2
East Midlands	0	15	16	1 185	1.3
West Midlands	2	29	31	918	3.3
Eastern	1	16	17	1 383	1.2
South East (Inc London)	4	51	55	1 138	4.8
South West	14	157	171	1 759	9.7

(a) excludes common land

(b) All figures are as at June 2011.

Table 6 Organic livestock numbers timeseries (UK)

	<i>Thousand head</i>					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	% change 2011 / 2010
Cattle	250	320	331	350	335	-4.4
Sheep ^(a)	n/a	n/a	885	981	1 162	18.4
Pigs	50	71	49	47	53	11.1
Poultry	4 441	4 363	3 959	3 871	2 838	-26.7
Other livestock ^(b)	4	5	3	5	5	10.5

(a) We are unable to provide full historical data for sheep as there are inconsistencies in the historical data.

(b) "Other Livestock" includes goats, farmed deer, horses, camelids and any livestock not recorded elsewhere.

Table 7 Organic livestock numbers timeseries (England)

	<i>Thousand head</i>					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	% change 2011 / 2010
Cattle	176	214	237	249	234	-6.0
Sheep ^(a)	n/a	n/a	380	431	424	-1.8
Pigs	49	57	46	42	48	13.9
Poultry	2 674	2 294	1 969	1 931	1 746	-9.6
Other livestock ^(b)	2	3	2	2	1	-38.8

(a) We are unable to provide full historical data for sheep as there are inconsistencies in the historical data.

(b) "Other Livestock" includes goats, farmed deer, horses, camelids and any livestock not recorded elsewhere.

Table 8 Organic livestock numbers 2011 (UK)

	<i>No. head</i>				
	In conversion	Organic	Total	Total livestock at June 2011 ^(a)	Organic as % of total livestock
Cattle	18 312	316 447	334 759	9 933 437	3.4
Sheep	31 767	1 129 950	1 161 717	31 633 968	3.7
Pigs	103	52 537	52 640	4 440 631	1.2
Poultry	5 239	2 832 911	2 838 150	162 551 155	1.7
Other Livestock ^{(b) (c)}	80	4 903	4 983	n/a	n/a

(a) Source: Defra June Survey of Agriculture / Cattle Tracing System for cattle populations.

(b) June figures are not provided for 'Other livestock' as the types of animals included are not comparable with the organic data

(c) "Other Livestock" includes goats, farmed deer, horses, camelids and any livestock not recorded elsewhere.

Table 9 Organic livestock numbers 2011 (England)

	<i>No. head</i>				
	In conversion	Organic	Total	Total livestock at June 2011 ^(a)	Organic as % of total livestock
Cattle	13 945	219 592	233 537	5 415 599	4.3
Sheep	23 935	399 680	423 615	14 325 847	3.0
Pigs	97	47 840	47 937	3 599 559	1.3
Poultry	4 946	1 741 129	1 746 075	120 291 272	1.5
Other Livestock ^{(b) (c)}	48	1 204	1 252	n/a	n/a

(a) Source: Defra June Survey of Agriculture / Cattle Tracing System for cattle populations.

(b) June figures are not provided for 'Other livestock' as the types of animals included are not comparable with the organic data

(c) "Other Livestock" includes goats, farmed deer, horses, camelids and any livestock not recorded elsewhere.

Table 10 Number of organic producers and/or processors time series

	<i>numbers</i>					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	% change 2011 / 2010
UK	7 631	7 896	7 567	7 287	6 929	-4.9
England	5 516	5 474	5 278	5 131	4 897	-4.6
Wales	953	1 230	1 176	1 166	1 119	-4.0
Scotland	860	889	820	737	679	-7.9
Northern Ireland	302	303	293	253	234	-7.5
North East	173	179	167	160	152	-5.0
North West	367	367	333	315	301	-4.4
Yorkshire & Humberside	356	330	308	302	278	-7.9
East Midlands	487	449	422	408	383	-6.1
West Midlands	556	555	507	494	476	-3.6
Eastern	574	551	529	515	481	-6.6
South East (Inc London)	1 042	1 041	1 024	984	975	-0.9
South West	1 961	2 002	1 988	1 953	1 851	-5.2

Table 11 Numbers of organic producers and processors by UK region 2011

	<i>numbers</i>				
	Number of producers only	Number of producer/processors	Number of processors only	Total	
UK	4 450		200	2 279	6 929
England	2 827		164	1 906	4 897
Wales	962		29	128	1 119
Scotland	476		7	196	679
Northern Ireland	185		0	49	234
North East	114		4	34	152
North West	142		8	151	301
Yorkshire & Humberside	134		7	137	278
East Midlands	184		11	188	383
West Midlands	288		16	172	476
Eastern	189		18	274	481
South East (Inc London)	410		28	537	975
South West	1 366		72	413	1 851

Table 12 Numbers of crop / livestock organic producers and processors 2011 ^(a)

numbers

	No. crop producers	No. crop producers and processors	No. livestock producers	No. livestock producers and processors
UK	4 246	197	2 997	153
England	2 707	160	1 737	127
Wales	950	29	795	21
Scotland	430	7	323	5
Northern Ireland	159	1	142	0
North East	110	4	85	3
North West	141	8	100	6
Yorkshire & Humberside	122	7	82	6
East Midlands	171	9	116	6
West Midlands	275	15	188	13
Eastern	168	18	64	14
South East (Inc London)	392	28	201	23
South West	1 328	71	901	56

(a) Mixed organic holdings will be recorded under both the crop and livestock headings above so the above numbers cannot be added together to get total producers / processors by region as this will lead to double counting. For totals please see Table 11.