



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



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Organic Statistics 2012 United Kingdom

This release shows information gathered during 2012 for organic crops and livestock produced in the United Kingdom, and the numbers of organic producers and processors who are registered with Organic Certification Bodies in the UK.

The key results are:

Land areas (Tables 1 to 6)

For the fifth year in a row, the total area of in conversion and organic land in the UK has decreased. Areas fell by 13% and 7.4% respectively to 32 thousand hectares of in conversion land and 573 thousand hectares of organic land.

Livestock numbers (Tables 7 to 10)

There was a decline in 2012 across the UK organic livestock sector with numbers of cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry all decreasing. Sheep numbers fell by 0.8% to 1.1 million head. Cattle and poultry numbers both fell by 13% to 290 thousand and 2.5 million respectively. Organic pig numbers fell most sharply by 34% to 35 thousand head in 2012.

Producer and processor numbers (Tables 11 to 13)

The number of organic producers and processors has fallen for the fourth year running (by 6.4%) to around 6 500 at the end of 2012. All UK regions have shown decreases with Northern Ireland and Scotland showing the largest percentage drops of 13% and 10% respectively.

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Detailed results

Figure 1 shows organic crop areas over time. All of the crop types shown have been in decline since 2009, with cereals showing the greatest rate of decrease.

Figure 1. Organic crop areas, UK

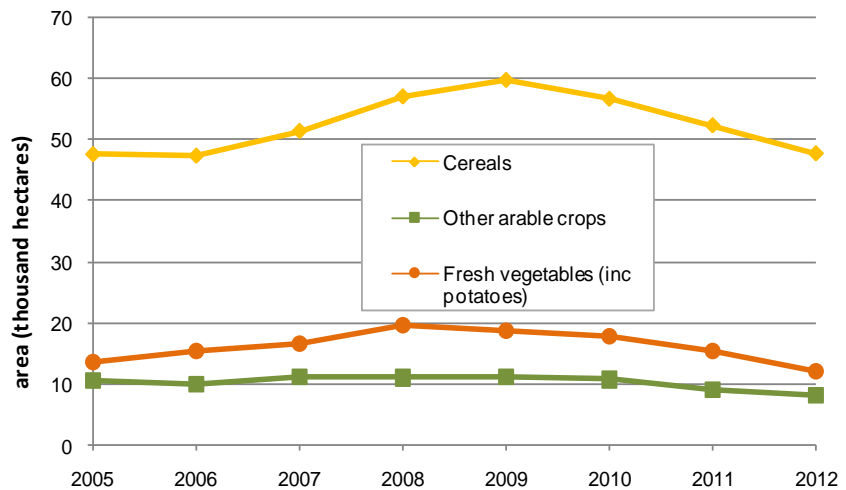


Figure 2. Organic livestock numbers, UK

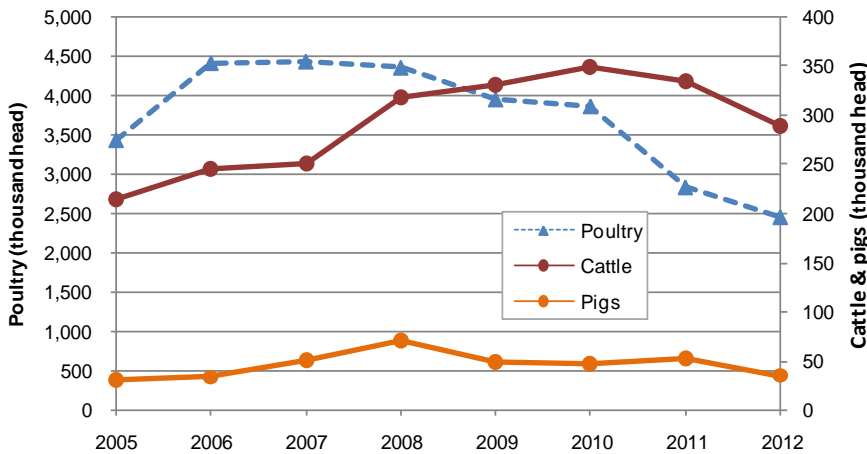


Figure 2 shows the numbers of organic cattle, pigs and poultry over time from 2005 to 2012 (please note the dual axis due to the comparatively high numbers for poultry). All livestock types have decreased over the previous year, with pig numbers showing the largest proportional decline of 34%.

Figure 3. Organic producer and processor numbers for 2012 by UK region

Figure 3 shows the regional distribution of organic producers and processors in the UK. The 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 2011.

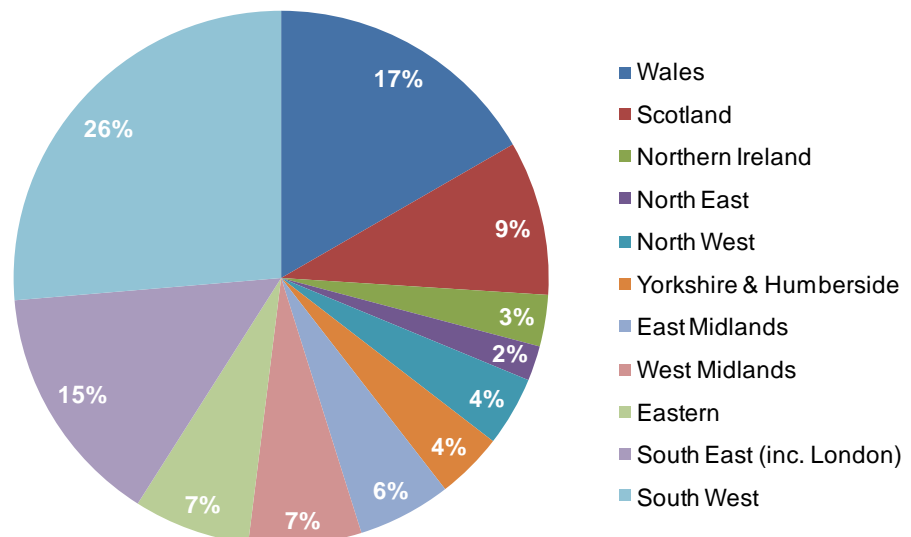


Table 1. Organic land areas, in conversion and fully organic split (UK & England)

	<i>Thousand hectares</i>					
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	% change 2012/2011
UK:						
In conversion land	149	119	51	37	32	-12.7
Fully organic land	594	619	668	619	573	-7.4
England:						
In conversion land	91	68	30	25	19	-24.5
Fully organic land	284	311	362	326	305	-6.4

Table 2. Organic land type areas (UK)

	<i>Thousand hectares</i>					
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	% change 2012/2011
Cereals	57	60	57	52	48	-8.8
Other arable crops	11	11	11	9	8	-10.4
Fresh vegetables (inc. potatoes)	20	19	18	16	12	-21.8
Fruit and nuts	2	2	2	2	2	-1.1
Herbaceous & ornamentals	6	6	6	6	6	-5.3
Temporary pasture	130	126	125	116	106	-8.6
Permanent pasture (inc. rough grazing)	494	496	479	435	406	-6.8
Woodland	6	7	8	8	7	-10.5
Unutilised land	18	12	12	11	10	-6.8
Total organic land area	744	739	718	656	606	-7.7

Table 3. Organic land type areas (England)

	<i>Thousand hectares</i>					
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	% change 2012/2011
Cereals	44	46	45	41	38	-8.5
Other arable crops	8	8	8	7	6	-14.3
Fresh vegetables (inc. potatoes)	15	14	14	12	10	-20.2
Fruit and nuts	2	2	2	2	2	-0.8
Herbaceous & ornamentals	4	4	5	5	5	2.0
Temporary pasture	106	103	103	96	87	-9.3
Permanent pasture (inc. rough grazing)	185	187	199	173	163	-5.8
Woodland	4	5	6	6	5	-12.8
Unutilised land	7	9	9	8	8	-3.6
Total organic land area	375	379	392	351	324	-7.7

Table 4. Detailed organic land type 2012 (UK)*Hectares*

	In conversion	Organic	Total	Total crop area at June 2012 ^(a)	Organic area as % of June area
Total cereals	1 454	46 388	47 842	3 141 971	1.5
Wheat	401	15 223	15 623	1 991 875	0.8
Barley	564	14 602	15 165	1 002 183	1.5
Oats	330	11 286	11 616	121 923	9.5
Rye, mixed corn and triticale	160	5 277	5 437	25 990	20.9
Other arable crops	291	8 060	8 351	1 284 960	0.6
Sugar beet	0	147	147	120 081	0.1
Fodder, forage and silage crops	232	5 807	6 039	69 989	8.6
Maize, oilseeds and protein crops	59	2 106	2 165	1 094 890	0.2
Fresh vegetables	247	10 808	11 054	123 460	9.0
Potatoes	13	1 188	1 200	148 771	0.8
Fruit and nuts	107	2 021	2 127	33 519	6.3
Herbaceous & ornamentals	278	5 509	5 787	12 308	47.0
Temporary pasture	5 540	100 585	106 125	1 356 614	7.8
Permanent pasture (inc. rough grazing)	21 959	383 610	405 569	9 724 882	4.2
Woodland	1 015	6 431	7 446	827 459	0.9
Unutilised land	1 320	8 807	10 127		
Total organic land area	32 223	573 406	605 629		

(a) Source: Defra June Survey of Agriculture

Table 5. Detailed organic land type 2012 (England)*Hectares*

	In conversion	Organic	Total	Total crop area at June 2012 ^(a)	Organic area as % of June area
Total cereals	1 060	36 806	37 866	2 593 703	1.5
Wheat	371	13 884	14 255	1 856 229	0.8
Barley	328	10 671	10 999	622 787	1.8
Oats	203	7 605	7 808	92 142	8.5
Rye, mixed corn and triticale	158	4 646	4 804	22 545	21.3
Other arable crops	221	5 741	5 962	1 151 990	0.5
Sugar beet	0	147	147	120 081	0.1
Fodder, forage and silage crops	176	3 859	4 035	38 690	10.4
Maize, oilseeds and protein crops	46	1 734	1 780	993 219	0.2
Fresh vegetables	207	8 725	8 932	106 340	8.4
Potatoes	1	780	780	112 150	0.7
Fruit and nuts	103	1 973	2 077	30 339	6.8
Herbaceous & ornamentals	252	4 838	5 090	10 748	47.4
Temporary pasture	4 994	82 129	87 123	656 213	13.3
Permanent pasture (inc. rough grazing)	10 203	152 870	163 073	3 690 887	4.4
Woodland	844	4 564	5 407	304 865	1.8
Unutilised land	1 296	6 334	7 630		
Total organic land area	19 181	304 758	323 939		

(a) Source: Defra June Survey of Agriculture

Table 6. Organic land areas by UK region 2012*Thousand hectares*

	In conversion	Organic	Total	Total agricultural area at June 2012 ^(a)	Organic area as % of total agricultural area
UK	32	573	606	17 149	3.5
England	19	305	324	8 985	3.6
Wales	1	118	120	1 569	7.6
Scotland	8	144	152	5 604	2.7
Northern Ireland	4	7	10	991	1.0
North East	3	27	30	575	5.2
North West	1	15	17	878	1.9
Yorkshire & Humberside	1	10	10	1 086	1.0
East Midlands	1	15	16	1 198	1.3
West Midlands	1	31	32	930	3.4
Eastern	1	14	15	1 398	1.1
South East (inc. London)	3	47	50	1 150	4.3
South West	9	146	154	1 769	8.7

(a) excludes common land.

Table 7. Organic livestock numbers (UK)

	<i>Thousands</i>					
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	% change 2012/2011
Cattle	320	331	350	335	290	-13.3
Sheep ^(a)	n/a	885	981	1 162	1 152	-0.8
Pigs	71	49	47	53	35	-34.2
Poultry	4 363	3 959	3 871	2 838	2 458	-13.4
Other livestock ^(b)	5	3	5	5	4	-16.7

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

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

Table 8. Organic livestock numbers (England)

	<i>Thousands</i>					
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	% change 2012/2011
Cattle	214	237	249	234	202	-13.6
Sheep ^(a)	n/a	380	431	424	435	2.6
Pigs	57	46	42	48	30	-38.4
Poultry	2 294	1 969	1 931	1 746	1 681	-3.7
Other livestock ^(b)	3	2	2	1	4	191.1

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

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

Table 9. Organic livestock numbers 2012 (UK)*No. head*

	In conversion	Organic	Total	Total livestock at June 2012 ^(a)	Organic as % of total livestock
Cattle	9 665	280 547	290 212	9 900 175	2.9
Sheep	19 459	1 132 638	1 152 097	32 214 916	3.6
Pigs	81	34 567	34 648	4 480 904	0.8
Poultry	6 004	2 451 652	2 457 656	160 061 200	1.5
Other livestock ^{(b) (c)}	170	3 980	4 150	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. Organic livestock numbers 2012 (England)*No. head*

	In conversion	Organic	Total	Total livestock at June 2012 ^(a)	Organic as % of total livestock
Cattle	8 029	193 665	201 694	5 373 118	3.8
Sheep	14 809	419 731	434 540	14 611 887	3.0
Pigs	64	29 447	29 511	3 661 876	0.8
Poultry	5 669	1 675 524	1 681 193	117 930 801	1.4
Other livestock ^{(b) (c)}	170	3 475	3 645	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 11. Number of organic producers and processors

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	% change 2012/2011
UK	7 896	7 567	7 287	6 929	6 487	-6.4
England	5 474	5 278	5 131	4 897	4 592	-6.2
Wales	1 230	1 176	1 166	1 119	1 080	-3.5
Scotland	889	820	737	679	611	-10.0
Northern Ireland	303	293	253	234	204	-12.8
North East	179	167	160	152	137	-9.9
North West	367	333	315	301	273	-9.3
Yorkshire & Humberside	330	308	302	278	262	-5.8
East Midlands	449	422	408	383	366	-4.4
West Midlands	555	507	494	476	442	-7.1
Eastern	551	529	515	481	456	-5.2
South East (inc. London)	1 041	1 024	984	975	950	-2.5
South West	2 002	1 988	1 953	1 851	1 706	-7.8

Table 12. Numbers of organic producers and processors by UK region 2012

	Number of producers only	Number of producer/ processors	Number of processors only	Total
UK	4 118	163	2 206	6 487
England	2 589	135	1 868	4 592
Wales	936	24	120	1 080
Scotland	434	4	173	611
Northern Ireland	159	0	45	204
North East	100	3	34	137
North West	129	6	138	273
Yorkshire & Humberside	125	5	132	262
East Midlands	170	9	187	366
West Midlands	267	15	160	442
Eastern	178	10	268	456
South East (inc. London)	377	23	550	950
South West	1 243	64	399	1 706

Table 13. Numbers of organic crop and livestock producers and processors 2012 ^(a)

	No. crop producers	No. crop producers and processors	No. livestock producers	No. livestock producers and processors
UK	3 913	157	2 743	111
England	2 457	130	1 572	90
Wales	928	24	767	18
Scotland	394	3	285	3
Northern Ireland	134	0	119	0
North East	97	3	76	2
North West	125	6	93	1
Yorkshire & Humberside	108	5	78	2
East Midlands	157	8	119	5
West Midlands	255	12	172	11
Eastern	162	10	70	9
South East (inc. London)	359	23	180	11
South West	1 194	63	784	49

(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 12.

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 are sent to Defra each January, to form the annual return required under Eurostat Commission Regulation No. 889/2008 of 5 September 2008.

The information collated by Defra is checked thoroughly before the figures are presented in this statistical release. Data is checked against historical data for comparability and any unusual values are queried with the relevant certification bodies. 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.

Please visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs/series/organic-farming> for more information from this survey. Alternatively, you can contact us on 01904 455332.

Note

In this statistical release, unless specified otherwise, all data includes both in-conversion and fully organic holdings. Also, all percentage changes in this release's tables are based on unrounded figures, so totals may not necessarily agree with the sum of their components.

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 <https://www.gov.uk/browse/business/farming/organic-farming> for more details about organic farming, including 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.

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: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs/series/structure-of-the-agricultural-industry>

The next update from the June Survey of Agriculture will be the publication of early crop areas for England in August 2013. The final England results of crop and grassland areas and cattle, sheep and pig numbers will be published in September 2013. UK results will be available in October 2013.

This organics statistical release will be updated in May 2014.