

Uses, Users and Methodology of the Cereal Usage Survey

Introduction

Cereal usage is a quarterly publication that contains information on the use of cereal grain, flour production and stocks of cereal by these cereal processors on a quarterly and crop year basis (July to June) and includes Oatmeal Millers data, use of wheat for starch and bioethanol production.

User statement

The information in this notice is used by the UK government and the EU as evidence for assessing market conditions and evaluating agricultural policy including regular market management activities e.g. import tariffs. A key use is for the construction of the UK forecast cereals balance sheet which is published at [AHDB website](#). The balance sheet is updated regularly during the year and includes more detailed contextual commentary.

Other users include the food, feed and farming industry, academia and the general public.

Feedback

We welcome feedback on the data from all users including how and why the data are used. This helps us to understand the value of the statistics to external users, and identifies any unmet needs.

Enquiries and Feedback to: Crop Statistics, Defra, 201 Foss House, Kings Pool, 1-2 Peasholme Green, York, YO1 7PX Email: crops-statistics@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Please note that the last data published by Defra is for December 2017. All future cereal usage survey data will be published by the AHDB at [AHDB website](#).

Revisions policy

Figures in this notice are provisional and subject to revision. We will provide information about any revisions we make to previously published information in this statistics notice, and the associated datasets. Revisions could occur for various reasons, including:

- a) if we have not received survey data from respondents we make an estimate based on their previous returns applying any particular trend in the data, as appropriate. These estimates will be replaced with actual survey data when it is received.
- b) when survey respondents occasionally supply amended figures for previous periods.
- c) revising previous estimated data for smaller companies with actual survey data on an annual basis.

Methodology

These compulsory surveys, the Wheat Milled and Flour Production, the Cereal Usage by the Brewers, Maltsters and Distillers and the Oatmeal Millers collect data under the Statistics of Trade Act 1947. The data reported in this statistical release are from survey returns of all of the major users of wheat, barley and oats in the UK.

Companies for the Wheat Milled and Flour Production and the Cereal Usage by the Brewers, Maltsters and Distillers are contacted monthly or annually and their usage, stock and sales statistics are recorded. Most companies are sampled monthly, but smaller companies are sampled annually. Estimates for the smaller companies that are not part of the monthly survey are made and included in the published figures. This reduces the chance of a large change in the crop-year to date totals when the actual annual returns are incorporated into the data. For both the Brewers, Maltsters and Distillers and the Wheat Milled and Flour Production Surveys the smaller companies account for less than 5% of the total production.

Companies for the Oatmeal Millers survey are contacted quarterly and data are published quarterly. All known companies are sampled quarterly.

Totals for the current crop year to date are shown (July to June) as well as for the most recent quarter.

Accuracy and Reliability of the Results

The accuracy of the survey results is very high because a census is carried out of all companies and the typical response rate is 100% per year. However in a particular month it is possible that estimates for a small number of individual companies may need to be used which will be subsequently revised when actual data are received. Occasionally data is not published when it fails strict disclosure and dominance checks. This ensures that statistics cannot be traced back to a particular company.

For the Wheat Milled and Flour Production Survey, since October 1999, self raising flour has only been used by a minority of companies so is no longer displayed. Usage by the two bio-ethanol plants is not published separately but included in the other flour category so that usage is accounted for. For the Cereals Usage by the Brewers, Maltsters and Distillers, maize has only been used by a small number of companies and therefore has not been published. The data for each individual return are subject to a variety of validation checks such as comparison against previous months/quarters, cross checks on stocks and totals and extraction rates and data trends which identify any inconsistencies in the data. These would then be verified with the relevant survey respondent and any incorrect figures would be amended prior to publication.