

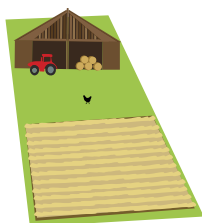


## Organic farming statistics 2018

This release presents estimates of the land area farmed organically, crop areas, livestock numbers and numbers of organic producers and processors in the United Kingdom. The results are produced from data compiled by approved organic certification bodies.

### Key findings:

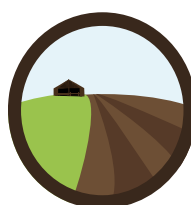
#### Organic land area ([Table 1](#))



**474 thousand hectares**

is farmed organically in the UK.

#### Organic land use ([Table 2](#))



**70%**

of UK organic land is accounted for by permanent grassland.

#### Organic crops ([Table 3](#))



**8%**

of the total UK organic area is used to grow cereals.

#### Regional organic land use ([Table 4](#))



**61%**

of the total UK organic area is in England

#### Organic Livestock ([Tables 5 and 6](#))



**3.3%**

of the total UK cattle population is reared organically.

#### Organic operators ([Tables 7 to 9](#))



**6.2 thousand**

The number of organic operators in the UK.

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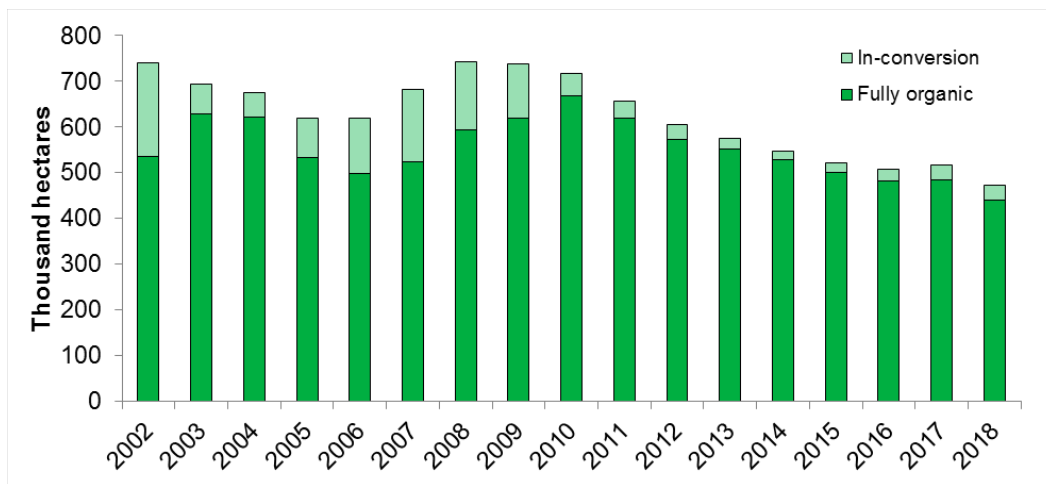
## Detailed results

The total organic area referred to, is made up of fully organic land and organic land in-conversion. Long-term trends and detailed geographical breakdowns are available in the dataset: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/organic-farming-statistics-2018>.

### Land area farmed organically

In 2018, the United Kingdom had a total area of 474 thousand hectares of land farmed organically (i.e. the fully converted area and area under conversion), a decrease of 8.4% compared to 2017. Whilst there has been little change to the main crop areas (cereals, other crops, fruit & nuts and vegetables), this decrease has been driven by the fall in the area of land with a low production value, e.g. temporary pasture, woodland etc. Since 2008 when the area of land farmed organically peaked, the organically farmed area has declined by 36%. The organically farmed area represents 2.7% of the total farmed area on agricultural holdings in the United Kingdom.

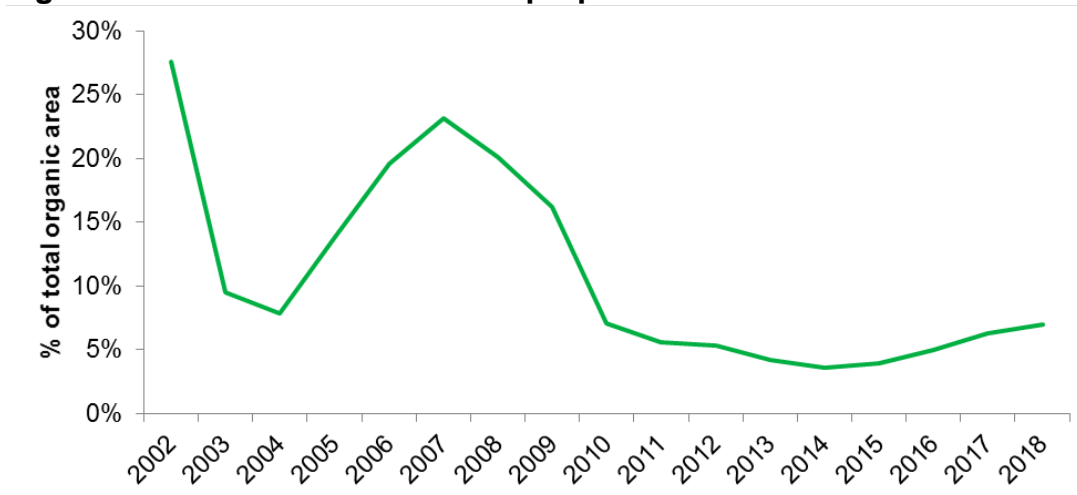
**Figure 1: Land area farmed organically in the United Kingdom**



### Land in-conversion

Organic production comes from fully converted land. Before an area can be considered as fully organic, it must undergo a conversion process. The area in-conversion expressed as a percentage of the total organic area can give an indication of the potential growth in the organic sector. This proportion showed a small increase in 2018, the fourth consecutive increase since 2014.

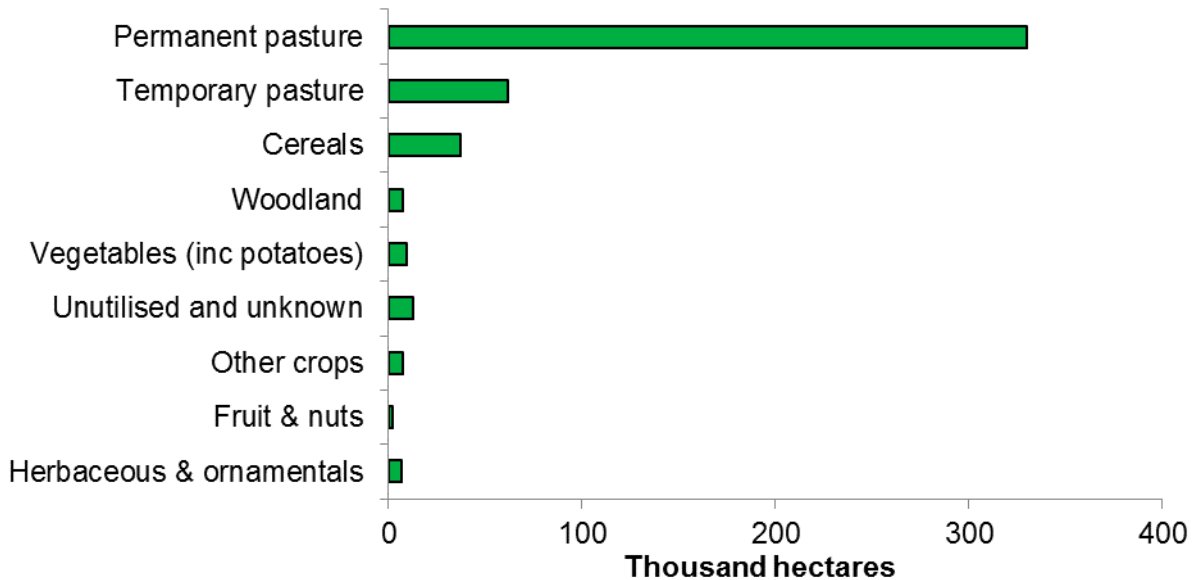
**Figure 2: Land in-conversion as a proportion of the total area farmed organically**



### Organic land use

Permanent pasture accounts for the biggest share of the organic area (70%) followed by temporary pasture (13%) and cereals (8%). The full breakdown of organic land use is shown in Figure 3 below and Table 2 on page 5. The drop in unknown area reflects the data cleaning carried out to assign crop types.

**Figure 3: Organic land use in the United Kingdom: 2018<sup>(a)</sup>**

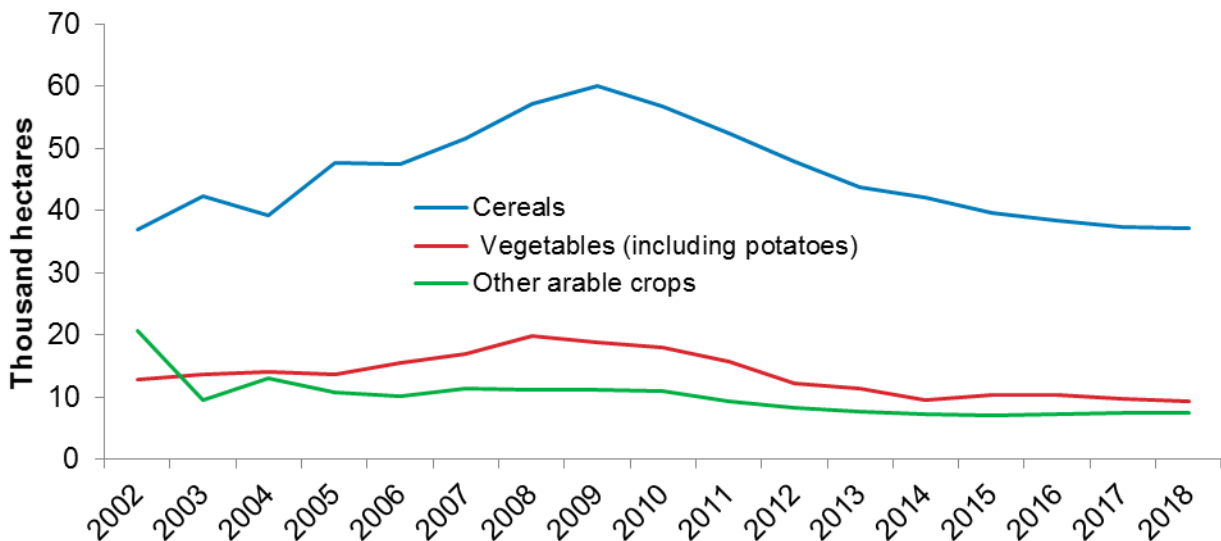


(a) Includes fully organic land and land in-conversion

### Organic crops

The three main crop types grown organically are cereals, vegetables including potatoes, and other arable crops. All have shown a decline since the late 2000s, mirroring the fall in the land area farmed organically since 2008.

**Figure 4: Organic crops in the United Kingdom<sup>(a)</sup>**



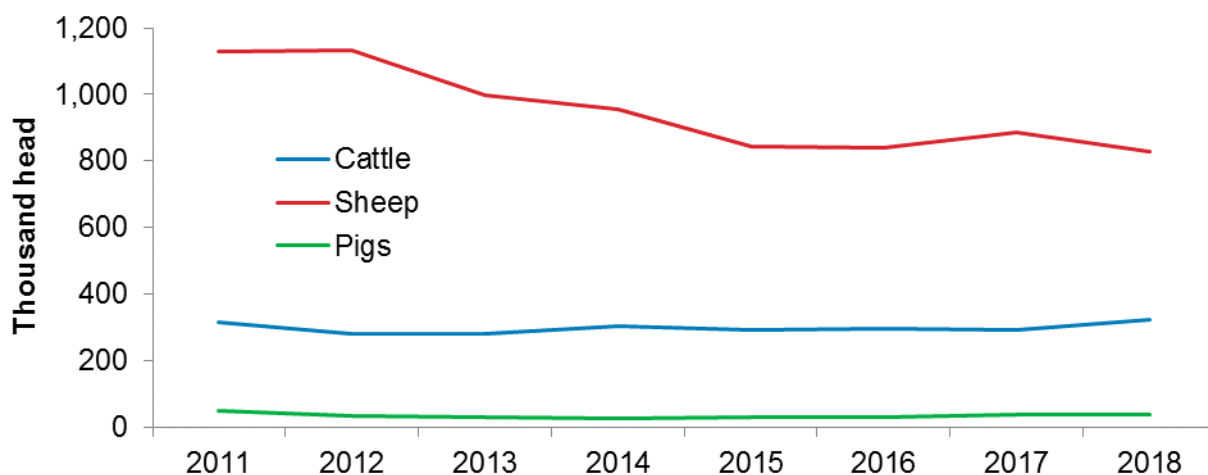
(a) Includes fully organic land and land in-conversion

## Organic livestock

The number of total poultry farmed organically in the United Kingdom increased by 10% between 2017 and 2018, rising to almost 3.4 million birds. However, this equates to 1.8% of the total UK poultry population.

In the red meat sector (see Figure 5), sheep reared organically decreased by 6.8% to 827 thousand animals in 2018. Pigs reared organically also saw a decrease of 4.2% from 39 thousand animals in 2017 to 37 thousand animals in 2018. Organically reared cattle numbers rose from 294 thousand animals in 2017 to 324 thousand animals in 2018, an increase of 10%.

**Figure 5: Organic livestock in the United Kingdom<sup>(a)</sup>**

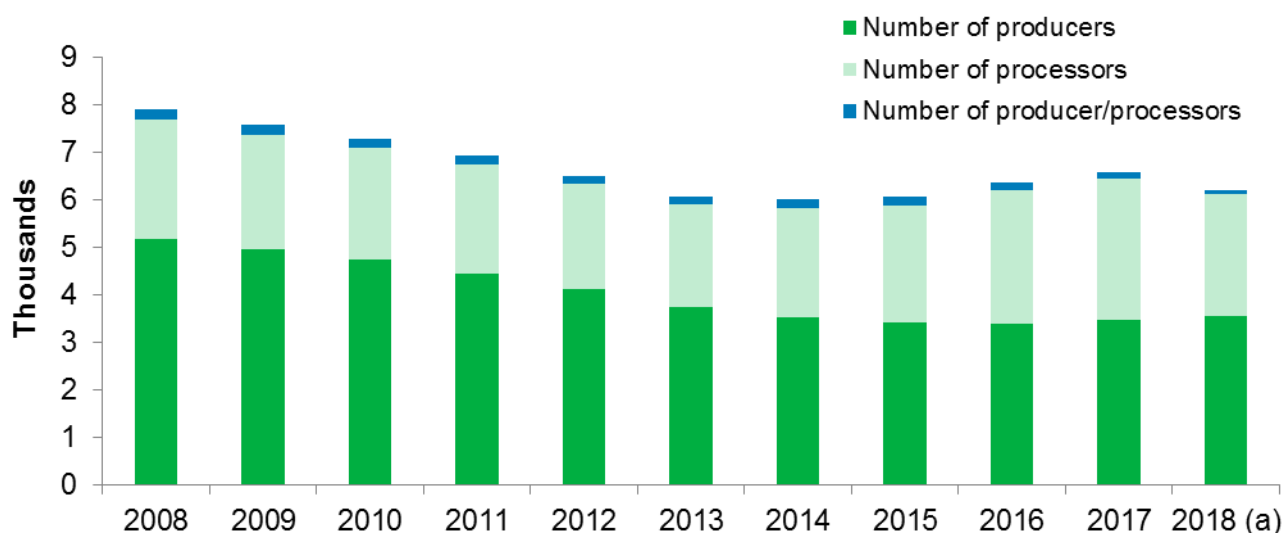


(a) Includes fully organic only

## Number of organic producers and processors

In 2018, there were almost 6.2 thousand producers and processors registered with the organic certification bodies in the United Kingdom. This is a decrease of 6% compared to 2017, however the figures are not directly comparable to previous years, see note (a).

**Figure 6: Organic producers and processors in the United Kingdom**



(a) In 2018 work has been carried out to clarify how operators are recorded. This has resulted in a number of operators that were previously recorded as processors now being recorded in the correct categories of wholesalers/traders/retailers etc. We are unable to backdate these changes so earlier data is not directly comparable.

**Table 1: Land area farmed organically 2015 to 2018**

|                           | Thousand hectares |              |              |              |                       |
|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------------|
|                           | 2015              | 2016         | 2017         | 2018         | % change<br>2018/2017 |
| <b>United Kingdom</b>     |                   |              |              |              |                       |
| In-conversion             | 20.6              | 25.2         | 32.6         | 32.9         | 1.0                   |
| Fully organic             | 500.8             | 482.7        | 484.8        | 441.1        | -9.0                  |
| <b>Total organic area</b> | <b>521.4</b>      | <b>507.9</b> | <b>517.4</b> | <b>474.0</b> | <b>-8.4</b>           |
| <b>England</b>            |                   |              |              |              |                       |
| In-conversion             | 10.0              | 14.7         | 19.8         | 20.3         | 2.7                   |
| Fully organic             | 293.7             | 281.8        | 280.5        | 269.0        | -4.1                  |
| <b>Total organic area</b> | <b>303.7</b>      | <b>296.5</b> | <b>300.3</b> | <b>289.3</b> | <b>-3.7</b>           |

**Table 2: Organic land use 2015 to 2018<sup>(a)</sup>**

|  | Thousand hectares |              |              |              |                       |
|--|-------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------------|
|  | 2015              | 2016         | 2017         | 2018         | % change<br>2018/2017 |
| <b>United Kingdom</b>                    |                   |              |              |              |                       |
| Cereals                                  | 39.6              | 38.4         | 37.4         | 37.1         | -0.8                  |
| Other crops                              | 6.9               | 7.3          | 7.4          | 7.4          | -0.7                  |
| Fruit & nuts                             | 1.9               | 1.9          | 1.8          | 1.7          | -5.3                  |
| Vegetables (inc potatoes)                | 10.4              | 10.2         | 9.6          | 9.3          | -3.1                  |
| Herbaceous & ornamentals                 | 6.2               | 5.8          | 5.9          | 6.7          | 12.1                  |
| Temporary pasture                        | 92.2              | 92.1         | 92.3         | 61.8         | -33.0                 |
| Permanent pasture (inc<br>rough grazing) | 347.1             | 335.0        | 333.3        | 330.1        | -1.0                  |
| Woodland                                 | 6.9               | 7.4          | 9.0          | 7.6          | -15.5                 |
| Unutilised land                          | 5.7               | 5.4          | 5.5          | 4.0          | -28.2                 |
| Unknown <sup>(b)</sup>                   | 4.3               | 4.5          | 15.2         | 8.4          | -44.4                 |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>521.4</b>      | <b>507.9</b> | <b>517.4</b> | <b>474.0</b> | <b>-8.4</b>           |
| <b>England</b>                           |                   |              |              |              |                       |
| Cereals                                  | 33.1              | 32.1         | 31.3         | 31.4         | 0.5                   |
| Other crops                              | 5.1               | 5.4          | 5.4          | 5.5          | 2.6                   |
| Fruit & nuts                             | 1.8               | 1.8          | 1.6          | 1.6          | -0.5                  |
| Vegetables (inc potatoes)                | 8.7               | 8.5          | 8.0          | 7.7          | -3.7                  |
| Herbaceous & ornamentals                 | 5.4               | 5.0          | 5.2          | 5.8          | 11.4                  |
| Temporary pasture                        | 75.7              | 75.0         | 75.5         | 51.9         | -31.2                 |
| Permanent pasture (inc<br>rough grazing) | 160.9             | 155.6        | 153.9        | 172.2        | 11.9                  |
| Woodland                                 | 5.2               | 5.3          | 5.3          | 4.7          | -11.2                 |
| Unutilised land                          | 4.4               | 4.0          | 4.0          | 2.7          | -31.8                 |
| Unknown <sup>(b)</sup>                   | 3.4               | 3.8          | 10.1         | 5.6          | -44.8                 |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>303.7</b>      | <b>296.5</b> | <b>300.3</b> | <b>289.3</b> | <b>-3.7</b>           |

(a) Includes fully organic and in-conversion areas.

(b) In 2018 some land areas were provided without a crop category or land use description, therefore these are classified as unknown.

**Table 3: Detailed organic land use 2018**

Thousand hectares

|                                       | Area in-conversion | Fully organic area | Total organic area | Total areas at June 2018 <sup>(a)</sup> | Total organic area as % of June area |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| <b>United Kingdom</b>                 |                    |                    |                    |   |                                      |
| <b>Cereals</b>                        | <b>2.2</b>         | <b>34.8</b>        | <b>37.1</b>        | <b>3 178</b>                            | 1.2                                  |
| Wheat                                 | 0.5                | 8.2                | 8.7                | 1 797                                   | 0.5                                  |
| Barley                                | 0.9                | 11.2               | 12.1               | 1 157                                   | 1.0                                  |
| Oats                                  | 0.6                | 12.1               | 12.7               | 173                                     | 7.3                                  |
| Other cereals                         | 0.2                | 3.3                | 3.6                | 51                                      | 7.0                                  |
| <b>Other arable crops</b>             | <b>0.9</b>         | <b>6.5</b>         | <b>7.4</b>         | <b>1 285</b>                            | <b>0.6</b>                           |
| Sugar beet                            | 0.0                | 0.0                | 0.0                | 116                                     | 0.0                                  |
| Fodder, forage & silage               | 0.8                | 6.0                | 6.7                | 86                                      | 7.8                                  |
| Maize, oilseeds & protein crops       | 0.1                | 0.5                | 0.6                | 1 083                                   | 0.1                                  |
| Vegetables                            | 0.7                | 7.4                | 8.0                | 117                                     | 6.9                                  |
| Potatoes                              | 0.2                | 1.1                | 1.3                | 142                                     | 0.9                                  |
| Fruit & nuts                          | 0.1                | 1.6                | 1.7                | 35                                      | 4.8                                  |
| Herbaceous & ornamentals              | 0.1                | 6.6                | 6.7                | 12                                      | 56.4                                 |
| Temporary pasture                     | 7.3                | 54.5               | 61.8               | 1 164                                   | 5.3                                  |
| Permanent pasture (inc rough grazing) | 20.3               | 309.9              | 330.1              | 10 110                                  | 3.3                                  |
| Woodland                              | 0.5                | 7.1                | 7.6                | 1 020                                   | 0.7                                  |
| Unutilised land                       | 0.4                | 3.5                | 4.0                |   |                                      |
| Unknown <sup>(b)</sup>                | 0.3                | 8.1                | 8.4                |   |                                      |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>32.9</b>        | <b>441.1</b>       | <b>474.0</b>       |   |                                      |
| <b>England</b>                        |                    |                    |                    |   |                                      |
| <b>Cereals</b>                        | <b>1.9</b>         | <b>29.6</b>        | <b>31.4</b>        | <b>2 671</b>                            | 1.2                                  |
| Wheat                                 | 0.4                | 7.7                | 8.2                | 1 668                                   | 0.5                                  |
| Barley                                | 0.7                | 8.9                | 9.6                | 825                                     | 1.2                                  |
| Oats                                  | 0.5                | 10.0               | 10.6               | 134                                     | 7.9                                  |
| Other cereals                         | 0.2                | 3.0                | 3.2                | 43                                      | 7.4                                  |
| <b>Other arable crops</b>             | <b>0.7</b>         | <b>4.9</b>         | <b>5.5</b>         | <b>1 189</b>                            | <b>0.5</b>                           |
| Sugar beet                            | 0.0                | 0.0                | 0.0                | 116                                     | 0.0                                  |
| Fodder, forage & silage               | 0.6                | 4.4                | 5.0                | 58                                      | 8.5                                  |
| Maize, oilseeds & protein crops       | 0.1                | 0.5                | 0.6                | 1 014                                   | 0.1                                  |
| Fruit & nuts                          | 0.1                | 1.5                | 1.6                | 32                                      | 5.0                                  |
| Vegetables                            | 0.7                | 6.2                | 6.8                | 97                                      | 7.0                                  |
| Potatoes                              | 0.1                | 0.8                | 0.9                | 107                                     | 0.8                                  |
| Herbaceous & ornamentals              | 0.1                | 5.7                | 5.8                | 10                                      | 55.9                                 |
| Temporary pasture                     | 6.3                | 45.7               | 51.9               | 668                                     | 7.8                                  |
| Permanent pasture (inc rough grazing) | 9.6                | 162.6              | 172.2              | 3 789                                   | 4.5                                  |
| Woodland                              | 0.3                | 4.4                | 4.7                | 376                                     | 1.2                                  |
| Unutilised land                       | 0.3                | 2.4                | 2.7                |   |                                      |
| Unknown <sup>(b)</sup>                | 0.3                | 5.3                | 5.6                |   |                                      |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>20.3</b>        | <b>269.0</b>       | <b>289.3</b>       |   |                                      |

(a) Source: June Survey of Agriculture as at 1 June 2018. Excludes common land.

(b) In 2018 some land areas were provided without a crop category or land use description, therefore these are classified as unknown.

**Table 4: Area farmed organically by country and English region 2018**

|                          | Thousand hectares  |                    |                    |   |                                      |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
|                          | Area in-conversion | Fully organic area | Total organic area | Total agricultural area at June 2018 <sup>(a)</sup> | Total organic area as % of June area |
| <b>United Kingdom</b>    | <b>32.9</b>        | <b>441.1</b>       | <b>474.0</b>       | <b>17 677</b>                                       | <b>2.7</b>                           |
| Wales                    | 3.6                | 81.4               | 85.0               | 1 723   | 4.9                                  |
| Scotland                 | 8.5                | 83.1               | 91.6               | 5 604   | 1.6                                  |
| Northern Ireland         | 0.5                | 7.6                | 8.1                | 1 022   | 0.8                                  |
| <b>England</b>           | <b>20.3</b>        | <b>269.0</b>       | <b>289.3</b>       | <b>9 328</b>  | <b>3.1</b>                           |
| North East               | 1.6                | 21.6               | 23.2               | ..  | ..                                   |
| North West               | 0.6                | 11.6               | 12.2               | ..  | ..                                   |
| Yorkshire and the Humber | 0.6                | 9.7                | 10.3               | ..  | ..                                   |
| East Midlands            | 1.1                | 12.6               | 13.7               | ..  | ..                                   |
| West Midlands            | 4.4                | 28.7               | 33.1               | ..  | ..                                   |
| Eastern                  | 1.2                | 12.1               | 13.3               | ..  | ..                                   |
| South East (inc London)  | 2.0                | 39.4               | 41.4               | ..  | ..                                   |
| South West               | 8.7                | 133.3              | 142.0              | ..  | ..                                   |

(a) Source: June Survey of Agriculture as at 1 June 2018. Excludes common land.

.. Comparison with 2018 data is not available.

**Table 5: Organic livestock numbers 2015 to 2018<sup>(a)</sup>**

|                                | Thousand head |         |         |         |                    |
|--------------------------------|---------------|---------|---------|---------|--------------------|
|                                | 2015          | 2016    | 2017    | 2018    | % change 2018/2017 |
| <b>United Kingdom</b>          |               |         |         |         |                    |
| Cattle                         | 291.5         | 296.4   | 294.0   | 324.1   | 10.3               |
| Sheep                          | 844.6         | 840.8   | 887.0   | 826.6   | -6.8               |
| Pigs                           | 30.0          | 31.5    | 39.1    | 37.4    | -4.2               |
| Poultry                        | 2 560.2       | 2 821.2 | 3 059.9 | 3 380.9 | 10.5               |
| Other livestock <sup>(b)</sup> | 4.3           | 3.4     | 2.6     | 6.0     | 130.8              |
| <b>England</b>                 |               |         |         |         |                    |
| Cattle                         | 217.7         | 219.3   | 217.3   | 240.6   | 10.7               |
| Sheep                          | 415.3         | 405.9   | 421.2   | 374.0   | -11.2              |
| Pigs                           | 22.2          | 29.4    | 37.2    | 29.2    | -21.5              |
| Poultry                        | 1 512.4       | 1 699.2 | 2 002.0 | 2 038.2 | 1.8                |
| Other livestock <sup>(b)</sup> | 3.9           | 2.8     | 2.3     | 4.8     | 110.0              |

(a) Data relates to fully organic only

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

**Table 6: Detailed organic livestock numbers 2018**

|                          |  | Thousand head                               |  |
|--------------------------|--|---|--|
|                          | Total organic livestock <sup>(a)</sup> | Total livestock at June 2018 <sup>(b)</sup> | Total organic livestock as % of June livestock |
| <b>United Kingdom</b>    |  |   |  |
| <b>Cattle</b>            | <b>324.1</b>                           | <b>9 891</b>                                | <b>3.3</b>                                     |
| for slaughter            | 116.1                                  | 3 890                                       | 3.0  |
| Dairy cows               | 88.3                                   | 3 277                                       | 2.7  |
| Other cattle             | 119.7                                  | 2 723                                       | 4.4  |
| <b>Sheep</b>             | <b>826.6</b>                           | <b>33 781</b>                               | <b>2.4</b>                                     |
| Breeding females         | 446.6                                  | 16 286                                      | 2.7  |
| Other sheep              | 380.0                                  | 17 495                                      | 2.2  |
| <b>Pigs</b>              | <b>37.4</b>                            | <b>5 012</b>                                | <b>0.7</b>                                     |
| Fattening pigs           | 21.3                                   | 4 509                                       | 0.5  |
| Breeding sows            | 3.8                                    | 409   | 0.9  |
| Other pigs               | 12.3                                   | 94  | 13.1   |
| <b>Poultry</b>           | <b>3 380.9</b>                         | <b>188 442</b>                              | <b>1.8</b>                                     |
| Broilers                 | 1 878.7                                | 123 946                                     | 1.5  |
| Laying hens              | 1 412.8                                | 39 852                                      | 3.5  |
| Other poultry            | 89.4                                   | 24 644                                      | 0.4  |
| <b>Other livestock</b>   | <b>6.0</b>                             | :   | :  |
| Farmed deer              | 3.3                                    | 34  | 9.9  |
| Goats                    | 0.7                                    | 108   | 0.7  |
| Horses                   | 1.0                                    | 250   | 0.4  |
| Others <sup>(c)(d)</sup> | 0.9                                    | :   | :  |
| <b>England</b>           |  |   |  |
| <b>Cattle</b>            | <b>240.6</b>                           | <b>5 372</b>                                | <b>4.5</b>                                     |
| for slaughter            | 81.3                                   | 1 918                                       | 4.2  |
| Dairy cows               | 70.1                                   | 1 972                                       | 3.6  |
| Other cattle             | 89.2                                   | 1 483                                       | 6.0  |
| <b>Sheep</b>             | <b>374.0</b>                           | <b>15 651</b>                               | <b>2.4</b>                                     |
| Breeding females         | 213.3                                  | 7 383                                       | 2.9  |
| Other sheep              | 160.7                                  | 8 268                                       | 1.9  |
| <b>Pigs</b>              | <b>29.2</b>                            | <b>4 038</b>                                | <b>0.7</b>                                     |
| Fattening pigs           | 14.7                                   | 3 630                                       | 0.4  |
| Breeding sows            | 3.4                                    | 327   | 1.0  |
| Other pigs               | 11.1                                   | 82  | 13.7   |
| <b>Poultry</b>           | <b>2 038.2</b>                         | <b>139 689</b>                              | <b>1.5</b>                                     |
| Broilers                 | 968.8                                  | 95 849                                      | 1.0  |
| Laying hens              | 1 015.2                                | 25 278                                      | 4.0  |
| Other poultry            | 54.2                                   | 18 562                                      | 0.3  |
| <b>Other livestock</b>   | <b>4.8</b>                             | :   | :  |
| Farmed deer              | 2.5                                    | 21  | 11.8   |
| Goats                    | 0.6                                    | 87  | 0.6  |
| Horses                   | 0.8                                    | 162   | 0.5  |
| Others <sup>(c)(d)</sup> | 0.8                                    | :   | :  |

(a) Data relates to fully organic only

(b) Source: June survey of agriculture/Cattle Tracing system for cattle populations

(c) "Others" include camelids and any livestock not recorded elsewhere

(d) June figures are not provided for other livestock as the type of animals are not comparable



**Table 7: Number of organic producers and processors 2018**

|                         | Number of producers only | Number of producer/processors | Number of processors only | Total organic producers and processors |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| <b>United Kingdom</b>   | <b>3 544</b>             | <b>75</b>                     | <b>2 569</b>              | <b>6 188</b>                           |
| Wales                   | 627                      | 4                             | 128                       | 759                                    |
| Scotland                | 379                      | 2                             | 196                       | 577                                    |
| Northern Ireland        | 162                      | 5                             | 49                        | 216                                    |
| <b>England</b>          | <b>2 376</b>             | <b>64</b>                     | <b>2 196</b>              | <b>4 636</b>                           |
| North East              | 74                       | 2                             | 37                        | 113                                    |
| North West              | 112                      | 6                             | 145                       | 263                                    |
| Yorkshire & the Humber  | 102                      | 2                             | 136                       | 240                                    |
| East Midlands           | 163                      | 4                             | 183                       | 350                                    |
| West Midlands           | 311                      | 9                             | 155                       | 475                                    |
| Eastern                 | 175                      | 9                             | 293                       | 477                                    |
| South East (inc London) | 343                      | 9                             | 844                       | 1 196                                  |
| South West              | 1 096                    | 23                            | 403                       | 1 522                                  |

**Table 8: Number of organic producers and processors 2015 to 2018**

|                         | 2015         | 2016         | 2017         | 2018         | % change 2018/2017 |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------|
| <b>United Kingdom</b>   | <b>6 056</b> | <b>6 363</b> | <b>6 586</b> | <b>6 188</b> | <b>-6.0</b>        |
| Wales                   | 741          | 751          | 751          | 759          | 1.1                |
| Scotland                | 539          | 560          | 578          | 577          | -0.2               |
| Northern Ireland        | 197          | 204          | 220          | 216          | -1.8               |
| <b>England</b>          | <b>4 579</b> | <b>4 848</b> | <b>5 037</b> | <b>4 636</b> | <b>-8.0</b>        |
| North East              | 137          | 130          | 132          | 113          | -14.4              |
| North West              | 277          | 301          | 308          | 263          | -14.6              |
| Yorkshire & The Humber  | 257          | 273          | 275          | 240          | -12.7              |
| East Midlands           | 329          | 371          | 388          | 350          | -9.8               |
| West Midlands           | 438          | 446          | 514          | 475          | -7.6               |
| Eastern                 | 457          | 508          | 543          | 477          | -12.2              |
| South East (inc London) | 1 083        | 1 192        | 1 254        | 1 196        | -4.6               |
| South West              | 1 601        | 1 627        | 1 623        | 1 522        | -6.2               |

**Table 9: Number of organic crop and livestock producers and processors 2018<sup>(a)</sup>**

|                          | Number of:        |                                     |                        |  |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|--|
|                          | Crop<br>producers | Crop<br>producers and<br>processors | Livestock<br>producers | Livestock<br>producers and<br>processors |
| <b>United Kingdom</b>    | <b>3 244</b>      | <b>69</b>                           | <b>2 397</b>           | <b>51</b>                                |
| Wales                    | 609               | 4                                   | 517                    | 2  |
| Scotland                 | 327               | 1                                   | 255                    | 1  |
| Northern Ireland         | 127               | 2                                   | 117                    | 0  |
| <b>England</b>           | <b>2 181</b>      | <b>62</b>                           | <b>1 508</b>           | <b>48</b>                                |
| North East               | 72                | 2                                   | 57                     | 2  |
| North West               | 105               | 6                                   | 78                     | 4  |
| Yorkshire and the Humber | 90                | 2                                   | 65                     | 2  |
| East Midlands            | 147               | 4                                   | 109                    | 2  |
| West Midlands            | 291               | 9                                   | 175                    | 6  |
| Eastern                  | 140               | 7                                   | 70                     | 5  |
| South East (inc London)  | 307               | 9                                   | 183                    | 8  |
| South West               | 1 029             | 23                                  | 771                    | 19                                       |

(a) Mixed organic holdings will be recorded under both the crop and livestock headings above. The numbers shown cannot be added together to arrive at total producers / processors by region as this will lead to double counting.

## Organic statistics methodology, data notes and feedback

### Organic statistics methodology

This statistical release contains summary results of data compiled by 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 an annual return required by the European Commission under 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 are 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 are collected at varying times through the year. Therefore, the data presented here do not give an exact snapshot of organic farming at any specific time of year, so they 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 figures include both in conversion and fully organic holdings. Also, totals in this release are based on unrounded figures so may not agree with the sum of their components in the tables.

### 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.

### 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 with extensive outdoor access under an organic system.

### 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 agricultural 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>

## Users and uses of these statistics

Users of the data include the EU Commission who require these statistics to be supplied annually under paragraph 36, Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 and Article 93 Commission Regulation (EC) No 889/2008. The purpose is to support the management of the organic production sector in the EU. Statistics are published by Eurostat in their database <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>

Other major users include the organic certification bodies in the UK, who provide the information used to compile the statistics, and the Government and devolved administrations, who use the information when formulating policy on support for organic farming. Other users include farming organisations, research bodies, students and there is interest also from the general public.

## National Statistics Status

National Statistics status means that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

The continued designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in 2014 following a [full assessment](#) by the UK Statistics Authority against the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

Since the last review of these statistics in 2014, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made improvements including:

- Providing a detailed breakdown of livestock categories following user feedback
- Improved the data quality by updating guidance for data providers and carrying out enhanced validation checks on data received

## Feedback

We welcome feedback and any thoughts to improve the publication further. Please send any feedback to: [organic-stats@defra.gov.uk](mailto:organic-stats@defra.gov.uk)

Suggested questions to help you structure your feedback are below but all feedback is welcome:

- How relevant is the current content of the publication to your needs as a user?
- What purpose do you require the data for?
- Which data do you find most useful?
- Is there any content that you did not find useful?
- Do you have any suggestions for further development of this release; including additional content, presentation and any other thoughts?