



1 May 2014

United Kingdom Poultry and Poultry Meat Statistics – March 2014

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Key points

This release shows the latest monthly information on poultry outputs, including hatchery output, slaughtering and production statistics. The key results for **March 2014** are given below:

- UK commercial layer chick placings were 26% higher than a year earlier in March 2013 at 3.1 million chicks. The average weekly equivalent (0.78 million chicks) is the highest number since the early 1990's, at least. The increases seen over the latest three months imply increases in the laying flock size (and hence, egg production) in the coming months.
- UK broiler chick placings were 1.3% lower than March 2013 at 72 million birds and UK turkey placings were 2.0% higher at 1 million birds.
- UK broiler slaughterings were 0.7% lower than March 2013 at 69 million birds. UK turkey slaughterings were 18% lower at 0.8 million birds.
- With lower slaughterings and lower broiler liveweights, UK poultry meat production was 120 thousand tonnes, 0.9% lower than in March 2013.

This release will be updated at 09:30 on 5 June 2014. Additional time series are available to download at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/poultry-and-poultry-meat-statistics>

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Section 1: Commentary

The number of eggs set (incubated) each month indicates how many chicks will be available for placing into poultry systems in future months (hen eggs take around 21 days to hatch, turkey eggs take around 28 days). Once hatched, the chicks are then placed for further growth so the placing figures give an indication of future poultry meat and egg production.

Broiler chick and turkey poult placings are strongly affected by consumer demand for turkeys around Christmas time. Clear peaks (of turkey placings) and troughs (of broiler placings) are seen in the average weekly figures in the months running up to Christmas (Figs 2.1 and 2.2). This translates into equivalent high/low levels in the slaughtering volumes over the Christmas period (Figs 3.1 and 3.2).

The overall trend for the past few years has been a gradual increase in the volume of broilers produced in the UK whereas the volume of turkeys produced has remained fairly stable.

Section 2: United Kingdom Hatcheries data – placings and eggs set

Tables 2.1 and 2.3 show the number of eggs set and chicks placed by United Kingdom hatcheries. The surveys are run according to statistical, rather than calendar months, so the number of weeks in each statistical month is specified. Longer time series are available at the web link on the front page.

Table 2.1: Number of eggs set by United Kingdom Hatcheries

	millions		
	January 2014 5 weeks	February 2014 4 weeks	March 2014 4 weeks
Commercial broilers (a)	106.8	88.0	88.6
Broiler breeders (a) (b)	5.1	4.7	4.4
Turkeys (c)	1.7	1.3	1.4
Commercial layers (c)	9.8	8.1	7.1

(a) Includes eggs set to produce chicks for placing outside the UK

(b) Includes Broiler parents and grandparents

(c) Only includes eggs set for commercial stock, including those for placing outside the UK

Table 2.2 shows the average weekly eggs set for the last thirteen months. The monthly figures are affected by the number of weeks in the statistical month. To get a clearer measure of trends, weekly averages are calculated by dividing the number of eggs set in each month by the number of weeks in the statistical month.

Table 2.2: Average weekly number of eggs set by United Kingdom Hatcheries

	millions												
	2013											2014	
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Commercial broilers (a)	21.7	21.8	22.1	22.2	21.8	21.6	21.8	20.5	21.6	21.7	21.4	22.0	22.1
Broiler breeders (a) (b)	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.2	1.1
Turkeys (c)	0.4	0.4	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Commercial layers (c)	1.9	2.0	2.0	1.9	1.6	1.9	2.2	1.9	2.0	1.8	2.0	2.0	1.8

(a) Includes eggs set to produce chicks for placing outside the UK

(b) Includes Broiler parents and grandparents

(c) Only includes eggs set for commercial stock, including those for placing outside the UK

Table 2.3: Chicks and poults placed in the United Kingdom by United Kingdom Hatcheries

	millions		
	January 2014	February 2014	March 2014
	5 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks
Commercial broilers (a)	90.2	72.1	72.2
Broiler female parents (b)	0.7	0.7	0.7
Turkey poults (c)	1.2	1.0	1.0
Commercial layers	3.4	2.8	3.1

(a) Includes 'by-product' chicks

(b) Includes imported female parent chicks. Excludes grandparent chicks and 'by-product' chicks

(c) Includes female breeder poults only

We have recently concluded a quality review on the broiler female chick placings data. We have consulted with members of the British Poultry Council and developed a new system for more accurately recording the numbers of imported broiler female parent chicks. The data now gives a better representation of the total numbers of breeder chicks which are placed in the UK and are presented on this new basis from January 2014 onwards.

Table 2.4 shows the average weekly placings for the last thirteen months. As in Table 2.2, this removes the effect of using statistical months to give a clear picture of trends over time. Longer term trends can be seen in Figures 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3, following these tables.

Table 2.4: Average weekly numbers of chicks and poults placed in the United Kingdom by United Kingdom Hatcheries

	millions												
	2013					2014							
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Commercial broilers (a)	18.3	18.0	18.4	18.4	18.5	18.1	18.3	18.1	17.1	18.1	18.0	18.0	18.1
Broiler female parents (b)	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2
Turkey poults (c)	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Commercial layers	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8

(a) Includes 'by-product' chicks

(b) Includes imported female parent chicks. Excludes grandparent chicks and 'by-product' chicks

(c) Female breeder poults only

Figure 2.1: Average weekly commercial broiler chicks placed in the United Kingdom by United Kingdom Hatcheries

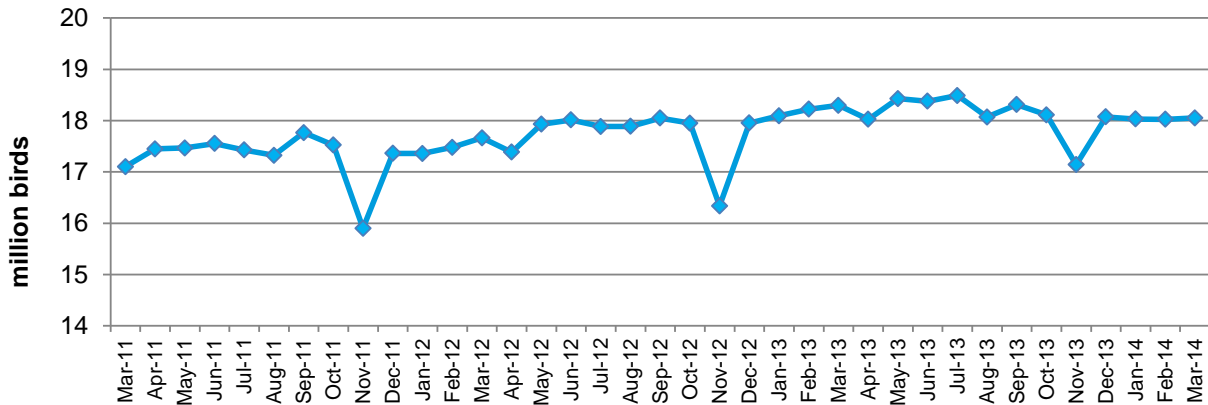


Figure 2.2: Average weekly turkey poults placed in the United Kingdom by United Kingdom Hatcheries

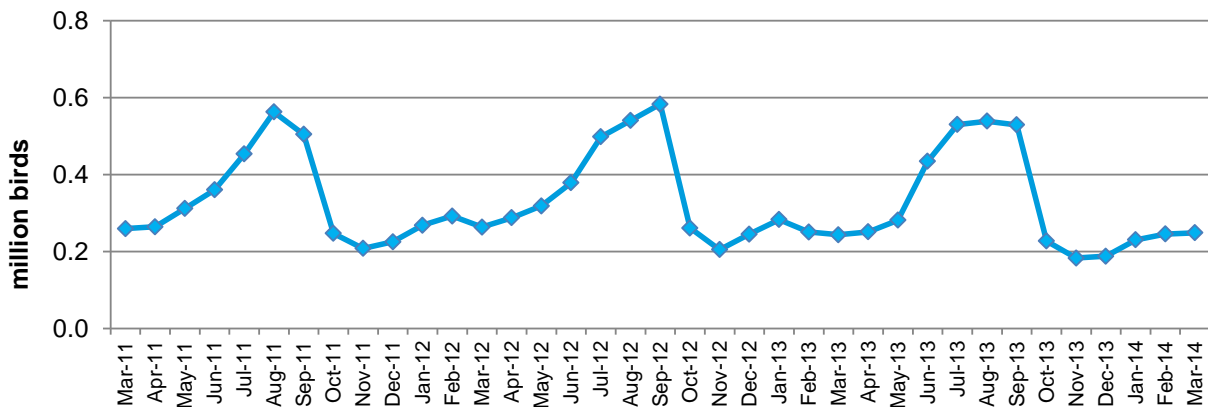
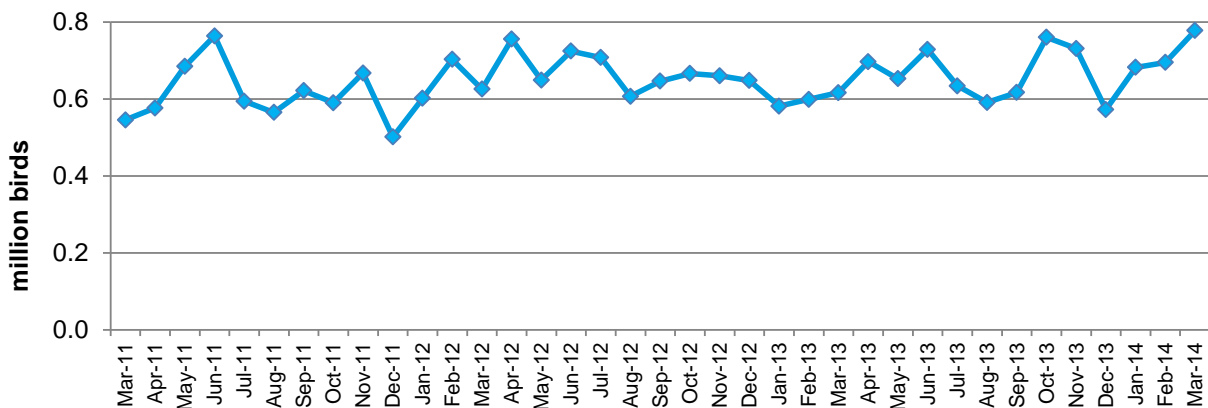


Figure 2.3: Average weekly commercial layer chicks placed in the United Kingdom by United Kingdom Hatcheries



Section 3: United Kingdom poultry slaughterings - numbers slaughtered, average weights and poultry meat production

Tables 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 below show the estimated number of poultry slaughtered, average liveweights of poultry and poultry meat production in the United Kingdom.

Table 3.1: Number of poultry slaughtered in the United Kingdom

	million birds		
	January 2014	February 2014	March 2014
	5 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks
Broilers	84.9	69.1	69.0
Boiling Fowl (a)	3.6	4.2	3.5
Turkeys	1.9	1.2	0.8

(a) Includes spent commercial layer hens, spent layer breeders and spent broiler breeder hens

Table 3.2: Average liveweights per bird at point of slaughter in England & Wales

	kilograms												
	2013						2014						
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Broilers	2.21	2.24	2.25	2.27	2.25	2.25	2.26	2.24	2.23	2.22	2.24	2.19	2.18
Boiling fowls	2.12	2.21	2.16	2.17	2.06	2.34	2.18	2.23	2.27	2.21	2.22	2.13	2.09
Turkeys	13.12	12.91	13.23	13.42	13.66	13.11	12.69	14.28	10.92	9.22	15.44	15.23	14.64

Table 3.3: United Kingdom poultrymeat production (a,b)

	thousand tonnes carcass weight		
	January 2014	February 2014	March 2014
	5 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks
Broilers	130.5	104.0	103.9
Boiling Fowl	5.0	5.6	4.7
Turkeys	24.9	15.3	9.5
Ducks	2.8	2.4	2.5
Total	163.1	127.2	120.5

(a) Converted to whole bird equivalent carcass weight net of offal

(b) Excludes other poultry types, e.g. geese

Table 3.4 shows the average weekly slaughterings for the last thirteen months. As in Section 2, this removes the effect of using statistical months to give a clear picture of trends over time. Longer term trends can be seen in Figures 3.1 and 3.2 following this table.

Table 3.4: Average weekly numbers of poultry slaughtered in the United Kingdom

	2013											2014	
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Broilers	17.4	17.5	17.4	17.5	17.7	17.7	17.5	17.5	17.4	16.9	17.0	17.3	17.3
Boiling Fowl (a)	0.8	0.9	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.7	1.0	0.9
Turkeys	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.2

(a) Includes spent commercial layer hens, spent layer breeders and spent broiler breeder hens

Figure 3.1: United Kingdom average weekly numbers of broilers slaughtered

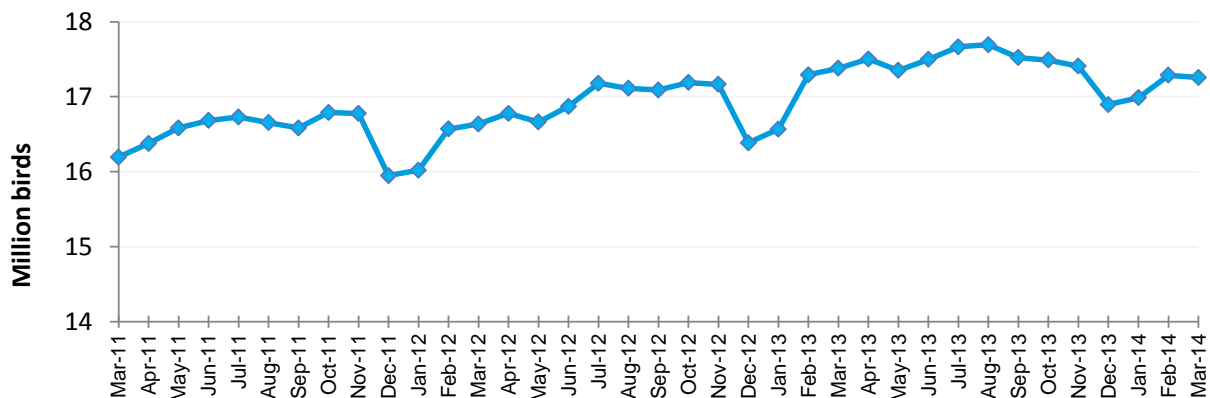
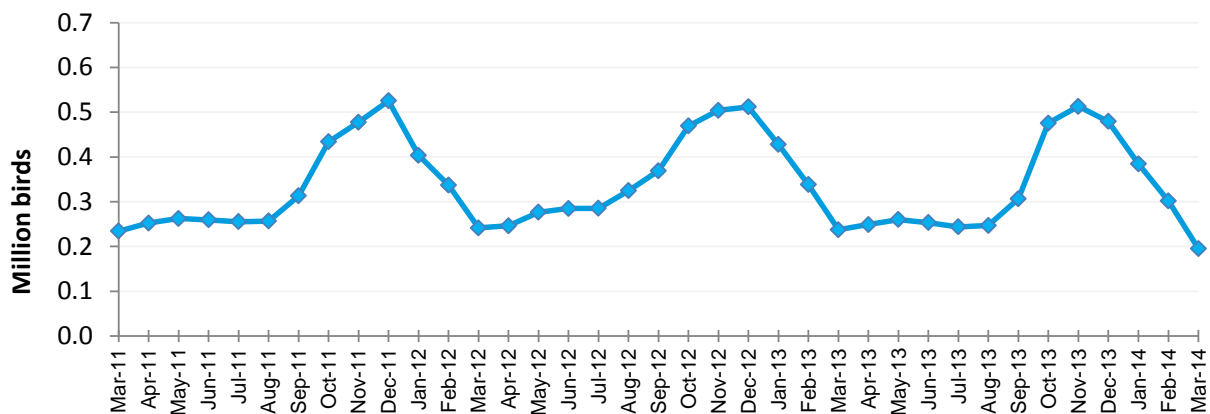


Figure 3.2: United Kingdom average weekly numbers of turkeys slaughtered



Section 4: Data users, methodology notes and revisions policy

Data users

1. Users of the poultry data include the EU Commission who require an extensive range of statistics on the poultry sector. The numbers of poultry slaughtered and tonnages of poultry meat produced are required monthly under Regulation EC 1165/2008 (Animal Production). The hatchery statistics are also required monthly, along with an annual summary of the structure and size distribution of UK hatcheries under Regulations EC 617/2008 and 1234/2007 (Poultry Farming). Detailed information on these regulations is available by selecting “Animal Production” or “Poultry Farming” at <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/agriculture/legislation>.

European level statistics on poultry production (which includes data tables showing results at EU Member State level) are available at

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Agricultural_products_-_animals

2. Representatives of the poultry industry are also major users of the data. The data on Commercial layer chick sets and placings are the key sector indicators for the British Egg Industry Council (BEIC) as they indicate the future laying flock size (and hence egg production). The British Poultry Council also makes heavy use of the data as the Commercial broiler chick sets and placings give evidence on the current state of the industry and predict the available supplies of meat for the coming year. This, in turn, can affect poultry meat prices and trade decisions on levels of imports and exports to maintain supply. The breeder chick placings are also a key measure of future flock sizes and intentions of the sector. The Home Grown Cereals Authority (HGCA), part of the Agricultural and Horticultural Development Board, rely on the chick placings data as a good indicator of feed demand and hence grain usage by the sector.

Our statistics are also often heavily referenced in industry publications such as “Poultry World”.

Methodology

3. Defra runs a monthly survey of registered England and Wales hatcheries. It is a statutory survey of 42 respondents that collects information on the number of eggs set and the chicks placed by hatcheries. The response rate is typically 100%. Similar surveys are run by the Rural & Environment Research and Analysis Directorate (RERAD) for Scotland and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) for Northern Ireland. Scottish poultry statistics are available in the Economic Report on Scottish Agriculture at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Agriculture-Fisheries/PubEconomicReport> (Section 5.5). This website also contains contact details and more information. Northern Ireland results are available at <http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/statistics/agricultural-inputs-and-outputs.htm>

4. Poultry slaughterings and poultry meat production statistics are estimated from the number of chicks placed by hatcheries and day old chick imports using industry advice on life-spans and mortality. Average liveweights for each type of poultry are obtained from Defra's monthly survey of England and Wales poultry slaughterhouses. This is a sample survey of large poultry slaughterhouses, around 26 respondents. Similar surveys are run in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Meat production is calculated from the estimated number of birds slaughtered and the average liveweights. The liveweight is converted to carcass weight using industry advice on conversion factors.
5. Survey data are subject to a variety of validation checks which identify inconsistencies in the data. All data are cleaned prior to publication in discussion with the survey respondents.

Contact details are available on the front page of this notice, for you to send feedback or ask questions about the information provided.

Revisions policy

6. Figures in this release are provisional and subject to revision. We will provide information about any revisions we make to previously published information in this statistics release 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. These estimates are replaced with actual survey data when it is received.
 - b. survey respondents occasionally supply amended figures for previous periods.
 - c. we may also revise the methodology used to raise the survey data to give UK totals.

This month minor revisions have been made to the hatchery, slaughtering and production data from January 2014. This is as a result of amended survey data and revised data from Scotland and Northern Ireland. The scale of revision is small, for example the total poultry production for February 2014 has only been revised by around 300 tonnes (0.2%).