

## Overview - Agricultural Statistics and Climate Change (5th Edition)

The fifth edition of Agricultural Statistics and Climate Change, published on the 30th of July 2014, is an overview of previously published national level statistics on agriculture. It provides some background context to the current understanding of agriculture and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and explains the gaps, uncertainties and limitations in the statistics. The publication also incorporates statistics emerging from developing research and provides some international comparisons.

This latest edition includes links to results from the 2014 Farm Practices Survey, the 2013 British Survey of Fertiliser Practice and updates the indicator framework that monitors greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture. Other charts and tables have also been updated where more recent data are available.

Current methodology used to report emissions from agriculture is predominantly based on the number of livestock animals and the amount of nitrogen based fertiliser applied. A variety of factors which influence emissions are unable to be captured by this methodology (for example, soil conditions, the weather, differing farm practices) and as a result there are relatively large uncertainties around the estimates for agricultural emissions. Research is underway to enable future statistics to better reflect the true position; Defra and the Devolved Administration Governments are investing £12.6 million in the development of an improved GHG Inventory for agriculture which will be delivered in 2015.

Agricultural Statistics and Climate Change provides valuable information during the transition to an improved GHG Inventory. The publication brings together a range of statistics that relate directly and indirectly to emissions, which can give an indication of whether agriculture is increasing its efficiency in ways that reduce GHG emissions. These include data on slaughter weights and ages, feed conversion ratios, livestock mortality, fertiliser use and land use. Also included are links to data relating to on-farm practices that can give a picture of farmer awareness and the level of uptake of measures to reduce emissions. There is a mixed level of uptake for these measures, for example:

- The proportion of farms completing nutrient management plans has risen steadily from 46% in 2006 to 60% in 2014. Uptake is greatest on cereal and general cropping farms (84% and 79% respectively in 2014) and lowest on grazing livestock farms (37% on lowland grazing livestock farms and 24% on those in areas designated less favoured).
- Although farmer awareness of anaerobic digestion as a method of composting biodegradable waste has increased significantly in recent years the proportion of farms actually processing waste by this method remains very low at around 1%. This represents little change on 2008.

The full publication is available at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/foodfarm/enviro/climate/>