



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



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## Organic Statistics 2013 United Kingdom

This release shows information gathered during 2013 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](#))

The total area of in conversion and organic land in the UK continued to decrease. Areas fell by 24% and 3.9% respectively to 24 thousand hectares of in conversion land and 551 thousand hectares of organic land during 2013.

### Livestock numbers ([Tables 7 to 10](#))

The decline in the UK's populations of organic cattle, sheep and pigs decreased in 2013, while the number of organic poultry increased by 1.2%. Organic sheep and pig numbers both fell by 13% to 1million and to 30 thousand head respectively. The number of organic cattle fell by 2.4% to 283 thousand.

### Producer and processor numbers ([Tables 11 to 13](#))

The number of organic producers and processors has fallen for the fifth year in a row (by 6.4%) to around 6 100 at the end of 2013. Nearly all of the UK's regions have shown decreases with Wales and Scotland showing the largest percentage declines of 16% and 9.8% respectively. The only part of the UK to see an increase was the South East, including London, where the number of organic operators rose by 0.7%

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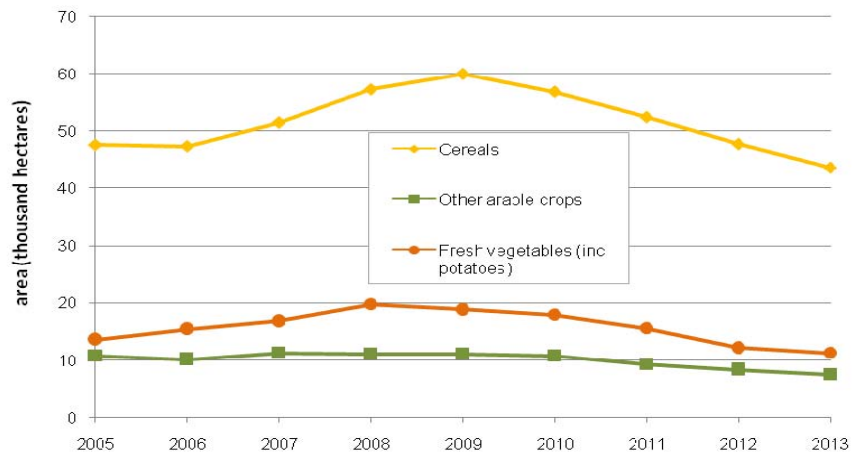
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## Detailed results

Figure 1 shows organic crop areas over time. All of the crop types shown continued to decline in area during 2013, with other arable crops falling by 10%, cereals decreasing by 8.6% and fresh vegetables declining by 7.5%.

**Figure 1. Organic crop areas, UK**



**Figure 2. Organic livestock numbers, UK**

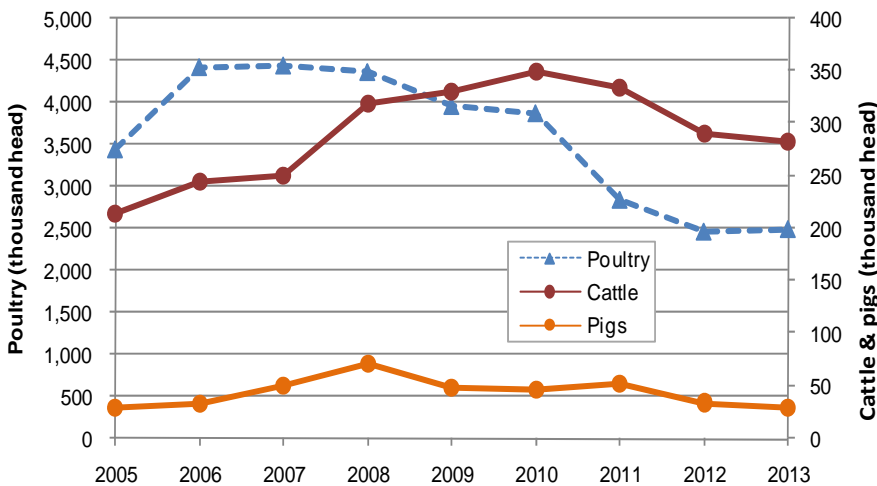
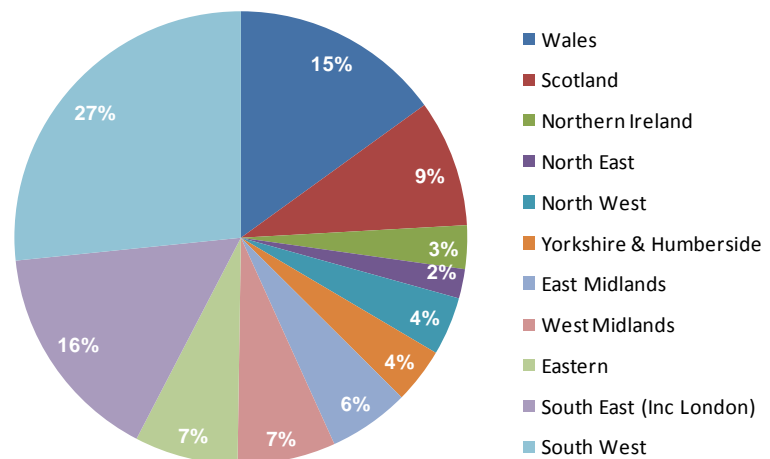


Figure 2 shows the numbers of organic cattle, pigs and poultry from 2005 to 2013 (please note the dual axis due to the comparatively high numbers for poultry). Poultry increased by 1.2% in 2013, while numbers of pigs and cattle continued to decrease.

**Figure 3. Organic producer and processor numbers for 2013 by UK region**

Figure 3 shows the regional distribution of organic producers and processors in the UK. The South West region continues to have the largest share (27%) of organic operators in the UK, while the North East region contains the smallest proportion (2.0%) of organic operators. Regional distribution across the UK has shown very little change for the second year running.



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

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	% change 2013/2012
<b>UK:</b>						
In conversion land	119	51	37	32	24	-24.4%
Fully organic land	619	668	619	573	551	-3.9%
<b>England:</b>						
In conversion land	68	30	25	19	14	-27.3%
Fully organic land	311	362	326	305	302	-1.0%

**Table 2. Organic land type areas (UK)***Thousand hectares*

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	% change 2013/2012
Cereals	60	57	52	48	44	-8.6%
Other arable crops	11	11	9	8	7	-10.3%
Fresh vegetables (inc potatoes)	19	18	16	12	11	-7.5%
Fruit and nuts	2	2	2	2	2	-3.5%
Herbaceous & ornamentals	6	6	6	6	7	17.4%
Temporary pasture	126	125	116	106	99	-6.8%
Permanent pasture (inc. rough grazing)	496	479	435	406	387	-4.6%
Woodland	7	8	8	7	8	2.0%
Unutilised land	12	12	11	10	10	2.5%
<b>Total organic land area</b>	<b>739</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>656</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>575</b>	<b>-5.0%</b>

**Table 3. Organic land type areas (England)***Thousand hectares*

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	% change 2013/2012
Cereals	46	45	41	38	35	-7.0%
Other arable crops	8	8	7	6	6	-6.4%
Fresh vegetables (inc potatoes)	14	14	12	10	9	-5.6%
Fruit and nuts	2	2	2	2	2	-3.2%
Herbaceous & ornamentals	4	5	5	5	6	14.2%
Temporary pasture	103	103	96	87	81	-6.7%
Permanent pasture (inc. rough grazing)	187	199	173	163	163	0.1%
Woodland	5	6	6	5	5	-0.8%
Unutilised land	9	9	8	8	8	4.5%
<b>Total organic land area</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>-2.6%</b>

**Table 4. Detailed organic land type 2013 (UK)***Hectares*

	In conversion	Organic	Total	Total crop area at June 2013 <sup>(a)</sup>	Organic area as % of June area
<b>Total cereals</b>	<b>1 378</b>	<b>42 352</b>	<b>43 729</b>	<b>3 028 263</b>	<b>1.4</b>
Wheat	479	12 023	12 503	1 614 511	0.8
Barley	448	15 124	15 572	1 212 997	1.3
Oats	239	11 269	11 509	176 541	6.5
Rye, mixed corn and triticale	211	3 935	4 146	24 214	17.1
<b>Other arable crops</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>7 378</b>	<b>7 563</b>	<b>1 334 221</b>	<b>0.6</b>
Sugar beet	0	68	68	116 973	0.1
Fodder, forage and silage crops	148	5 183	5 331	87 609	6.1
Maize, oilseeds and protein crops	37	2 126	2 163	1 129 639	0.2
Fresh vegetables	129	9 901	10 030	115 930	8.7
Potatoes	23	1 289	1 311	139 293	0.9
Fruit and nuts	89	1 963	2 053	32 978	6.2
Herbaceous & ornamentals	697	6 098	6 795	11 891	57.1
Temporary pasture	3 802	95 063	98 865	1 389 665	7.1
Permanent pasture (inc. rough grazing)	16 639	370 388	387 027	9 741 602	4.0
Woodland	647	6 950	7 596	865 397	0.9
Unutilised land	762	9 618	10 380		
<b>Total organic land area</b>	<b>24 350</b>	<b>550 999</b>	<b>575 349</b>		

(a) Source: Defra June Survey of Agriculture

**Table 5. Detailed organic land type 2013 (England)***Hectares*

	In conversion	Organic	Total	Total crop area at June 2013 <sup>(a)</sup>	Organic area as % of June area
<b>Total cereals</b>	<b>1 128</b>	<b>34 101</b>	<b>35 228</b>	<b>2 492 296</b>	<b>1.4</b>
Wheat	468	11 067	11 535	1 504 571	0.8
Barley	330	11 295	11 624	827 707	1.4
Oats	132	8 246	8 377	138 398	6.1
Rye, mixed corn and triticale	199	3 493	3 692	21 620	17.1
<b>Other arable crops</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>5 428</b>	<b>5 579</b>	<b>1 224 715</b>	<b>0.5</b>
Sugar beet	0	68	68	116 973	0.1
Fodder, forage and silage crops	120	3 562	3 682	45 567	8.1
Maize, oilseeds and protein crops	32	1 797	1 829	1 062 175	0.2
Fresh vegetables	119	8 218	8 337	98 224	8.5
Potatoes	23	809	832	103 273	0.8
Fruit and nuts	89	1 920	2 009	29 870	6.7
Herbaceous & ornamentals	493	5 318	5 811	10 322	56.3
Temporary pasture	3 389	77 856	81 245	667 714	12.2
Permanent pasture (inc. rough grazin)	7 379	155 851	163 230	3 744 982	4.4
Woodland	551	4 816	5 366	324 942	1.7
Unutilised land	630	7 342	7 972		
<b>Total organic land area</b>	<b>13 952</b>	<b>301 658</b>	<b>315 610</b>		

(a) Source: Defra June Survey of Agriculture

**Table 6. Organic land areas by UK region 2013***Thousand hectares*

	In conversion	Organic	Total (ha)	Total agricultural area <sup>(a)</sup> at June 2013 <sup>(b)</sup>	Organic area as % of total agricultural area
<b>UK</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>552</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>17 250</b>	<b>3.3</b>
England	14	302	316	9 086	3.5
Wales	2	100	102	1 560	6.5
Scotland	8	140	148	5 606	2.6
Northern Ireland	0	9	9	998	0.9
North East	1	27	28	588	4.7
North West	1	14	15	909	1.6
Yorkshire & Humberside	1	10	11	1 091	1.0
East Midlands	1	14	15	1 182	1.3
West Midlands	1	31	32	953	3.3
Eastern	1	14	15	1 370	1.1
South East (Inc London)	3	48	51	1 158	4.4
South West	6	144	150	1 835	8.2

(a) excludes common land

(b) All figures are as at June 2013.

**Table 7. Organic livestock numbers (UK)**

	<i>Thousands</i>					
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	% change 2013 / 2012
Cattle	331	350	335	290	283	-2.4
Sheep	885	981	1 162	1 152	999	-13.3
Pigs	49	47	53	35	30	-12.9
Poultry	3 959	3 871	2 838	2 458	2 488	1.2
Other livestock <sup>(a)</sup>	3	5	5	4	4	-0.4

(a) "Other Livestock" includes goats, farmed deer, horses, camelids and any livestock not recorded else here.

**Table 8. Organic livestock numbers (England)**

	<i>Thousands</i>					
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	% change 2013 / 2012
Cattle	237	249	234	202	200	-1.2
Sheep	380	431	424	435	401	-7.9
Pigs <sup>(a)</sup>	46	42	48	30	26	-11.7
Poultry	1 969	1 931	1 746	1 681	1 688	0.4
Other livestock <sup>(b)</sup>	2	2	1	4	3	-6.1

(a) Please note that the 2009 total pigs figure has been revised in the light of more up to date data being available

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

**Table 9. Organic livestock numbers 2013 (UK)***No. head*

	<b>In conversion</b>	<b>Organic</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total livestock at June 2013 <sup>(a)</sup></b>	<b>Organic as % of total livestock</b>
Cattle	45	283 291	283 336	9 843 542	2.9
Sheep	0	999 200	999 200	32 856 476	3.0
Pigs	0	30 165	30 165	4 884 971	0.6
Poultry	53	2 487 587	2 487 640	162 608 882	1.5
Other Livestock <sup>(b) (c)</sup>	0	4 133	4 133	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 2013 (England)***No. head*

	<b>In conversion</b>	<b>Organic</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total livestock at June 2013 <sup>(a)</sup></b>	<b>Organic as % of total livestock</b>
Cattle	45	199 504	199 549	5 363 810	3.7
Sheep	0	400 753	400 753	14 921 639	2.7
Pigs	0	26 495	26 495	4 065 928	0.7
Poultry	53	1 687 462	1 687 515	120 504 242	1.4
Other Livestock <sup>(b) (c)</sup>	0	3 423	3 423	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**

	<i>numbers</i>					
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	% change 2013 / 2012
<b>UK</b>	<b>7 567</b>	<b>7 287</b>	<b>6 929</b>	<b>6 487</b>	<b>6 072</b>	<b>-6.4</b>
England	5 278	5 131	4 897	4 593	4 419	-3.8
Wales	1 176	1 166	1 119	1 080	913	-15.5
Scotland	820	737	679	611	551	-9.8
Northern Ireland	293	253	234	204	189	-7.4
North East	167	160	152	137	127	-7.3
North West	333	315	301	273	253	-7.3
Yorkshire & Humberside	308	302	278	262	240	-8.4
East Midlands	422	408	383	366	351	-4.1
West Midlands	507	494	476	442	426	-3.6
Eastern	529	515	481	456	449	-1.5
South East (Inc London)	1 024	984	975	950	957	0.7
South West	1 988	1 953	1 851	1 706	1 616	-5.3

**Table 12. Numbers of organic producers and processors by UK region 2013**

	<i>numbers</i>				
	Number of producers only	Number of producer/ processors	Number of processors only	Total	
<b>UK</b>	<b>3 740</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>2 154</b>	<b>6 072</b>	
England	2 415	152	1 852	4 419	
Wales	771	20	122	913	
Scotland	404	6	141	551	
Northern Ireland	150	0	39	189	
North East	94	2	31	127	
North West	120	6	127	253	
Yorkshire & Humberside	113	6	121	240	
East Midlands	156	10	185	351	
West Midlands	255	15	156	426	
Eastern	165	14	270	449	
South East (Inc London)	353	28	576	957	
South West	1 159	71	386	1 616	



**Table 13. Numbers of organic crop and livestock producers and processors 2013 <sup>(a)</sup>***numbers*

	No. crop producers	No. crop producers and processors	No. livestock producers	No. livestock producers and processors
<b>UK</b>	<b>3 563</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>2 491</b>	<b>130</b>
England	2 299	149	1 469	109
Wales	767	19	632	18
Scotland	371	6	281	3
Northern Ireland	126	0	109	0
North East	92	2	75	2
North West	114	6	84	4
Yorkshire & Humberside	102	6	73	4
East Midlands	141	11	109	6
West Midlands	246	14	162	13
Eastern	148	14	63	9
South East (Inc London)	338	28	160	21
South West	1 118	68	743	50

(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 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.

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 include 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 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 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 2014. The final England results of crop and grassland areas and cattle, sheep and pig numbers will be published in September 2014. UK results will be available in October 2014.