



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

www.gov.uk/defra

Sixty-fifth annual report to Parliament on smallholdings in England

1 April 2014 – 31 March 2015

**Presented to Parliament pursuant to section 59 of the
Agriculture Act 1970**



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Introduction

Under section 59 of the Agriculture Act 1970 (“the 1970 Act”), the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is required to lay before Parliament a report summarising for each financial year the proceedings of smallholdings authorities in relation to smallholdings in England. This sixty-fifth annual report covers the financial year from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Under the 1970 Act, every county council in England is a smallholdings authority (“Smallholdings Authority”). Smallholdings are farms, commonly referred to as ‘county farms’ and are owned and let by Smallholdings Authorities. It is a statutory requirement for all Smallholdings Authorities to supply statistical information on land let, sold and acquired within their estates to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), as set out in section 59(1) of the 1970 Act. The 1970 Act provides the legal framework for statutory smallholdings and requires Smallholdings Authorities to make it their general aim to provide opportunities for persons with sufficient experience to be farmers on their own account. The 1970 Act states that a smallholding shall be treated as such if it is capable, when farmed under reasonably skilled management, of providing full-time employment for not more than two people, including the occupier.

We would like to thank all of those who have kindly provided the statistical information presented in this report.

Statistical information on smallholdings provided by Smallholdings Authorities

Total area of smallholding land

As at 31 March 2015, the total area of land held by Smallholdings Authorities in England was 64,794 hectares, of which 61,791 hectares were let as smallholdings. Of the 27 Smallholdings Authorities, 26 submitted data, of which all but two let land as smallholdings. This is one less than the previous year as one authority has reclassified its let land and has no land let as smallholdings. The number of hectares let as smallholdings by the 25 remaining Smallholdings Authorities has increased by 0.28% between 2013/2014 and 2014/2015¹.

Table 1 provides figures by Smallholdings Authorities for the area of land let as smallholdings and the rent due.

Table 2 provides figures for land acquired and disposed of by each Smallholdings Authority in 2014/2015, where a total of 120 hectares were acquired by 5 Smallholdings Authorities, and a total of 364 hectares were sold or otherwise disposed of by 14 Smallholdings Authorities, during the year.

Number of tenants

There were 1,572 tenants of statutory smallholdings in England as at 31 March 2015. During 2014/2015, 87 tenancies were granted and 119 tenancies were terminated. Figures for each of the authorities are provided in **Tables 3 and 4**. This compares to 1,461² tenants in 2014, thus a 7% increase.

Numbers of holdings

Based on the responses received, Smallholdings Authorities reported that they owned and let 1,825 smallholdings as at 31 March 2015. Of the total number of smallholdings reported, 829 (45%) were 20 hectares or less in size; 477 (26%) were between 20 and 40 hectares; and 519 (28%) were over 40 hectares. The number of holdings provided by each Smallholdings Authority and their size distribution is set out in **Table 4**.

¹ In line with last years' annual report (the sixty-fourth annual smallholdings report 2013/14) this report does not include data from unitary authorities as they are not defined as Smallholdings Authorities for the purposes of the 1970 Act and are therefore not required to provide data to Defra on the operations of any smallholdings they may own. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/64th-annual-report-to-parliament-on-smallholdings-in-england>

² Revised from 1,464 as stated in the 64th Report due to the reclassification of land by one authority who has previously recorded land held as smallholdings.

Financial position of authorities

The total revenue from all land held by Smallholdings Authorities in England in the year ending 31 March 2015 showed a total operational income of £18,155,249 against a total operational expenditure of £7,448,078 giving an operational surplus of £10,707,171. Of the total area of land let as smallholdings, the average rent per hectare from smallholdings was £278.16.

Table 5 summarises the total revenue account for all land held by Smallholdings Authorities for the year ended 31 March 2015.

Table 1: Area of all land held by Smallholdings Authorities as at 31 March 2015

Smallholding Authority	Land let as smallholdings	'Other' land let	Total land let	Rent due for land let as smallholdings	Rent due for 'other' ³ land	Total rent due for land
	Hectares	Hectares	Hectares	£	£	£
Buckinghamshire	1648.32	91.46	1739.78	£464,805	£115,142	£579,947
Cambridgeshire	13148.00	254.00	13402.00	£3,733,124	£183,802	£3,916,926
Cumbria	**	**	**	£20,900	£4,644	£25,544
Derbyshire	0.00	0.00	0.00	£0	£0	£0
Devon	3842.71	77.37	3920.08	£959,091	£38,722	£997,813
Dorset	2387.51	200.20	2587.71	£651,961	£48,317	£700,278
East Sussex	0.00	0.00	0.00	£0	£0	£0
Essex	78.87	**	78.87	£36,320	£11,118	£47,438
Gloucestershire	3305.31	18.66	3323.97	£946,660	£47,001	£993,661
Hampshire	1757.35	296.67	2054.02	£591,687	£17,680	£609,367
Hertfordshire	1877.51	107.98	1985.50	£565,958	£191,108	£757,066
Kent	342.90	0.80	343.70	£4,653	£925	£5,578
Lancashire	36.19	64.03	100.22	£22,762	£9,180	£31,942
Leicestershire	2297.00	611.00	2908.00	£709,109	£151,224	£860,333
Lincolnshire	7681.59	25.20	7706.79	£2,259,437	£8,422	£2,267,860
Norfolk	6374.00	221.00	6595.00	£1,689,520	£104,113	£1,793,633
North Yorkshire	1593.65	247.88	1841.53	£300,803	£25,322	£326,125
Northamptonshire	328.24	0.95	329.19	£68,569	£185	£68,754
Nottinghamshire	532.88	0.00	532.88	£110,713	£0	£110,713
Oxfordshire	354.00	1.00	355.00	£50,454	£645	£51,099
Somerset	1680.00	223.00	1903.00	£457,883	£0	£457,883
Staffordshire	3434.54	86.52	3521.06	£1,153,766	£46,350	£1,200,116
Suffolk	4957.00	228.00	5185.00	£1,240,288	£79,130	£1,319,418
Surrey	887.42	112.94	1000.36	£222,522	£195,135	£417,657
Warwickshire	1963.00	71.00	2034.00	£639,496	£49,330	£688,826
West Sussex	~	~	~	~	~	~
Worcestershire	1283.00	63.00	1346.00	£287,116	£25,155	£312,271
Total	61791.00	3002.66	64793.66	£17,187,597	£1,352,650	£18,540,247

Key

- ** Data not available
- ~ No response received

³ Means vacant land not being farmed, non-agricultural land e.g. livery stables, telecom sites, etc. and other land held but not let e.g. woodlands, estate roads, waste

Table 2: Acquisitions and disposals by Smallholdings Authorities between April 2014 and March 2015

Smallholding Authority	Land acquired Hectares			Land disposed of Hectares		
	Newly acquired	Formerly leased	Total	Sold / exchanged	Leased land	Total
Buckinghamshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cambridgeshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cumbria	0	0	0	28	0	28
Derbyshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
Devon	41	0	41	3	0	3
Dorset	0	0	0	7	0	7
East Sussex	0	0	0	0	0	0
Essex	0	0	0	5	0	5
Gloucestershire	0	0	0	31	0	31
Hampshire	22	0	22	*	0	0
Hertfordshire	0	0	0	*	0	0
Kent	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lancashire	**	**	**	**	**	**
Leicestershire	18	0	18	9	0	9
Lincolnshire	14	0	14	6	0	6
Norfolk	0	0	0	3	0	3
North Yorkshire	0	0	0	81	46	127
Northamptonshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nottinghamshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oxfordshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
Somerset	0	0	0	57	0	57
Staffordshire	25	0	25	0	0	0
Suffolk	0	0	0	6	0	6
Surrey	0	0	0	35	0	35
Warwickshire	0	0	0	1	0	1
West Sussex	~	~	~	~	~	~
Worcestershire	0	0	0	46	0	46
Total	120	0	120	318	46	364

Key

- * Less than 0.5 hectares
- ** Data not available
- ~ No response received

Table 3: Tenancies granted by Smallholdings Authorities for the first time and those terminated between April 2014 and March 2015

Smallholdings Authority	Number granted	Number terminated
Buckinghamshire	1	0
Cambridgeshire	5	10
Cumbria	0	2
Derbyshire	0	0
Devon	7	10
Dorset	2	2
East Sussex	0	0
Essex	0	1
Gloucestershire	0	1
Hampshire	1	1
Hertfordshire	4	6
Kent	0	0
Lancashire	0	0
Leicestershire	4	5
Lincolnshire	6	10
Norfolk	4	6
North Yorkshire	20	19
Northamptonshire	0	0
Nottinghamshire	0	0
Oxfordshire	3	3
Somerset	0	3
Staffordshire	13	18
Suffolk	3	4
Surrey	0	0
Warwickshire	6	6
West Sussex	~	~
Worcestershire	8	12
Total	87	119

Key

- ** Data not available
- ~ No response received

Table 4: Analysis of smallholdings by size at 31 March 2015

Small Holding Authority	Number of Holdings				Number of Tenants			
	0 - 20 Hectares	20 - 40 Hectares	Over 40 Hectares	Total	0 - 20 Hectares	20 - 40 Hectares	Over 40 Hectares	Total
Buckinghamshire	33	15	16	64	27	13	13	53
Cambridgeshire	132	51	129	312	104	44	113	261
Cumbria	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Derbyshire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Devon	1	25	43	69	7	24	43	74
Dorset	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
East Sussex	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Essex	14	2	0	16	13	2	0	15
Gloucestershire	54	41	31	126	24	36	29	89
Hampshire	33	10	18	61	26	6	20	52
Hertfordshire	30	18	20	68	20	16	20	56
Kent	2	0	3	5	2		3	5
Lancashire	6	0	0	6	6	0	0	6
Leicestershire	39	40	24	103	35	37	24	96
Lincolnshire	95	71	69	235	95	71	69	235
Norfolk	154	44	67	265	92	20	71	183
North Yorkshire	21	27	14	62	15	28	14	57
Northamptonshire	8	5	2	15	8	5	2	15
Nottinghamshire	11	10	3	24	11	10	3	24
Oxfordshire	33	3	1	37	23	3	1	27
Somerset	11	26	12	49	11	26	11	48
Staffordshire	43	51	32	126	22	48	32	102
Suffolk	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
Surrey	35	9	6	50	35	9	6	50
Warwickshire	14	13	21	48	14	13	21	48
West Sussex	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~
Worcestershire	60	16	8	84	55	13	8	76
Total	829	477	519	1825	645	424	503	1572

Key

- ** Data not available
- ~ No response received

Table 5: Total revenue account for all land held by Smallholdings Authorities between April 2014 and March 2015

OPERATIONAL ACCOUNT (see glossary for definitions of the terms used)	
Income	
Rent from Holdings	£16,708,057
Other Rents	£935,946
Other Income	£511,246
TOTAL	£18,155,249
Expenditure	
Repairs and Maintenance	£4,058,826
Rents, Rates, Annuities and Water Charges	£675,418
Net Tenant Rights Valuations	£161,495
Estate Management	£2,184,842
Other Expenditure	£367,497
TOTAL	£7,448,078
OPERATIONAL ACCOUNT SURPLUS	£10,707,171
NON-OPERATIONAL ACCOUNT	
Income	
TOTAL	£423,090
Expenditure	
Central Support Costs	£238,833
Other Expenditure	£498,936
TOTAL	£737,769
NON-OPERATIONAL ACCOUNT DEFICIT	(£314,679)
REVENUE ACCOUNT NET DEFICIT⁴	
Operational Account Surplus	£10,707,171
Non-Operational Account Deficit	(£314,679)
Net Surplus	£10,392,492
Capital Charges	£14,513,347
Net Deficit including Capital Charges	(£4,120,855)

⁴ The Revenue Account is in deficit this year because one authority revalued its entire portfolio and wrote off a large loss leading to an unusually high capital charge entry of over £9 million for that authority. (Previous year's figure was c £33k).

Glossary of terms used in the operational accounts

Income

Rent from holdings (£)	Net rent from land being farmed including grazing licenses after deductions of allowances, abatements and rent not collected.
Other rents (£)	Means rent from cottage tenancies, staff housing, waste-land, woodland, telecommunication sites and rent received from non-farm business tenancies.
Other income (£)	Includes royalties, wayleaves, easements, shooting and fishing rights, licences to extract gravel, insurance claims, sales of timber, trees, produce, materials, farm equipment and vehicles, fees and charges.

Expenditure

Repairs and Maintenance (£)	Includes revenue expenditure on repairs and maintenance of houses, buildings, drainage and ditching work. Net of any amounts recovered from tenants but excludes grant-aided schemes of a capital nature.
Rents, Rates, Annuities and Water Charges (£)	Includes rent, rates, water charges, tithes and perpetual annuities, net of recovery of rates and water charges.
Net Tenant Right Valuations (£)	Includes expenditure paid by landlord to outgoing tenant less income received from incoming tenant for tenant right valuations and dilapidations. Excludes capital payments for equipment/buildings. Includes any milk quota compensations payments charged to revenue.
Estate Management (£)	Includes ad-hoc specialist advice, all employees (professional and clerical) within the department responsible for small-holdings and accommodation charges for office space. Also includes net cost to any authorities contracting out their estate management function.
Other Expenditure (£)	Includes items such as transport and sundry expenses.

Non-Operational Account

Income (£)	Includes revenue grants, interest received and other non-operational income.
Central Support Costs (£)	Includes legal/secretariat, financial (including audit), valuation (excluding corporate disposals), personnel and IT services.
Other Expenditure (£)	Includes subscriptions, external audit fees, stamp duty and external legal and professional fees.

Revenue Account Net Surplus

Capital Charges (£)	Represented as 6% return on the asset valuation.
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