



21st April 2016

## United Kingdom Poultry and Poultry Meat Statistics – March 2016

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### Key points

This release shows the latest monthly information on poultry statistics, including hatchery output, slaughtering and meat production volumes. The key results for **March 2016** in comparison to **March 2015** are given below:

- UK commercial layer chick placings were down by 11% to 2.9 million chicks.
- UK broiler chick placings were up by 3.3% at 76.8 million chicks.
- Turkey chick placings were down by 3.9% at 0.9 million chicks.
- Turkey slaughterings were down by 4.6% at 0.8 million birds.
- UK broiler slaughterings were 1.2% higher at 72.1 million birds.
- Total UK poultry meat production was 125.2 thousand tonnes, down 1.0%.

This release will be updated **at 09:30 on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2016**. Full 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).

## Section 2: Numbers of eggs set and chicks placed by UK hatcheries

Tables 2.1 to 2.4 show the number of eggs set and chicks placed by United Kingdom hatcheries in the most recent months. Longer time series are available at the web link on the front page. The increased number of eggs set seen since November 2015 is due to increased capacity within the industry.

Please note that the surveys are run according to statistical, rather than calendar, months. The Methodology section provides more explanation of the statistical week system.

**Table 2.1: Number of eggs set per month by UK Hatcheries**

	millions					yr on yr % change
	March 2015 4 weeks	January 2016 5 weeks	February 2016 4 weeks	March 2016 4 weeks		
Commercial broilers <sup>(a)</sup>	89.6	111.8	90.5	91.5	2.1%	
Broiler breeders <sup>(a) (b)</sup>	4.8	7.5	5.6	5.3	10%	
Turkeys <sup>(c)</sup>	1.3	1.5	1.2	1.3	-3.8%	
Commercial layers <sup>(c)</sup>	8.5	11.8	7.4	8.6	1.2%	

(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

The monthly figures are affected by the number of weeks in the statistical month so to give a clearer indication of trends, Table 2.2 below shows the average number of eggs set per week.

**Table 2.2: Average number of eggs set per week by UK Hatcheries**

	millions													yr on yr % change
	2015					2016								
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Commercial broilers <sup>(a)</sup>	22.4	22.6	22.8	23.1	22.1	22.6	22.7	21.2	21.7	22.2	22.4	22.6	22.9	2.1%
Broiler breeders <sup>(a) (b)</sup>	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.3	10%
Turkeys <sup>(c)</sup>	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	-3.8%
Commercial layers <sup>(c)</sup>	2.1	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.0	1.8	2.2	1.7	2.3	1.5	2.4	1.8	2.1	1.2%

(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 per month in the UK by UK Hatcheries**

	millions				
	March 2015	January 2016	February 2016	March 2016	yr on yr
	4 weeks	5 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	% change
Commercial broilers <sup>(a)</sup>	74.4	93.2	75.9	76.8	3.3%
Female broiler breeders <sup>(b)</sup>	0.6	0.9	0.7	0.7	16%
Turkey poults <sup>(c)</sup>	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9	-3.9%
Commercial layers	3.3	3.0	3.0	2.9	-11%

(a) Includes 'by-product' chicks

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

(c) Including female breeder poults

Table 2.4 below shows the average number of eggs set per week to remove the statistical week effect, as in earlier tables.

**Table 2.4: Average numbers of chicks and poults placed per week in the UK by UK Hatcheries**

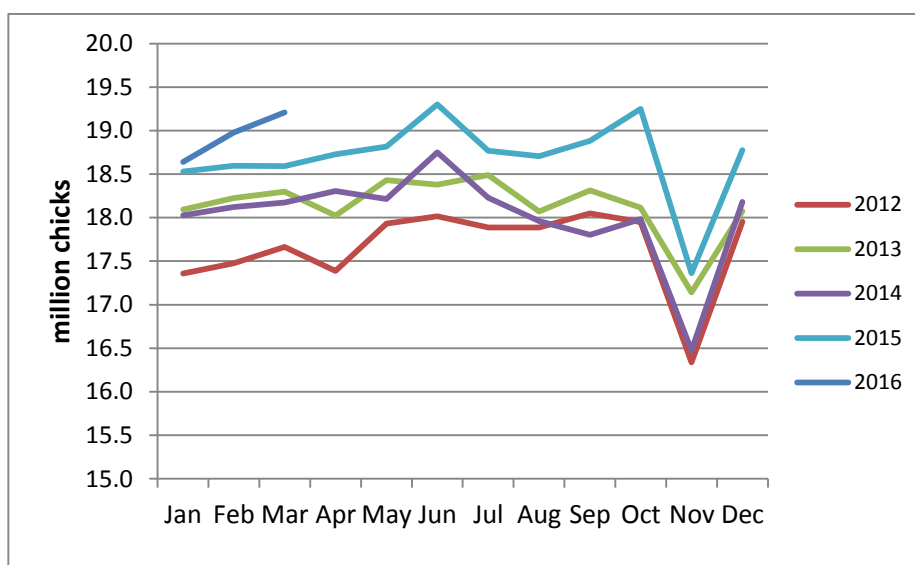
	millions													yr on yr
	2015											2016		% change
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Commercial broilers <sup>(a)</sup>	18.6	18.7	18.8	19.3	18.8	18.7	18.9	19.3	17.4	18.8	18.6	19.0	19.2	3.3%
Female broiler breeders <sup>(b)</sup>	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	16%
Turkey poults <sup>(c)</sup>	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	-3.9%
Commercial layers	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.8	0.7	-11%

(a) Includes 'by-product' chicks

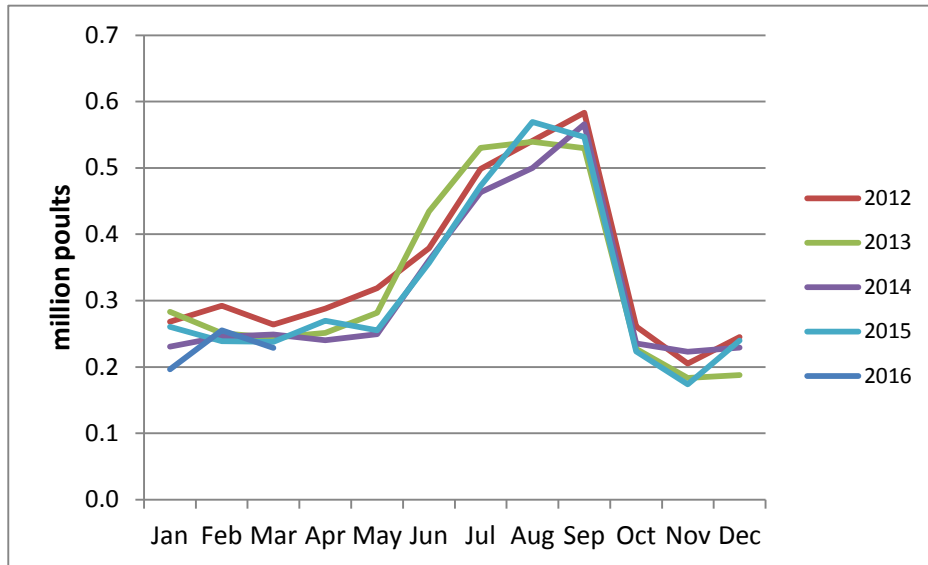
(b) Female parents only. Excludes grandparent chicks and 'by-product' chicks. Includes imported female parent chicks

(c) Including female breeder poults

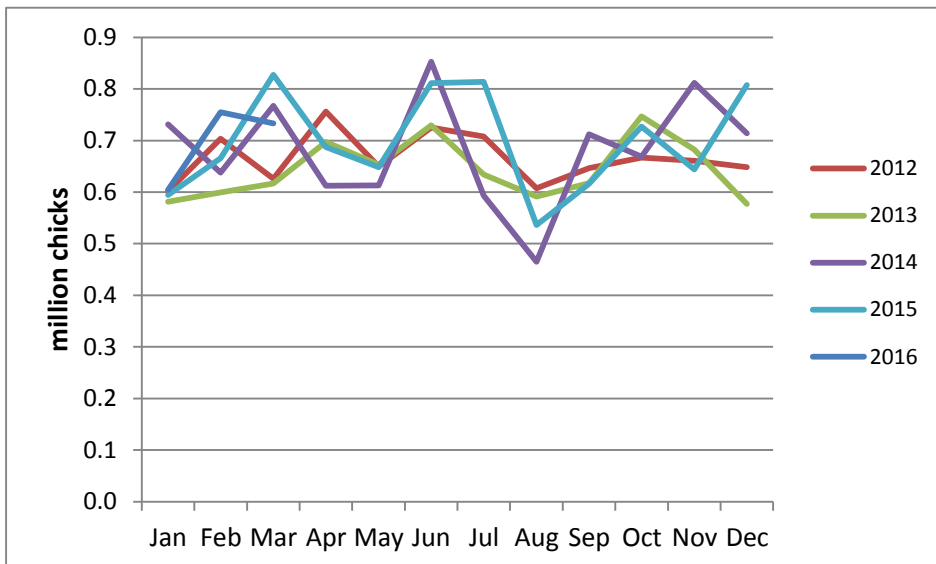
**Figure 2.1: Average number of broiler chicks placed per week by UK Hatcheries**



**Figure 2.2: Average number of turkey poulters placed per week by UK Hatcheries**



**Figure 2.3: Average number of layer chicks placed per week by UK Hatcheries**



## Section 3: Poultry meat production

Tables 3.1 to 3.4 below show the number of poultry slaughtered, average liveweights of poultry and volumes of poultry meat production in the UK.

**Table 3.1: Number of poultry slaughtered per month in the UK**

	million birds				
	March 2015 4 weeks	January 2016 5 weeks	February 2016 4 weeks	March 2016 4 weeks	yr on yr % change
Broilers	71.2	87.3	71.5	72.1	1.2%
Boiling fowl <sup>(a)</sup>	3.7	4.2	4.6	3.6	-2.8%
Turkeys	0.9	1.9	1.3	0.8	-4.6%

(a) Includes spent hens and spent breeders

Table 3.2 below shows the average number of poultry slaughtered per week to remove the statistical week effect, as in earlier tables.

**Table 3.2: Average number of poultry slaughtered per week in the UK**

	million birds													yr on yr % change
	2015												2016	yr on yr % change
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	% change
Broilers	17.8	17.9	17.9	18.1	18.4	18.1	18.0	18.0	18.4	17.6	17.5	17.9	18.0	1.2%
Boiling fowl <sup>(a)</sup>	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.8	1.1	0.9	-2.8%
Turkeys	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.2	-4.6%

(a) Includes spent hens and spent breeders

**Table 3.3: Average liveweights per bird at point of slaughter in England & Wales**

	kilograms													yr on yr % change
	2015												2016	yr on yr % change
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	% change
Broilers	2.26	2.18	2.23	2.23	2.23	2.23	2.20	2.18	2.19	2.24	2.25	2.23	2.17	-3.6%
Boiling fowl	2.23	2.15	2.11	2.14	2.15	2.31	2.40	2.15	2.32	2.12	2.18	2.24	2.30	2.9%
Turkeys	12.34	13.60	14.02	11.90	13.98	13.47	13.88	15.07	10.88	9.41	14.28	15.14	13.18	6.9%

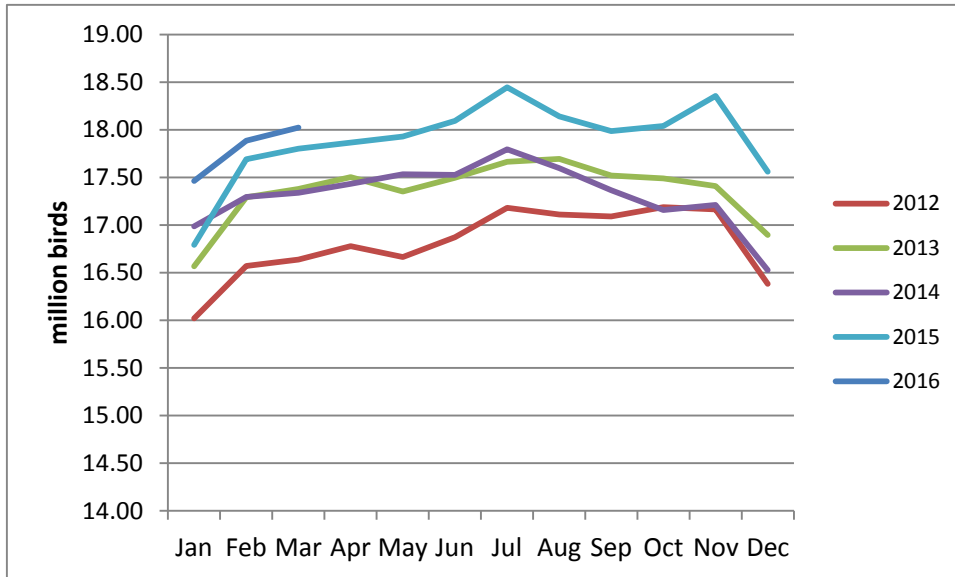
**Table 3.4: Volume of poultry meat produced per month in the UK <sup>(a)</sup>**

	thousand tonnes carcase weight				
	March 2015 4 weeks	January 2016 5 weeks	February 2016 4 weeks	March 2016 4 weeks	yr on yr % change
Broilers	110.0	134.2	109.0	108.3	-1.5%
Boiling fowl	5.3	6.0	6.6	5.3	-0.3%
Turkeys	8.7	23.0	16.4	9.2	6.0%
Ducks	2.5	2.8	2.2	2.3	-7.2%
<b>Total <sup>(b)</sup></b>	<b>126.5</b>	<b>166.1</b>	<b>134.1</b>	<b>125.2</b>	<b>-1.0%</b>

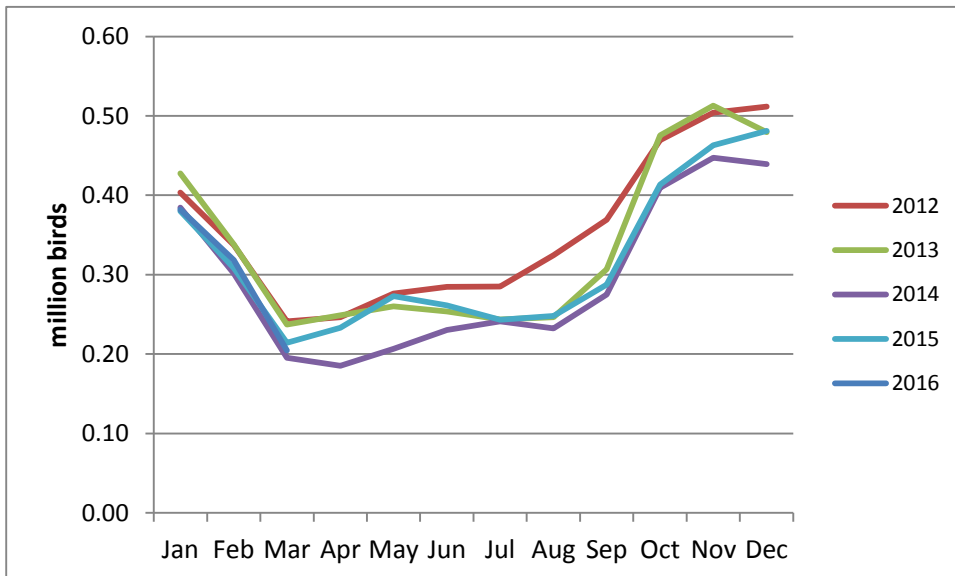
(a) Converted to whole bird equivalent carcase weight, net of offal

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

**Figure 3.1: Average number of broilers slaughtered per week in the UK**



**Figure 3.2: Average numbers of turkeys slaughtered per week in the UK**



## 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\\_production\\_-\\_animals](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Agricultural_production_-_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 Science and Analytical Service (RESAS) 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. Monthly survey results are produced using the statistical week system (this enables comparable quarter on quarter results). This method allocates 13 weeks per quarter of a year, which breaks down into a “5 week month”, followed by two lots of “4 week months”. Monthly results, therefore, are not directly comparable to each other as they are based on differing numbers of weeks. To enable direct comparisons, weekly averages have been calculated which divide the monthly figures by the number of statistical weeks in the relevant month.
6. 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**

7. 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.

**This month there are revisions to hatcheries data for January and February 2016 due to actual survey data replacing estimates . For example, the number of turkey chicks placed increased 0.17million (19.7%) from 0.85 to 1.02 million.**

**There are also revisions to monthly poultry slaughter data for January 2016 due to the same reasons as given above, for example the number of broilers slaughtered in E&W decreased by 0.3 million (0.5%) from 59.6 million birds to 59.3 million birds. Revisions have also been made to UK poultrymeat production for February 2016, this is due to actual survey data replacing estimates. For example in February 2016 UK poultrymeat production increased by 1.0 thousand tonnes from 133 to 134 thousand tonnes (0.7%).**