



5 February 2015

United Kingdom Egg Statistics – Quarter 4, 2014

This release shows quarterly information on the numbers of eggs packed in UK packing stations (which covers the vast majority of total eggs produced), usage and farm-gate egg prices. It also includes monthly information on the trade in eggs and egg products.

Key results

- 6.8 million cases of eggs were packed in UK egg packing stations during the fourth quarter of 2014. Although this represents a 0.2% decrease on the previous quarter the annual total for 2014 is 0.7% higher than in 2013, continuing the long term upward trend since 2005.
- The average UK farm-gate egg price through Q4 2014 was 81.7 pence per dozen, which continued the steady price decreases seen since the peak of 92.2 pence per dozen in Q1 2013.
- The production of egg products during the fourth quarter of 2014 totalled 26 thousand tonnes, a 2.9% increase on Q4 2013.
- Total production of liquid egg and egg products in 2014 was 102 thousand tonnes, an increase of 7.2% compared with 2013.

This quarterly release will be next updated at 09:30 on 7 May 2015. Full time series are available to download at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/egg-statistics>.

Enquiries on this publication to:

Leigh Riley, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Room 201, Foss House, Kings Pool, 1 - 2 Peasholme Green, York YO1 7PX. Tel:++ 44 (0)1904 455095, email:leigh.riley@defra.gsi.gov.uk

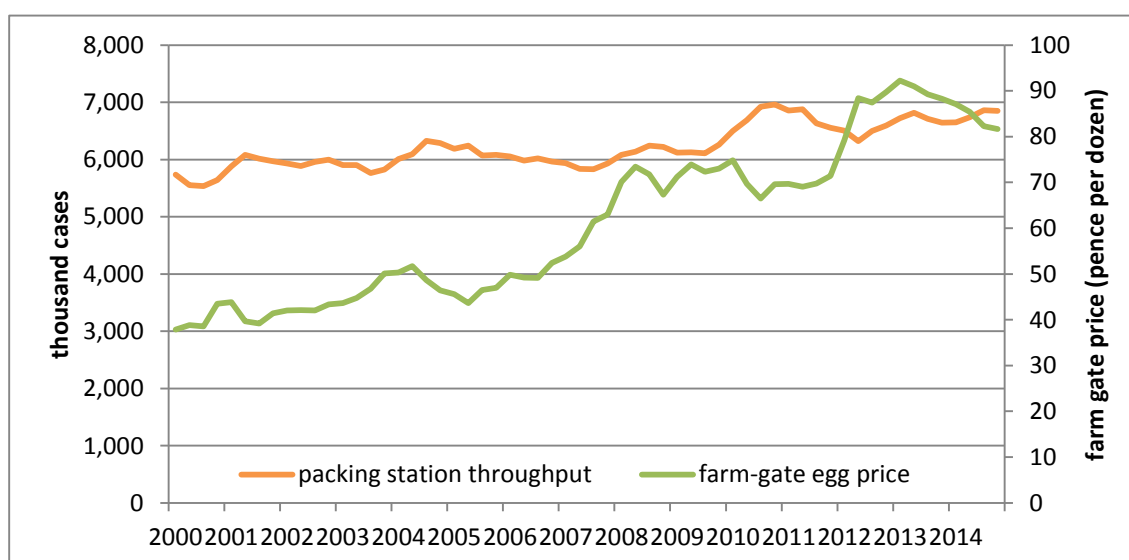
A National Statistics publication. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs. They are produced free from political interference. For general enquiries about National Statistics, contact the National Statistics Public Enquiry Service: tel. 0845 601 3034 email info@statistics.gov.uk. You can find National Statistics on the internet at www.statistics.gov.uk.

Section 1: UK egg packing volumes, methods of production, UK country breakdowns and price statistics

The tables in this section show quarterly information on the volumes of eggs passed through the UK egg packing stations. These eggs generally account for over 90% of total egg production. Packing station figures include throughput of both graded and ungraded eggs.

- The number of eggs which went through the packing stations in Q4 2014 decreased 0.2% on the previous quarter but the annual total for 2014 continued the upward movement seen since the middle of 2012 (Figure 1). Egg production is expected to stabilise in the coming months with no significant movement in the number of placings seen in the last few months.
- Egg prices have been steadily falling since the peak in Q1 2013. Looking at longer term trends over time, high egg prices have tended to precede increases in egg production, reflecting the influence this can have on the market.

Figure 1: The number of eggs packed in UK packing stations compared to the UK farm-gate egg price: 2000-2014



Note: Prices are not adjusted for inflation

Table 1: UK Packing Station egg throughput by country

Period		E&W	Scot	NI	UK	% change on previous year
2013	Q1	5,088	942	693	6,723	3.3%
	Q2	5,119	975	725	6,819	7.9%
	Q3	4,999	936	778	6,713	3.3%
	Q4	4,909	936	801	6,646	0.8%
	Total	20,114	3,790	2,996	26,901	3.8%
2014	Q1	4,953	864	832	6,649	-1.1%
	Q2	4,970	861	908	6,739	-1.2%
	Q3	5,087	918	855	6,861	2.2%
	Q4	5,015	820	1,014	6,849	3.1%
	Total	20,025	3,463	3,610	27,097	0.7%

Table 2: UK Packing Station egg throughput by egg production type

Period		Enriched cage	Barn	Free Range	Organic	Total
2013	Q1	3,339	250	2,986	148	6,723
	Q2	3,426	222	3,017	155	6,819
	Q3	3,381	199	2,973	159	6,713
	Q4	3,460	218	2,820	148	6,646
	Total	13,606	890	11,795	610	26,901
2014	Q1	3,398	221	2,869	160	6,649
	Q2	3,485	210	2,889	154	6,739
	Q3	3,601	195	2,905	160	6,861
	Q4	3,613	156	2,927	152	6,849
	Total	14,097	782	11,591	627	27,097

- Eggs produced from hens in enriched colony systems (intensive cages pre-2012) accounted for 52% of the total throughput in 2014, one percentage point higher than in 2013. Free range eggs accounted for 43% of 2014 throughput, one percentage point lower than in 2013. The proportion of eggs produced in the differing systems has changed little over the past 4 years.

Figure 2: UK egg throughput by production method

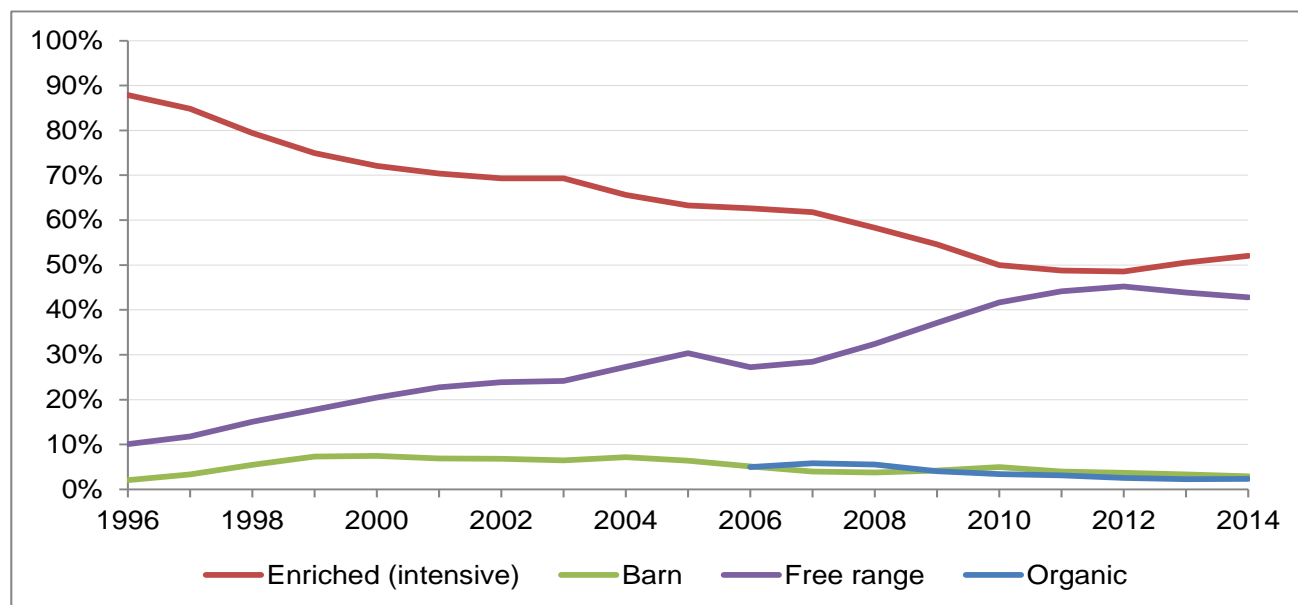


Table 3: Average UK farm-gate egg price (a)

Period		Enriched cage	Barn	Free Range	Organic	All Eggs	% change on previous year
2013	Q1	77.5	c	105.6	c	92.2	16.6%
	Q2	75.4	c	105.5	c	91.0	2.9%
	Q3	72.9	c	104.3	c	89.2	2.1%
	Q4	71.3	c	105.5	c	88.2	-1.7%
	Total	74.3	c	105.2	c	90.2	4.6%
2014	Q1	69.8	c	103.6	c	87.1	-5.6%
	Q2	69.1	c	101.4	c	85.4	-6.1%
	Q3	66.7	c	97.5	c	82.3	-7.8%
	Q4	65.7	c	97.8	c	81.7	-7.5%
	Total	67.8	c	100.1	c	84.1	-6.7%

'c' confidential

(a) From 2012 the price is an average across the survey period rather than an end of period weekly spot price and weighted according to the volumes packed by each packing station. Bonus payments paid are included.

Section 2: UK egg processing statistics

- The number of eggs bought by UK egg processors in Q4 2014 totalled 1.23 million cases (equating to 27 thousand tonnes), an increase of 3.5% on the same period in 2013 and contributing towards an annual increase of 7.2%, as shown in Table 4.
- Liquid egg accounted for 66% of the total production in Q4 2014. Quarterly production increased 9.5% in Q4 2014 compared to the previous quarter, contributing to an overall increase of 7.3% over the year. Production of other egg products decreased 6.8% in Q4 2014 compared to the previous quarter, but increased 7.0% across the whole year, as shown in Table 5.

Table 4: Number of eggs bought by UK Egg Processors

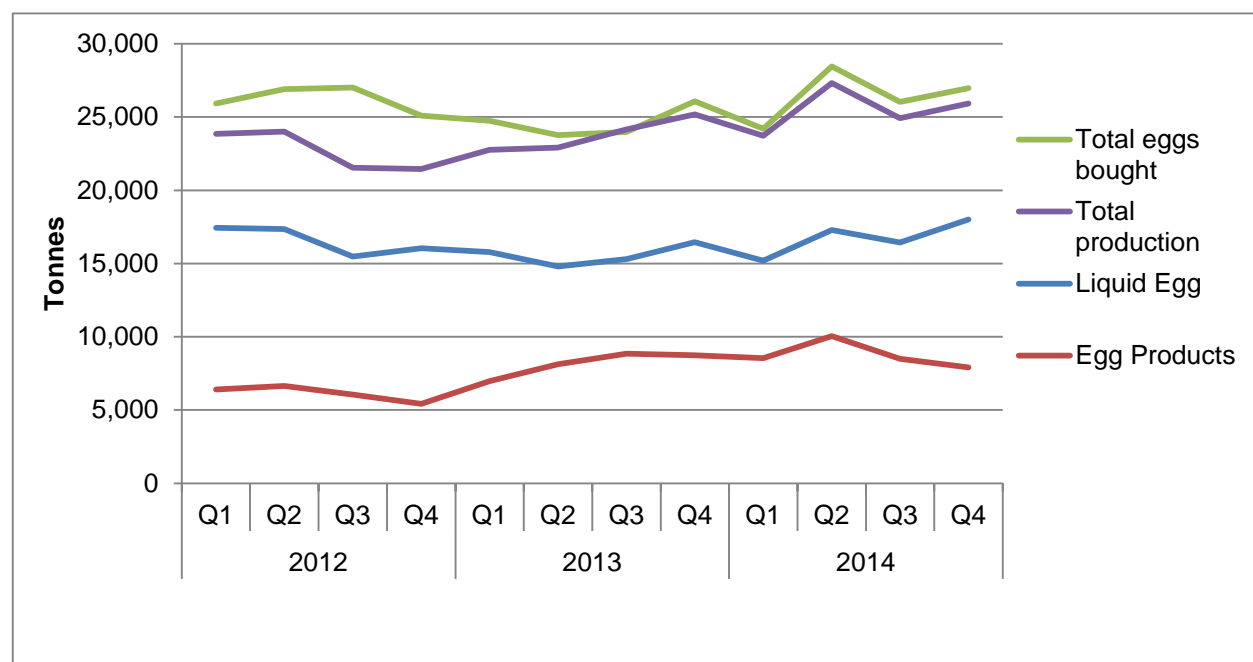
Period		Thousand	Tonnes	% change
2013	Q1	1,125	24,742	-4.6%
	Q2	1,080	23,769	-11.6%
	Q3	1,090	23,979	-11.2%
	Q4	1,185	26,078	3.9%
	Total	4,480	98,567	-6.1%
2014	Q1	1,100	24,200	-2.2%
	Q2	1,294	28,460	19.7%
	Q3	1,184	26,038	8.6%
	Q4	1,226	26,979	3.5%
	Total	4,804	105,677	7.2%

Table 5: Production of egg products by UK Egg Processors

Period		Liquid Egg	Egg Products		Total	% change year on year
			Hard Boiled	Other		
2013	Q1	15,785	6,964		22,749	-4.6%
	Q2	14,797	8,126		22,923	-4.5%
	Q3	15,303	8,852		24,155	12.1%
	Q4	16,453	8,726		25,179	17.4%
	Total	62,338	32,667		95,005	4.6%
2014	Q1	15,198	8,529		23,727	4.3%
	Q2	17,276	10,036		27,313	19.2%
	Q3	16,436	8,489		24,925	3.2%
	Q4	17,999	7,914		25,913	2.9%
	Total	66,910	34,968		101,878	7.2%

(a) Separate data for Hard Boiled Eggs and Other Products is currently unavailable to avoid disclosure of confidential information.

Figure 3: Intake and Production of Egg Products by UK Egg Processors (a)



(a) The volume of eggs processed also includes any processing carried out for external customers who supply their own eggs. This can cause the overall volume of eggs processed to be higher than the volume of eggs purchased, as in the statistics for Q3 2013.

Section 3: UK Egg Trade

Trade figures are supplied by HM Revenue and Customs. Trade data marked as provisional may be subject to revision. A recent investigation by HMRC has concluded the high volume of egg product exports reported between July 2012 and May 2013 were correct, though the reason for this large increase is still unclear and results look very unusual.

- The latest data for November 2014 shows a 7.3% decrease in imports of shell eggs on the same period last year. However, there is an overall increase of 7.4% when comparing the year to date in 2014 with the equivalent period in 2013.

- Shell egg export figures for November 2014 showed an increase of 4.5% over the same period in 2013, but across the year to date there was a decrease of 13% compared to 2013. These volumes are fairly small, so to give context to these figures, the number of imports in the 3 months to November 2014 (506 thousand cases) compares to approximately 7% of the volumes of home-produced eggs packed in UK packing stations around the same period.

Table 6: UK Trade in Shell Eggs (a)

Calendar Months	Imports			12 Month Moving Totals	Exports			12 Month Moving Totals
	% change				% change			
	2013	2014	13/14		2013	2014	13/14	
January	151	142	-6%	1,708	29	29	2%	281
February	128	135	6%	1,715	25	24	-3%	280
March	164	168	3%	1,720	20	35	79%	296
April	126	147	16%	1,741	21	17	-23%	291
May	122	155	27%	1,774	26	12	-53%	277
June	125	143	14%	1,792	22	23	5%	278
July	128	141	11%	1,805	25	22	-15%	275
August	150	148	-1%	1,803	23	19	-18%	271
September	149	156	5%	1,811	27	19	-32%	262
October	144	180	25%	1,847	33	15	-54%	244
November	184	170	-7%	1,834	13	14	5%	245
December	147				16			
Total	1,718	1,687			280	229		

(a) From 2012 comm codes changed from 04070030 to 040721000, 040729100 and 040790100, All trade data are provisional

Table 7: UK Trade in Egg Products (a)

Calendar Months	Imports			12 Month Moving Totals	Exports			12 Month Moving Totals
	% change				% change			
	2013	2014	13/14		2013	2014	13/14	
January	254	244	-4%	3,372	106	12	-89%	410
February	280	235	-16%	3,327	90	11	-88%	331
March	252	219	-13%	3,294	73	10	-86%	268
April	251	291	16%	3,334	64	12	-81%	216
May	310	298	-4%	3,322	82	8	-90%	142
June	309	245	-21%	3,258	17	9	-47%	134
July	306	270	-12%	3,222	14	10	-27%	130
August	274	238	-13%	3,187	13	10	-22%	128
September	287	482	68%	3,382	11	14	27%	131
October	335	294	-12%	3,341	12	9	-23%	128
November	251	255	2%	3,345	15	15	-5%	127
December	274				7			
Total	3,382	3,071			504	120		

(a) Figures are based on SITCs: 025.21, 025.22 and 025.30, converted to shell egg equivalent

All trade data are provisional

A recent investigation by HMRC has concluded the high volume of egg product exports reported between July 2012 and May 2013 were correct.

Section 4: Data users, methodology, notes and revisions policy

Data users

1. Users of the egg statistics include the EU Commission who require the UK farm gate egg price weekly under Regulation EC 546/2003. They have also recently issued a voluntary request for Member States to submit egg production estimates to fill a data gap that exists.
2. Representatives of the egg and poultry industry are also major users of the data. The data on egg production volumes and egg type are key sector indicators for the British Egg Industry Council (BEIC) as they reflect the size of the national laying flock. The British Free Range Egg Producers Association also make heavy use of our data as it indicates the size of the free range sector. We work closely with these users and consult widely when considering any changes to our surveys or associated datasets.
3. The Home Grown Cereals Authority (HGCA), part of the Agricultural and Horticultural Development Board, rely on egg production data as a good indicator of the commercial layer flock and associated feed demand and hence grain usage by the sector.
4. Our statistics are also often heavily referenced in industry publications such as “Poultry World” and “The Ranger”, the official magazine of the British Free Range Egg Producers Association.

Methodology

5. **Egg Packing Statistics:** Total egg throughput is modelled using the number of commercial laying hens (which is based on the Defra Hatchery Survey layer chick placings), average egg yields, average mortality rates and the proportion of UK eggs that go through packing stations. To estimate further breakdowns from this total output, Defra runs a quarterly survey of registered UK egg packing stations to collect data on egg production method (i.e. free range, enriched cages etc.), country of packing and prices. This “Egg Packers survey” is a voluntary survey of 27 packing stations across the UK, which accounts for around 75% of eggs packed in the UK. The response rate is typically 100 per cent.
6. The prices obtained on the survey are weighted according to the volume of eggs packed by each packing station to obtain average prices for the UK. From 2012, prices include any bonus payments paid to producers.
7. **Egg processing statistics:** Defra runs a quarterly survey of all registered egg processors. It is a voluntary survey of 11 respondents that collects information on the number of eggs bought by egg processors and the quantity of egg products produced. The response rate is typically 100 per cent.
8. In tables that show numbers of eggs the units used are 'thousand cases'. There are 360 eggs in one case.
9. **Trade statistics:** These figures come from HM Revenue and Customs, but are validated and adjusted if necessary prior to publication. The Standard Industrial Trade Classification codes used to produce each table are given in the footnotes below the tables.
10. The data are subject to a variety of validation checks which identify inconsistencies in the data. All data are cleaned prior to publication.
11. The percentage changes shown are calculated using unrounded figures. Thus any percentage changes calculated using the published (rounded) figures may not equate exactly with the changes shown.

12. The UK 12 month moving totals represent the sum of the 12 months up to and including the date indicated. They can be seen as a trend measure that is not affected by seasonality.
13. 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:

14. Figures in this notice are provisional and subject to revision. We will provide information about any revisions we make to previously published information in this statistics notice, 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 will be replaced with actual survey data when it is received.
 - b. survey respondents occasionally supply amended figures for previous periods.
15. This quarter there are minor revisions to previously published packing station figures due to revised hatchery data. In Q3, E & W throughput decreased by 1 thousand cases and NI throughput increased by 1 thousand cases. Total UK throughput was unchanged. There are also minor revisions to previously published trade figures from March 2014 due to amended HMRC data (For example, imports of egg products during May 2014 were revised upwards by 5.0% (14.2th cases) to 297.9th cases. Imports of shell eggs during August 2014 were revised upwards by 9.5% (12.9th cases) to 148.4th cases.