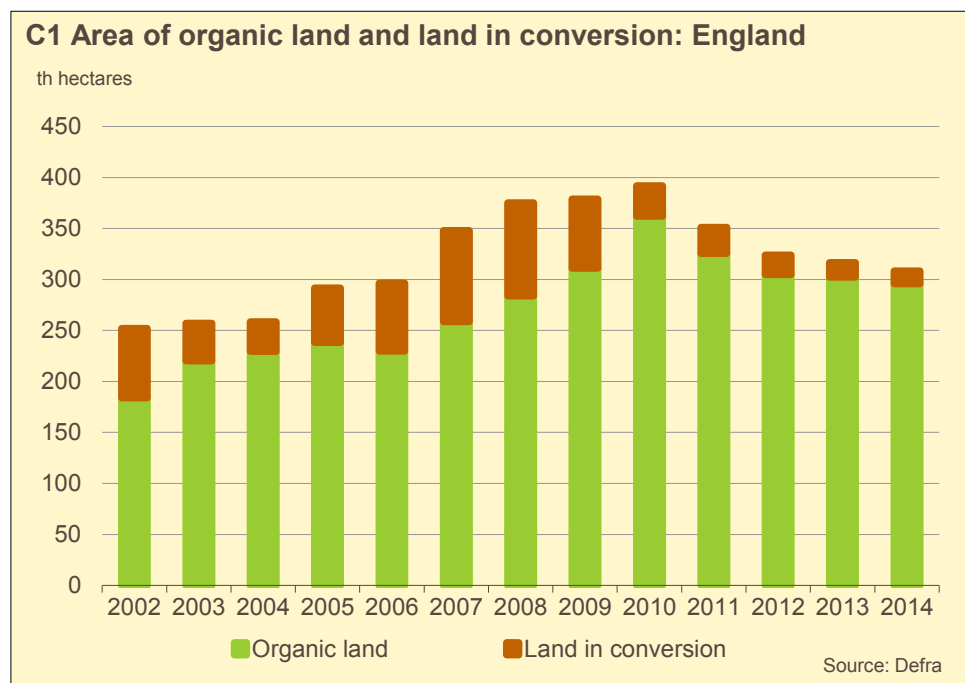


Observatory monitoring framework – indicator data sheet

Process: Farm management

Indicator C1: Organic farming

This indicator shows the area of land farmed organically (organic or in conversion) in England.



In 2014, 308 thousand hectares of the total area on agricultural holdings was classified either as fully organic or in conversion:

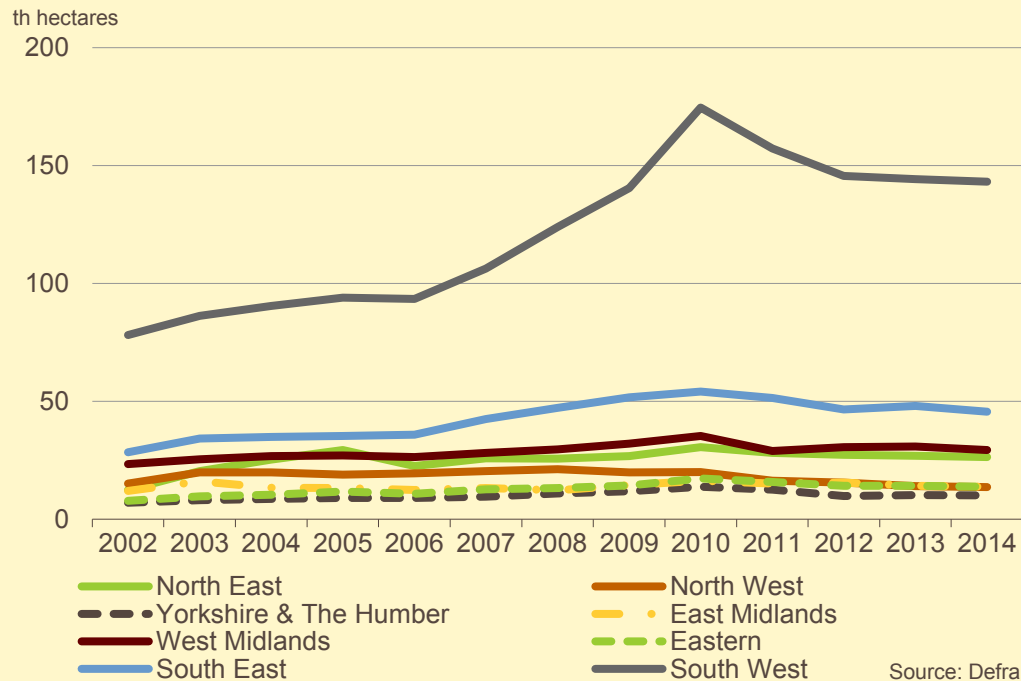
- this represented 3.4% of the total area;
- Proportionally, 78% of this area was in grassland, 16% in arable & vegetable crops, 6% in woodland & unutilised land and 1% in fruit & ornamentals.

On a regional basis, 149 thousand hectares of fully organic and in conversion land are found in the South West accounting for 8.3% of its agricultural land. Yorkshire and the Humber region has the lowest proportion (1%), accounting for around 11 thousand hectares.

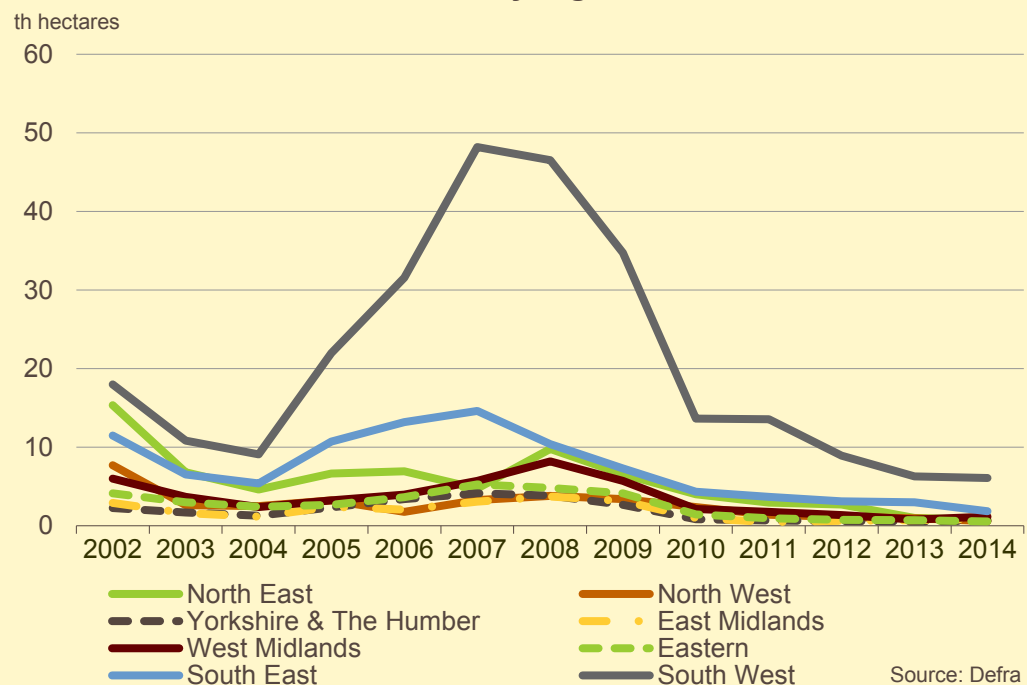
Between 2013 and 2014:

- the area of fully organic land decreased by 2%, to 296 thousand hectares. There were declines in all regions, with the largest relative decreases in the West Midlands (-5%) and South East (-5%). For all other regions changes were between -1% and -3%;
- the area of land under conversion decreased by 11% to 12.5 thousand hectares with declines in most regions. Increases occurred in Yorkshire and the Humber, East Midlands and West Midlands regions. The majority of regions have around one thousand hectares of land in conversion; larger areas occur in the South West (6 th ha) and the South East (2 th ha).

C1a Area of organic land by region



C1b Area of land in conversion by region



This indicator was updated in September 2015. The next update will be in summer 2016.

Further information and contact:

Background information can be found in the accompanying fact sheet.

For queries or information on this indicator contact Defra's Observatory team on +44 (0) 1904 455058 or email observatory@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Observatory monitoring framework – indicator fact sheet

Process: Farm management

Indicator C1: Organic farming

<i>Indicator</i>	The area of organically managed farms
<i>Data</i>	The area of land farmed organically in hectares.
<i>Geographic coverage</i>	England
<i>Years</i>	2002 to 2014
<i>Source</i>	Defra
<i>Origin of data</i>	Organic Certification Bodies
<i>Updates</i>	This indicator will be updated annually. The next update is expected to be in summer 2016.
<i>Background</i>	<p>Organic farming is a method of farming that requires farmers to operate a system based on ecological principles and which imposes strict limitations on the inputs that can be used in order to minimise damage to the environment and wildlife. Emphasis is placed on natural methods of production and pest control.</p> <p>These are administered in the UK by a number of Defra approved Organic Certification Bodies who are also able to inspect and certify organic holdings.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Since 2002 the area of organic land has increased, peaking at almost 400 thousand hectares in 2010. The area has subsequently declined to 308 thousand hectares.</p> <p><u>Conversion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.• The area of land farmed organically in the United Kingdom increased significantly in the late 1990s and early 2000s from less than 100 thousand hectares in 1998 to over 700 thousand hectares in 2002. Significant factors operating during this period were:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Farmers seeking alternatives to conventional production in response to falling farm incomes;➤ Scope of organic farming extended by the EU to livestock production in July 1999;➤ Substantial increases in payment rates for organic farming support schemes.

*Statistical &
methodological
information*

The data are estimated by Defra using information from the various Organic Certification Bodies throughout the UK. Each year certification bodies visit their registered farms to carry out inspections. The data collected during these inspections are forwarded to Defra every January to form the annual return required by the European Commission under Regulation No. 889/2008 of 5 September 2008. Due to the nature of these inspections, the data are collected at varying times. Therefore the data do not give an exact snapshot of organic farming at a specific time of year and so should be treated with caution, in this respect.

Although annual data for the UK are available from at least 1993, separate data for England are only available from 2002.

*Further
information*

Information on organic farming can be found on the GOV.UK website at:
<https://www.gov.uk/browse/business/farming/organic-farming>

Statistics on organic farming can be found on the GOV.UK website at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/organic-farming>