



18<sup>th</sup> April 2019

## United Kingdom Poultry and Poultry Meat Statistics – March 2019

### Contents:

Section 1: Commentary	page 2
Section 2: Numbers of eggs set and chicks placed by UK hatcheries	pages 2-4
Section 3: Poultry meat production	pages 5-6
Section 4: Data users, methodology, notes and revisions policy	pages 7-8

### 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 2019** in comparison to **March 2018** are given below:

- UK commercial layer chick placings were up 9.1% to 3.3 million chicks. (Table 2.3)
- UK broiler chick placings were down 1.4% at 83.2 million chicks. (Table 2.3)
- Turkey chick placings were down by 10.2% at 0.8 million chicks. (Table 2.3)
- Turkey slaughterings were up 14% at 0.8 million birds. (Table 3.1)
- UK broiler slaughterings were 0.3% lower at 82.7 million birds. (Table 3.1)
- Total UK poultry meat production was 138.97 thousand tonnes, down 2.1%. (Table 3.4)

The next release of this notice is **at 09:30 on 23rd May 2019**. Full time series are available to download at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/poultry-and-poultry-meat-statistics>

---

**Enquiries on this publication to:** Julie Rumsey, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Room 201, Foss House, Kings Pool, 1 - 2 Peasholme Green, York YO1 7PX.  
Tel: ++ 44 (0)2080 266306, email:Julie.rumsey@defra.gov.uk

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

## Section 1: Commentary

The number of eggs set (incubated) each month indicates how many chicks are 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, placed chicks give an indication of future poultry meat and egg production. Consumer demand strongly affects broiler chick and turkey poult placings. There are clear peaks (of turkeys) and troughs (of broilers) in the average weekly placings 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. It is likely that the latest 'Eggs Set' data may have been influenced by decisions to set eggs outside the UK during the previously anticipated exit from the EU in March.

Please note that the surveys run according to statistical, rather than calendar, months containing either 4 or 5 weeks. The Methodology section provides more explanation of the statistical week system.

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

	millions				
	March 2018 4 weeks	January 2019 5 weeks	February 2019 4 weeks	March 2019 4 weeks	yr on yr % change
Commercial broilers <sup>(a)</sup>	98.9	101.7	98.3	97.5	-1.4%
Broiler breeders <sup>(a) (b)</sup>	5.6	6.1	5.2	6.2	11%
Turkeys <sup>(c)</sup>	1.2	1.1	1.0	1.0	-20%
Commercial layers <sup>(c)</sup>	8.2	9.4	9.0	7.3	-11%

(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

Statistical months have either 4 or 5 weeks so it is difficult to compare monthly trends. 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													
	2018												2019	
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	% change
Commercial broilers <sup>(a)</sup>	24.7	24.6	25.9	25.2	24.4	25.7	24.6	22.9	24.5	24.6	20.3	24.6	24.4	-0.9%
Broiler breeders <sup>(a) (b)</sup>	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.5	19%
Turkeys <sup>(c)</sup>	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	-3.0%
Commercial layers <sup>(c)</sup>	2.0	2.0	2.6	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.7	1.9	2.4	1.8	1.9	2.2	1.8	-19%

(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 2018	January 2019	February 2019	March 2019	yr on yr
	4 weeks	5 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	% change
Commercial broilers <sup>(a)</sup>	84.3	103.2	83.1	83.2	-1.4%
Female broiler breeders <sup>(b)</sup>	0.6	0.9	0.5	0.5	-0.2%
Turkey poults <sup>(c)</sup>	0.9	1.0	0.9	0.8	-10.2%
Commercial layers	3.0	3.9	3.0	3.3	9.1%

(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 chicks and poults placed per week to remove the statistical month effect, as in earlier tables.

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

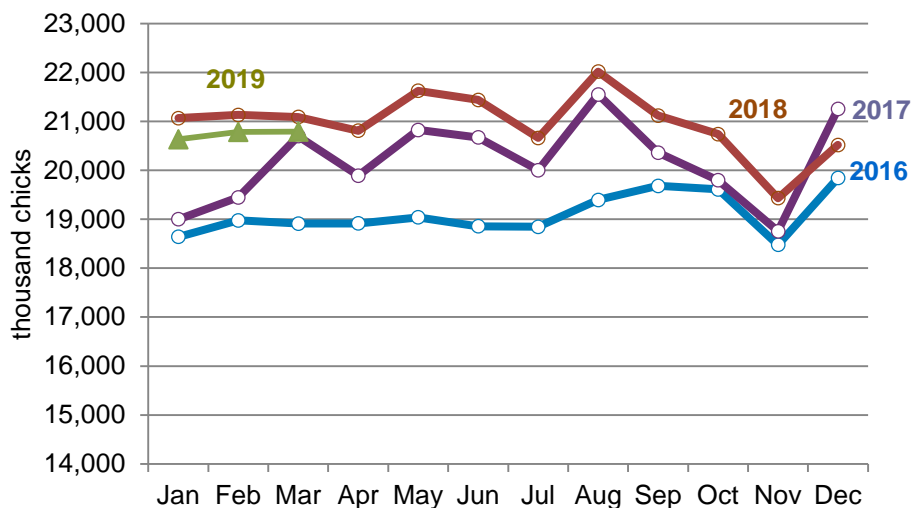
	millions													Month
	2018					2019								% change
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Commercial broilers <sup>(a)</sup>	21.1	20.8	21.6	21.4	20.7	22.0	21.1	20.7	19.4	20.5	20.6	20.8	20.8	0.0%
Female broiler breeders <sup>(b)</sup>	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	13%
Turkey poults <sup>(c)</sup>	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	-1.7%
Commercial layers	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.8	11%

(a) Includes 'by-product' chicks

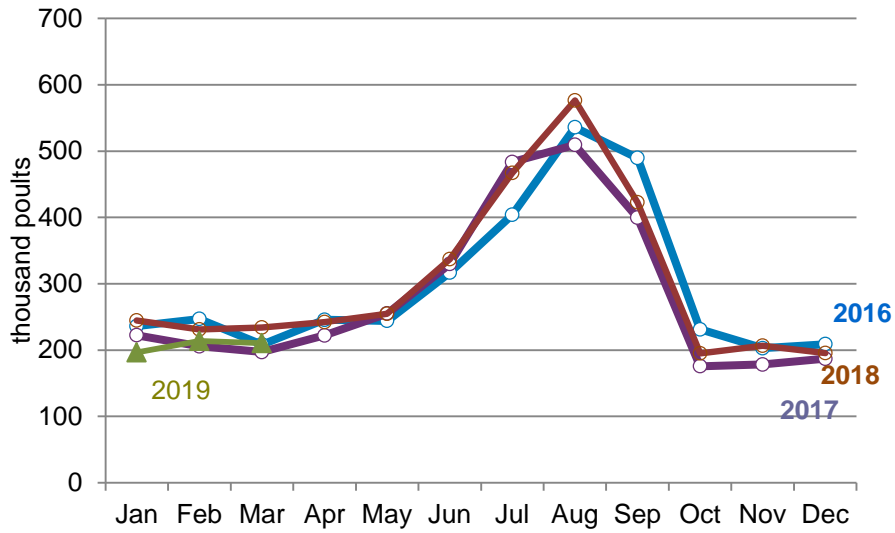
(b) Female parents only. Excludes grandparent chicks and 'by-product' chicks. Includes imported female parent chicks

(c) Including female breeder poults

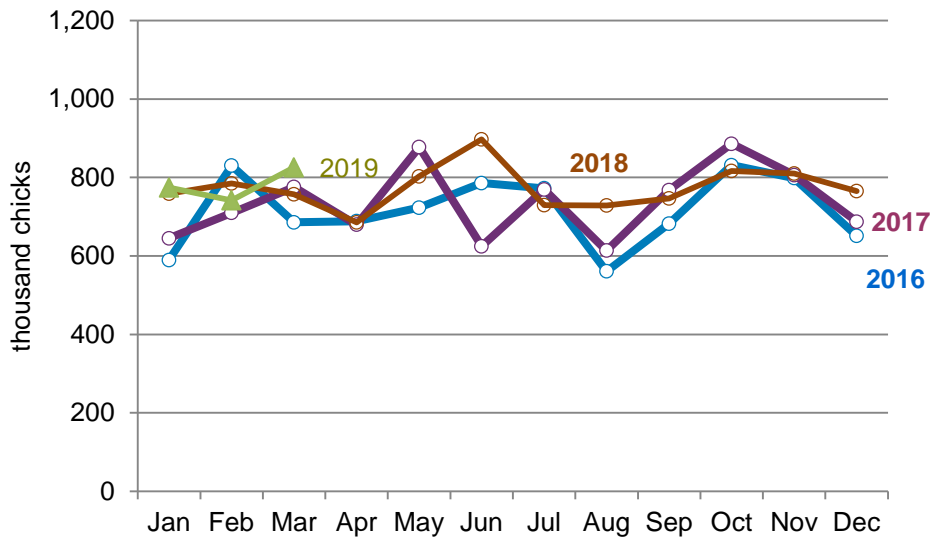
**Figure 2.1: Average number of broiler chicks placed per week by UK Hatcheries**



**Figure 2.2: Average number of turkey poultis 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				
	Mar-18	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	yr on yr
	4 weeks	5 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	% change
Broilers	83.0	97.7	82.3	82.7	-0.3%
Boiling fowl <sup>(a)</sup>	4.4	4.6	4.8	5.0	13%
Turkeys	0.7	2.1	1.0	0.8	14%

(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													
	2019										2019			Month
	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	% chg
Broilers	20.7	21.0	20.8	20.8	21.3	20.3	21.4	21.8	20.7	20.0	19.5	20.6	20.7	0.5%
Boiling fowl <sup>(a)</sup>	1.1	0.8	0.9	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	0.8	1.0	0.9	1.2	1.3	4.0%
Turkeys	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.2	-20%

(a) Includes spent hens and spent breeders

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

	kilograms													
	2019										2019			yr on yr
	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	% change
Broilers	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.2	2.2	-2.2%
Boiling fowl	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.2	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.2	-0.2%
Turkeys	12.9	12.9	12.7	12.0	12.0	12.4	12.7	13.8	10.4	10.1	15.4	15.7	10.9	-15%

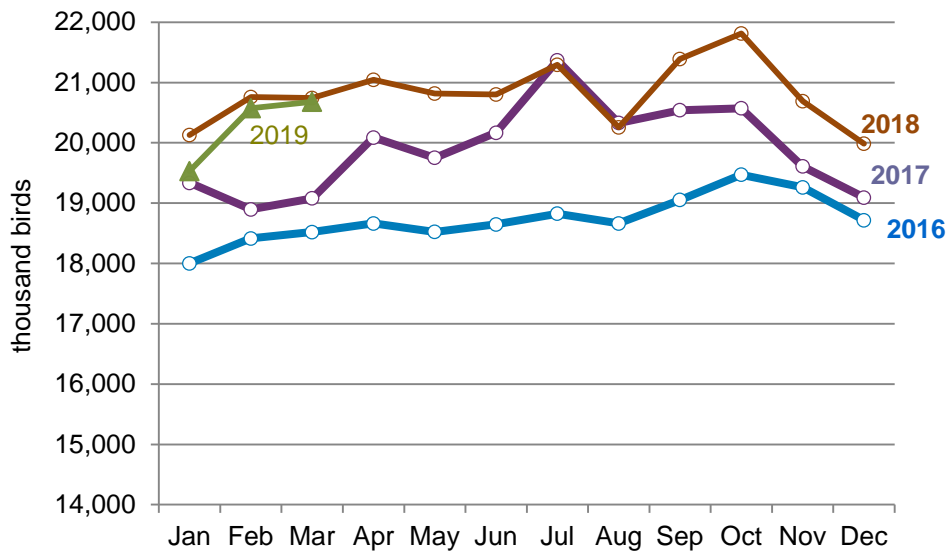
**Table 3.4: Volume of poultry meat produced per month in the UK <sup>(a)</sup>**

	thousand tonnes carcass weight				
	Mar-18	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	yr on yr
	4 weeks	5 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	% change
Broilers	125.6	156.4	127.4	122.3	-2.6%
Boiling fowl	6.3	6.5	6.8	7.1	13%
Turkeys	7.5	27.3	13.1	7.3	-3.5%
Ducks	2.4	2.6	2.2	2.2	-8.4%
<b>Total <sup>(b)</sup></b>	<b>141.9</b>	<b>192.8</b>	<b>149.6</b>	<b>139.0</b>	<b>-2.1%</b>

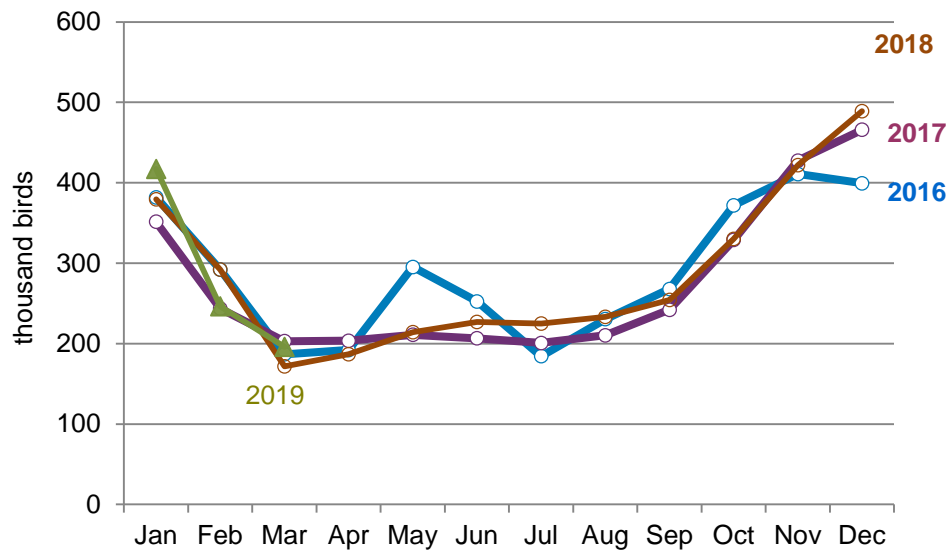
(a) Converted to whole bird equivalent carcass weight, net of offal

(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%. A similar survey is run by the Rural & Environment Science and Analytical Service (RESAS) for Scotland. 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.
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 carcase 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. Every 6 years this produces a 53 week statistical year; 2016 is such a year. In order to account for this extra week, December 2016 data have been revised to 5 weeks instead of the usual 4 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.

Northern Ireland hatcheries data from December 2018 is estimated. Northern Ireland slaughter data from December 2018 is estimated. Data for the UK has been revised back to January 2019.