



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Rural Payments
Agency

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Crop areas in England sourced from the Basic Payment Scheme and the June Survey of Agriculture 2015-2018 (Revised)

Following the publication on 6 February 2019 of the crop areas in England for 2015 to 2018 sourced from the Basic Payments Scheme (BPS), an investigation was carried out to look at the growing differences between these areas when compared to those from the annual June Survey of Agriculture. Now that the investigation has concluded, this release has been updated to include the revised 2018 areas from the June Survey published on 31 May 2019 together with the County/Unitary Authority (NUTS3) level breakdown of the 2018 BPS areas.

A report on revisions and an updated Statistical Release provide full details of the investigation and revisions. Both documents can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/structure-of-the-agricultural-industry>

This release presents the crop areas claimed under the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) in 2018 compared to the previously published official crop areas from the Defra June Survey of Agriculture.

It is important to note that these are Experimental Statistics and this is only the second year in which comparisons have been made. The statistics have not yet been shown to meet the quality criteria for National Statistics branding, but are being published to involve users in their development. We would value user feedback on these statistics to improve their value in future. A fuller description of the limitations of these statistics is provided throughout the release.

Table 1 overleaf shows the crop areas for 2015-2018 for both data sources. The full BPS data series, which includes spring/winter crop splits, is available on the following webpage:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/structure-of-the-agricultural-industry#2018-publications>

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An Official Statistics publication. These statistics are produced to the high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, which sets out eight principles including meeting user needs, impartiality and objectivity, integrity, sound methods and assured quality, frankness and accessibility. See <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/national-statistician/types-of-official-statistics/index.html> for further details on Official Statistics.

Table 1 : Crop areas claimed under the BPS and Defra June Survey: England (Thousand Ha)

Crop	Source	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change from 2017-18
Wheat	BPS	1,719	1,674	1,607	1,560	-2.9%
	June Survey	1,693	1,684	1,652	1,668	1.0%
	June Survey revised				1,619	-2.0%
Winter Barley	BPS	361	369	347	324	-6.7%
	June Survey	376	376	361	343	-4.9%
	June Survey revised				336	-7.0%
Spring Barley	BPS	374	404	459	463	0.9%
	June Survey	373	416	482	482	0.1%
	June Survey revised				471	-2.2%
Oats	BPS	96	100	116	122	5.2%
	June Survey	98	102	121	134	11.0%
	June Survey revised				132	9.4%
Potatoes	BPS	97	102	106	104	-2.5%
	June Survey	96	104	108	107	-0.7%
	June Survey revised				106	-2.3%
Beet*	BPS	105	100	128	133	3.8%
Sugar Beet only*	June Survey	90	86	111	116	4.5%
	June Survey revised				114	2.6%
Field beans	BPS	174	176	182	144	-20.7%
	June Survey	165	173	189	155	-17.9%
	June Survey revised				152	-19.4%
Peas	BPS	72	76	67	58	-14.0%
	June Survey	74	78	68	69	1.1%
	June Survey revised				66	-3.2%
Oilseed	BPS	613	539	507	559	10.4%
	June Survey	611	543	523	563	7.6%
	June Survey revised				545	4.2%
Maize	BPS	180	181	184	199	8.2%
	June Survey	173	182	183	209	14.2%
	June Survey revised				206	12.6%
Fallow	BPS	178	205	175	199	13.7%
	June Survey	179	216	200	230	14.9%
	June Survey revised				225	12.7%
Permanent Grassland*	BPS	4,150	4,008	3,957	3,969	0.3%
	June Survey	3,695	3,760	3,757	3,789	0.8%
	June Survey revised				3,752	-0.2%
Temporary Grassland*	BPS	484	492	508	469	-7.8%
	June Survey	646	627	640	668	4.4%
	June Survey revised				656	2.5%
Fruit & Veg (excludes peas and beans) **	BPS	119	121	121	122	1.3%
	June Survey	107	98	100	101	0.8%
	June Survey revised				100	-0.4%
Flowers	BPS	9	11	8	7	-12.2%
	June Survey	11	10	11	10	-6.0%
	June Survey revised				10	-7.3%

* The data in these categories are not directly comparable as they have different definitions.

** June Survey values for Fruit & Veg now exclude peas and beans hence the values are lower than published on 6 February. The BPS areas include some fodder crops (e.g. root and brassica crops) that are separately classified in the June Survey.

Definitions

Variable	June survey description	Basic Payment scheme description
Number of SBIs	-	Number of farm businesses claiming each crop
Crop areas (ha)	Areas of crops in the ground on 1 June. Includes areas of headlands and ditches.	The area that is eligible for payment. The land must be at the farmer's disposal with crops established, or intend to be established, on 15th May of the scheme year.
Other cereals	Survey data has not been included for this category as it only includes mixed corn, rye and triticale.	Covers a larger selection of crops- a full list is available in the Excel spreadsheet linked on the front page
Beet	Sugar beet provided, not including beet for stock feeding.	Covers a large selection of beet crops including sugar beet and beet for stock feeding
Peas	Peas for harvesting dry (for fodder) plus edible peas. The survey area also includes a small area of edible beans (<3,000 ha).	Covers a selection of peas- a full list is available in the Excel spreadsheet linked on the front page.
Fallow	Survey areas include uncropped arable land and all arable land not in production, including wild bird cover and game cover.	Includes strips and margins of fallow land if being used to meet a greening exemption or as a single 'crop for crop diversification. Otherwise areas of strips and margins can be included under the land use code of the main land parcel. Includes wild bird mixes if no crop production or grazing.
Fruit & Vegetables (excludes peas and beans)	Survey areas include all soft and top fruit, and all vegetables excluding peas and beans grown for human consumption. Excludes vegetables grown as fodder crops.	A full list of the categories included in the BPS data is available in the Excel spreadsheet linked on the front page. Includes vegetables grown as fodder crops.
Flowers	Survey areas include bulbs, flowers, nursery stock and Christmas trees.	BPS areas only include flowers (a full list is available in the Excel spreadsheet linked on the front page)
Temporary grassland	Survey areas include all temporary grass or grass sown within the past 5 years. It does not include land used for outdoor pigs.	BPS areas include land that has been in grass or other herbaceous forage for fewer than 5 consecutive years (self-seeded or sown). It also includes land used for livestock production, if it's been used in this way for fewer than 5 years. This includes land used for outdoor pigs.

Variable	June survey description	Basic Payment scheme description
Permanent grassland	Survey areas include grassland sown 5 or more years including areas of Sole rights rough grazing (lower quality grazing land including heathland, moors, hills and scrub). It excludes common grazing land.	BPS areas include land which is used to grow grasses or other herbaceous forage for 5 or more consecutive years (self-seeded or sown). It includes areas of bracken, salt marshes, reed beds and light scrub (including gorse bushes and briar) if the land is managed so that they are suitable for grazing and grasses and other herbaceous forage remain predominant. Area also includes areas of heather - where these are kept in a state suitable for grazing. It excludes areas of dense scrub which prevent grazing. Common land is included where farms have grazing rights on the commons.

Metadata: June Survey of Agriculture and Horticulture

This is an annual survey of around 15,000 respondents in England. The survey collects detailed data on crop areas, livestock numbers and the farm labour force. It only includes farms with significant levels of farming activity (e.g. more than 5ha land or more than 10 cattle etc.) The full list of survey thresholds is in the survey Methodology file at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/182206/defra-stats-foodfarm-landuselivestock-june-junemethodology-20120126.pdf

Strengths of the data

The June Survey of Agriculture has a long running time series providing a long term view of changes to the agriculture industry. It is unaffected by changes in administrative data reporting or subsidy systems and it collects information on all aspects of the farm activity. It is a sample survey, which means that the results are subject to a degree of sampling error, particularly at lower geographical levels. The geographical location of the land is based on a central grid system and all of the land and livestock on a farm is attributed to one central point which can make geographical estimates less reliable.

Limitations of the data

As with all sample surveys, the estimates that are derived are subject to sampling error and we provide confidence intervals as a measure of uncertainty that may apply to the estimated totals within the June Survey Statistics Release. The response rate is high, around 70%, and is closely monitored to ensure that it is not concentrated in particular types of farm in order to minimise the possibility of bias. The farm location is based on a central grid point so all of the land and livestock is attributed to this one location. This makes precise geographical estimates less reliable than other systems.

Revisions

This release has been revised to take account of revisions to the June Survey areas for England. An explanation of the reasons for the changes is included in the updated English

statistical release and in a supporting report which gives more detail. Both documents can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/structure-of-the-agricultural-industry>.

Metadata: Basic Payment Scheme (BPS)

This dataset comprises areas of eligible crops claimed under the Basic Payment Scheme each year. It includes data from individual land parcels with accompanying grid references which accurately identifies the crop location and means that it is very robust at low geographic levels.

Strengths of the data

The data should be accurate as farmers can be penalised if they over/under declare their land area or provide incorrect cropping details. Once their claim has been submitted, it under goes a series of validation checks in the Rural Payment system. These checks include checking the size of the land parcels, the ownership of each parcel and the land cover. A proportion of claims are selected randomly for inspection to ensure they are claiming the correct land and crops.

Limitations of the data

The data is only available from 2015 so the time series is short. At date of publication, 96.7% of 2018 claims had been processed so there may be slight revisions once the process is complete. The area of permanent grassland in particular may be subject to revision as the RPA is currently in the process of allocating 2018 common land. The BPS data only includes data from farms that make a claim, the statistics are therefore dependent on the number claiming in any year and could underestimate as claimant numbers reduce. The table below illustrates a steady decrease in claimant numbers and eligible areas. Changes in claimant numbers could be a results of structural change, rather than under-coverage.

Table 2: Number of claimants and eligible areas for the Basic Payment Scheme

	Number of Claimants	Total eligible area (Ha)	Crops (Ha)	Grass (Ha)	Crops %
2015	87,563	8,809,000	3,869,000	4,940,000	44%
2016	86,139	8,658,000	3,822,000	4,836,000	44%
2017	85,414	8,578,000	3,809,000	4,769,000	44%
2018	84,323	8,541,000	3,774,000	4,766,000	44%

Further information

Basic Payment Scheme

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/basic-payment-scheme>

June Survey

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/structure-of-the-agricultural-industry>