



16th April 2020

United Kingdom Poultry and Poultry Meat Statistics – March 2020

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, definitions, methodology and revisions policy	pages 7-9

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 2020** in comparison to **March 2019** are given below:

- UK commercial layer chick placings were down 15% to 2.8 million chicks. (Table 2.3)
- UK broiler chick placings were up 3.0% at 86.4 million chicks. (Table 2.3)
- Turkey chick placings were up by 2.0% at 0.9 million chicks. (Table 2.3)
- Turkey slaughterings were down 31% at 0.5 million birds. (Table 3.1)
- UK broiler slaughterings were up 1.4% at 83 million birds. (Table 3.1)
- Total UK poultry meat production was unchanged at 143.9 thousand tonnes. (Table 3.4)

The next release of this notice is **at 09:30 on 21st May 2020**. Full time series are available to download at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/poultry-and-poultry-meat-statistics>

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Section 1: Commentary

The number of eggs set 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. The number of placed chicks each month indicates future volumes of 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

This section contains tables and charts that indicate 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.

Please note that the surveys are not calendar months. They are statistical months containing either 4 or 5 weeks.

In order to remove the statistical month effect and give a clearer indication of trends, weekly average numbers have been used. 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 2019 4 weeks	January 2020 5 weeks	February 2020 4 weeks	March 2020 4 weeks		
Commercial broilers ^(a)	96.9	123.5	100.1	98.4		1.5%
Broiler breeders ^{(a) (b)}	5.2	7.2	5.6	4.6		-10.7%
Turkeys ^(c)	1.0	1.4	1.1	1.1		14%
Commercial layers ^(c)	7.8	11.9	8.7	6.4		-18%

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

	millions														Month % change
	2019							2020							
	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
Commercial broilers ^(a)	24.2	23.4	25.0	24.0	24.1	24.5	24.2	22.8	24.6	25.2	24.7	25.0	24.6	-1.6%	
Broiler breeders ^{(a) (b)}	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.2	-18%	
Turkeys ^(c)	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.9%	
Commercial layers ^(c)	1.9	2.1	1.9	1.8	2.3	1.9	2.3	1.9	2.1	1.9	2.4	2.2	1.6	-26%	

(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 2019	January 2020	February 2020	March 2020	yr on yr
	4 weeks	5 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	% change
Commercial broilers ^(a)	83.9	104.8	86.6	86.4	3.0%
Female broiler breeders ^(b)	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.8	24%
Turkey poults ^(c)	0.8	1.1	1.0	0.9	2.0%
Commercial layers	3.3	3.9	3.8	2.8	-15%

(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: Average numbers of chicks and poults placed per week in the UK by UK Hatcheries

	millions													Month
	2019						2020							
	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	% change
Commercial broilers ^(a)	21.0	20.6	20.8	21.0	20.7	21.2	20.9	20.7	19.4	21.3	21.0	21.6	21.6	-0.1%
Female broiler breeders ^(b)	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	24%
Turkey poults ^(c)	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	-12%
Commercial layers	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.8	0.9	0.7	-26%

(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

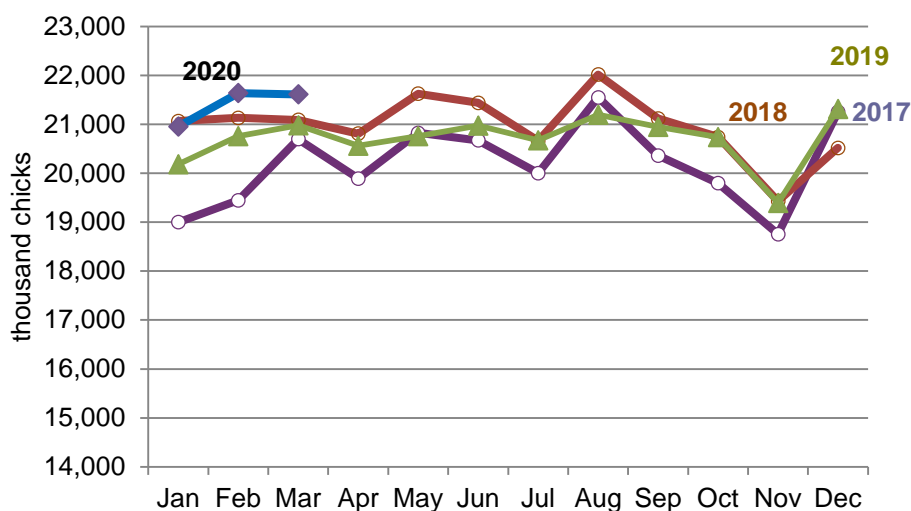


Figure 2.2: Average number of turkey poultis placed per week by UK Hatcheries

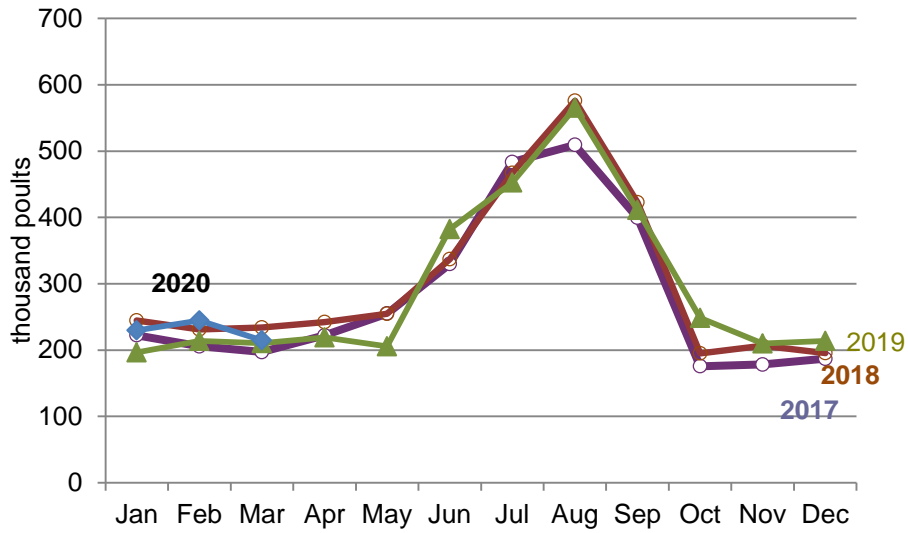
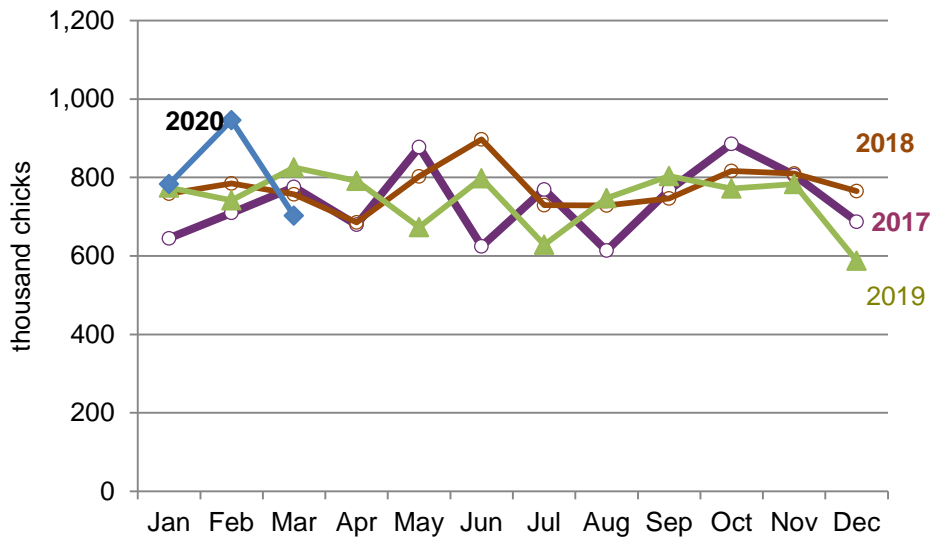


Figure 2.3: Average number of layer chicks placed per week by UK Hatcheries



Section 3: Poultry meat production

This section shows the number of poultry slaughtered and the average liveweights of poultry; together these indicate the volume of poultry meat production in the UK.

As in earlier tables, weekly averages are included to remove the statistical month effect.

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

	million birds				
	Mar-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	yr on yr
	4 weeks	5 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	% change
Broilers	81.8	101.4	81.0	82.9	1.4%
Boiling fowl ^(a)	5.0	5.4	4.3	5.1	2.7%
Turkeys	0.8	2.1	1.1	0.5	-31%

(a) Includes spent hens and spent breeders

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

	million birds													Month
	2019											2020		% chg
	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Broilers	20.4	20.6	20.3	20.0	20.0	19.9	20.1	20.5	20.6	19.9	20.3	20.2	20.7	2.4%
Boiling fowl ^(a)	1.3	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.2	1.3	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.1	1.3	20%
Turkeys	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.1	-51%

(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
	2019											2020		% change
	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Broilers	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	0.4%
Boiling fowl	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.4	2.2	2.4	2.2	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.8%
Turkeys	13.1	12.6	12.8	12.2	12.8	12.6	13.0	12.6	9.4	8.9	14.5	13.8	13.1	0.3%

Table 3.4: Volume of poultry meat produced per month in the UK ^(a)

	thousand tonnes carcass weight				
	Mar-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	yr on yr
	4 weeks	5 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	% change
Broilers	125.8	155.0	123.9	128.2	1.9%
Boiling fowl	7.1	7.5	6.2	7.5	5.1%
Turkeys	8.7	25.7	12.9	6.0	-31%
Ducks	2.2	2.4	2.0	2.1	-5.5%
Total ^(b)	143.9	190.6	145.0	143.9	0.0%

(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

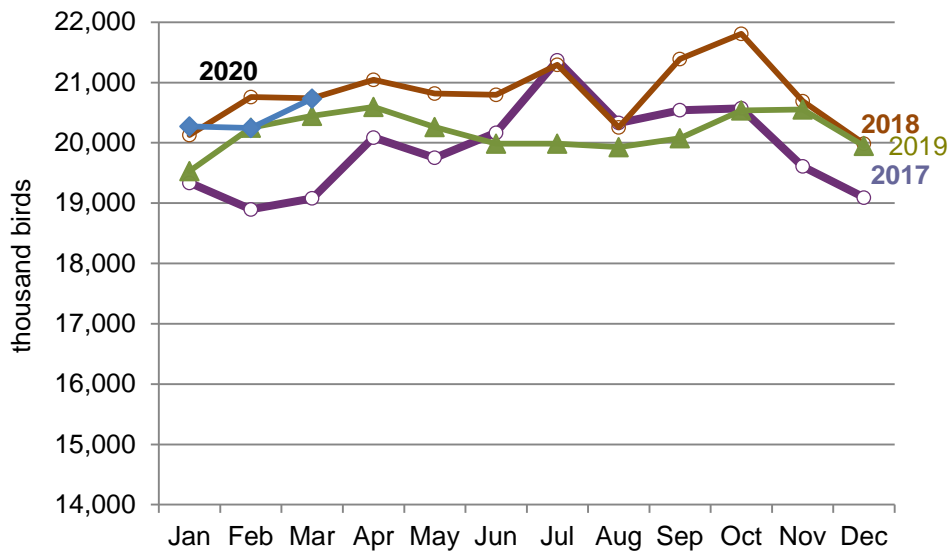
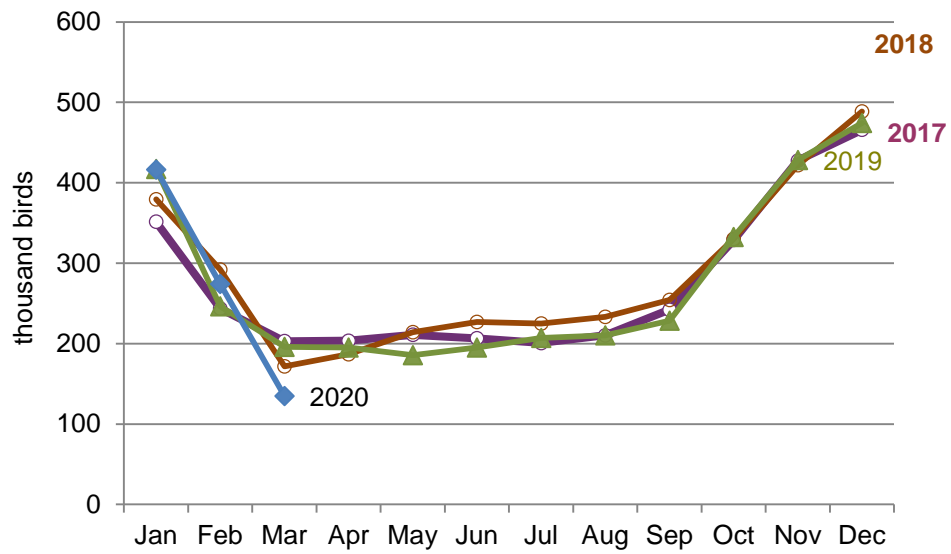


Figure 3.2: Average numbers of turkeys slaughtered per week in the UK



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

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 Agricultural and Horticultural Development Board (AHDB- Cereals and Oilseeds), 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”.

Definitions

3. Eggs Set: eggs placed into an incubator.
Chicks placed: the introduction of a hatched chick into a poultry rearing system.
Broiler: a bird raised primarily for meat production.
Layer: a bird raised primarily to lay eggs for human consumption.
Breeder: a bird raised primarily to provide the next generation of chicks.
Boiler/Boiling fowl/spent hen: a layer or breeding bird whose primary purpose is spent.
Poult: a turkey chick.

Methodology

4. 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.

5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.

National Statistics status

8. National Statistics status means that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.
9. The statistics last underwent a full assessment [[Assessment Report 271 Statistics on Agriculture](#)] against the [Code of Practice for Statistics in 2014](#).
10. Since the latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics and have enhanced data quality by reviewing methodologies and data sources.

Revisions policy

11. 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 October 2019 to March 2020 is estimated. Northern Ireland slaughter data from October 2019 to March 2020 is estimated.