



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



28th January 2020

Usage of milk by dairies in the United Kingdom – December 2020

This release shows the latest monthly information on the volume of milk used by dairies in the United Kingdom for the production of a range of milk products.

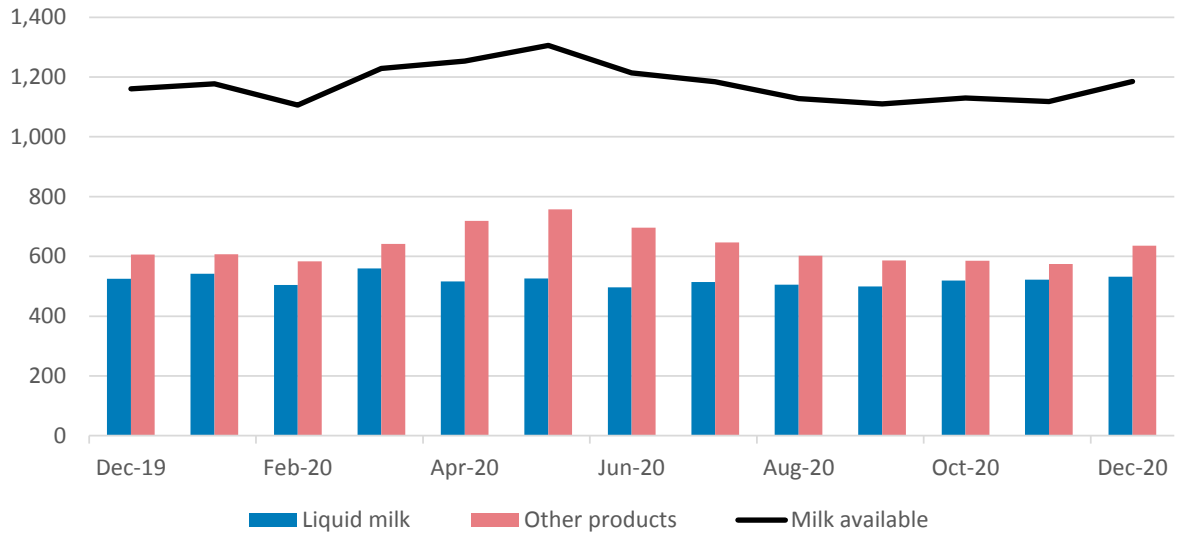
The key results for December 2020

- In December, UK dairies processed 1,185 million litres of milk. The 12 month rolling average up to December saw a 0.2% increase on the milk processed compared to the 12 months to November (Figures 1.1 and Table 1.1).
- Production of liquid milk, which usually remains relatively constant around 500-550 million litres per month, rose 1.8% to 532 million litres in December. The 12 month rolling average up to December saw a 0.1% increase in liquid milk and a 0.7% increase in cheese and a 1.0% increase in butter production compared to the 12 months to November (Figures 1.1 and Table 1.1).
- Cheese production continues to be the largest manufactured product (Figure 1.2) with cheddar the most popular cheese by far (Figure 1.3).

Section 1 – Monthly milk utilisation

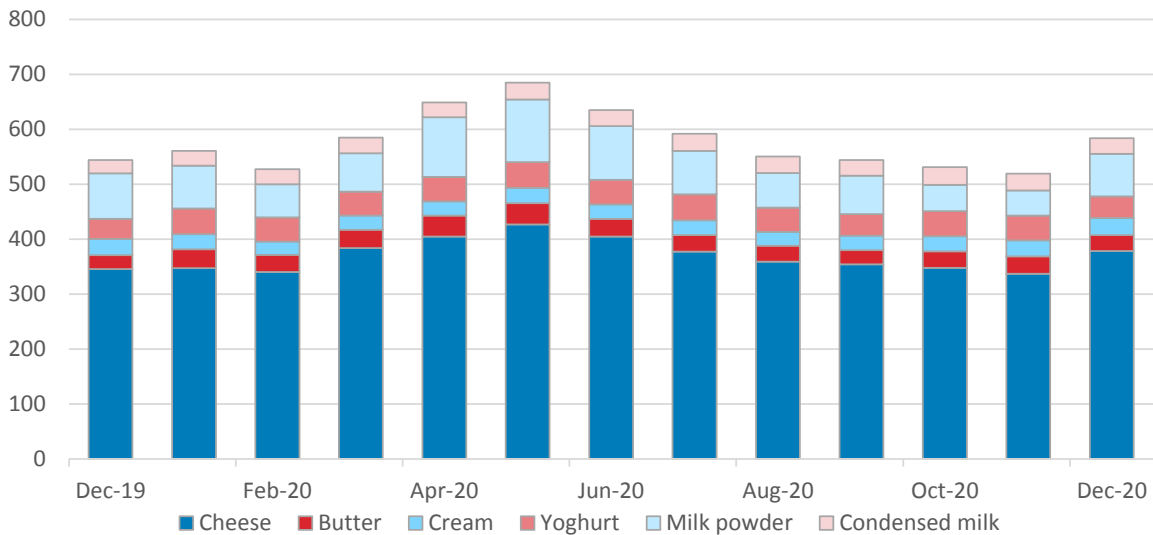
1.1 Monthly milk utilisation by liquid milk and other products

Figure 1.1: Monthly milk use: liquid milk and other products (million litres)



1.2 Milk use by product, excluding liquid milk (million litres)

Figure 1.2: Milk use by product, excluding liquid milk (million litres)



1.3 Milk utilisation by cheese type

Figure 1.3: Monthly utilisation of milk by cheese type (million litres)

1.4 Milk utilisation at UK processors

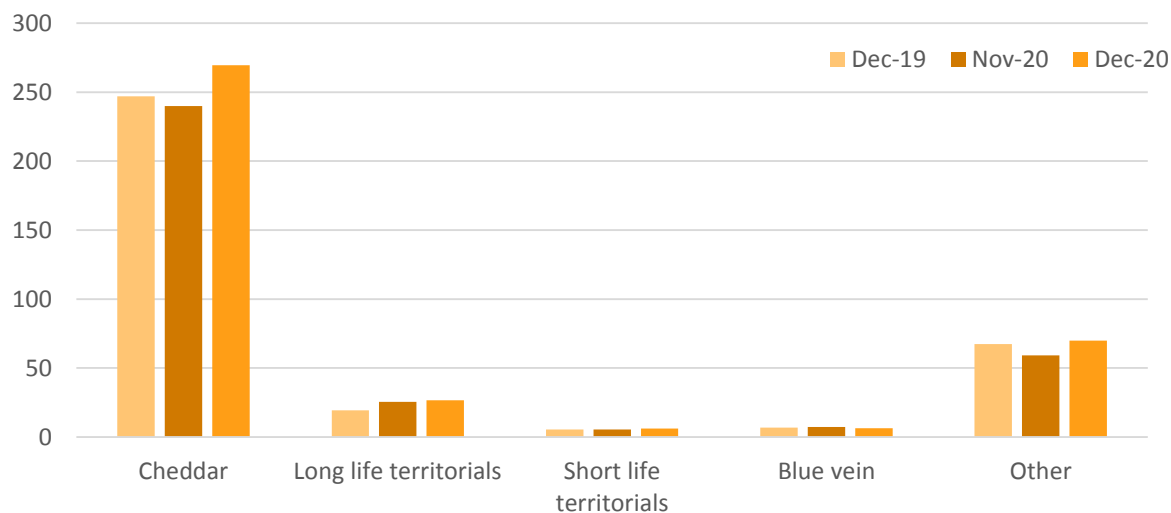


Table 1.1: Utilisation of milk at UK processors

	Monthly total Nov-20	Monthly total Dec-20	Percentage change	12 month rolling average Nov-20	12 month rolling average Dec-20	Percentage change
Milk available to processors (million litres)	1,118	1,185	6.0%	1,176	1,178	0.2%
Liquid milk production (million litres)	522	532	1.8%	519	520	0.1%
Cheese production ('000 tonnes)	35.9	40.2	11.9%	39.3	39.5	0.7%
Butter production ('000 tonnes)	15.4	14.3	-7.2%	15.5	15.7	1.0%
Milk powder production ('000 tonnes)	4.6	7.9	70.2%	7.8	7.8	-0.6%

Section 2 – About these statistics

Methodology: E&W statistics presented in this dataset are from the monthly survey of milk availability and usage by dairies in England and Wales. It is a voluntary sample survey with the largest 34 dairies sampled monthly and an additional 20 dairies surveyed quarterly (the quarterly data is apportioned into monthly data for the relevant 3 month period).

These 54 dairies cover approximately 90% of the total milk available for processing (based on the long term comparison with RPA volume data) so the survey data is raised to 100% of milk delivered to dairies in England and Wales.

UK results are derived as a sum of the survey results from England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Similar surveys are run by the Scottish Government and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) for Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland results are available at the [Daera milk-utilisation statistics webpage](#). Data for Scotland are not available separately due to confidentiality reasons. Scottish Government publications are available at the [Scottish government's publication webpage](#)

The wholesale production figures (e.g. for butter and cheese) are estimated from the volume of milk used for each production and compared to conversion factors advised by the dairy industry. Conversion factors can be variable and fluctuate on a monthly basis so average conversion factors have been used for calculating production volumes.

Revisions policy

Data for Northern Ireland from January 2019 is estimated.

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:

- If we have not received survey data from respondents we make an estimate based on their previous returns. These estimates are replaced with actual figures when they are received.

- Survey respondents occasionally supply amended figures for previous periods.
- Estimates have been used for some companies while awaiting clarification on data.

Data users/uses.

The milk utilisation statistics accompany another Defra monthly publication on farm gate milk prices (this is available at the [UK milk prices and composition publication webpage](#), which shows the prices paid to milk producers by dairies. This data, alongside the milk utilisation data, gives a comprehensive overview of the UK milk market and is used heavily by the dairy industry, in particular the division of the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) known as DairyCo (who represent milk producers) and Dairy UK (who represent milk processors). DairyCo consider the price and utilisation statistics vital for assessing market trends and to carry out further analysis on how changing prices affect the sector. Milk utilisation data provides insight into market characteristics and to monitor where milk is being used for domestic production. It provides insight to how production of products (such as butter, cheese etc.) changes in response to changes in global demand and market conditions.

Milk utilisation statistics are also used heavily by the British Cheese Board to monitor volumes of national cheese production over time.

The information in this release is also used by the UK government as evidence for assessing market conditions and evaluating agricultural policy. Other users include academia and the general public.

Contact details are available on the last page of this release, for you to send feedback or ask questions about the information provided.

Future publications

The next monthly release will be published at 09:30 on 4th March 2021.

Full UK and England/Wales time series of milk utilisation, production of milk products (butter, cheese etc.) and import/export volumes of milk products are all available on the gov.uk website at "[Milk utilisation by dairies](#)".

Other info

The 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.

Section 3 - Glossary

Table A: Conversion factors: litres of milk to produce 1 kg of product

Product	Conversion factor (litres/kg)
Butter (from Cream)	2.04
Cheddar	9.5
Other Long Life Territorials	9.2
Short life Territorials	8.1
Blue vein	9.1
Mozarella	9.8
Cottage cheese /Fromage frais	3.6
Soft cheese	8
Non-specified cheese	9.7
Condensed Milk	2.7
Milk Powder (from Whole milk)	8.5
Milk Powder (from Skim milk)	10.1
Milk Powder (from Cream)	12.3
Cream (from cream)	1
Yoghurt	1.1

What you need to know about this release

Contact details

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National Statistics Status

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.

The continued designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in 2014 following a compliance check by the UK Statistics Authority (now the Office for Statistics Regulation) against the Code of Practice for Statistics.

Since the last review of these statistics in 2014, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made improvements including:

- Providing a detailed breakdown of livestock categories following user feedback
- Improved the data quality by updating guidance for data providers and carrying out enhanced validation checks on data received

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