



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



25 May 2023

## Organic farming statistics United Kingdom 2022

This release presents final estimates for 2022 of the land area farmed organically, crop areas, livestock numbers and numbers of organic producers and processors in the UK. The results are produced from data compiled by approved organic certification bodies. The total organic area referred to is made up of fully organic land and organic land in-conversion.

### 1. Key findings

In 2022:

- 509 thousand hectares were farmed organically in the UK.
- 61.4% (312 thousand hectares) of the total UK organic area was in England.
- Permanent pasture (inc. rough grazing) accounted for 61.8% of UK organic land, covering 314 thousand hectares.
- 9.7% of the total UK organic area was used to grow cereals (49 thousand hectares).
- 3.1% of the total UK cattle population was reared organically.
- There were a total of 5.5 thousand organic operators in the UK.

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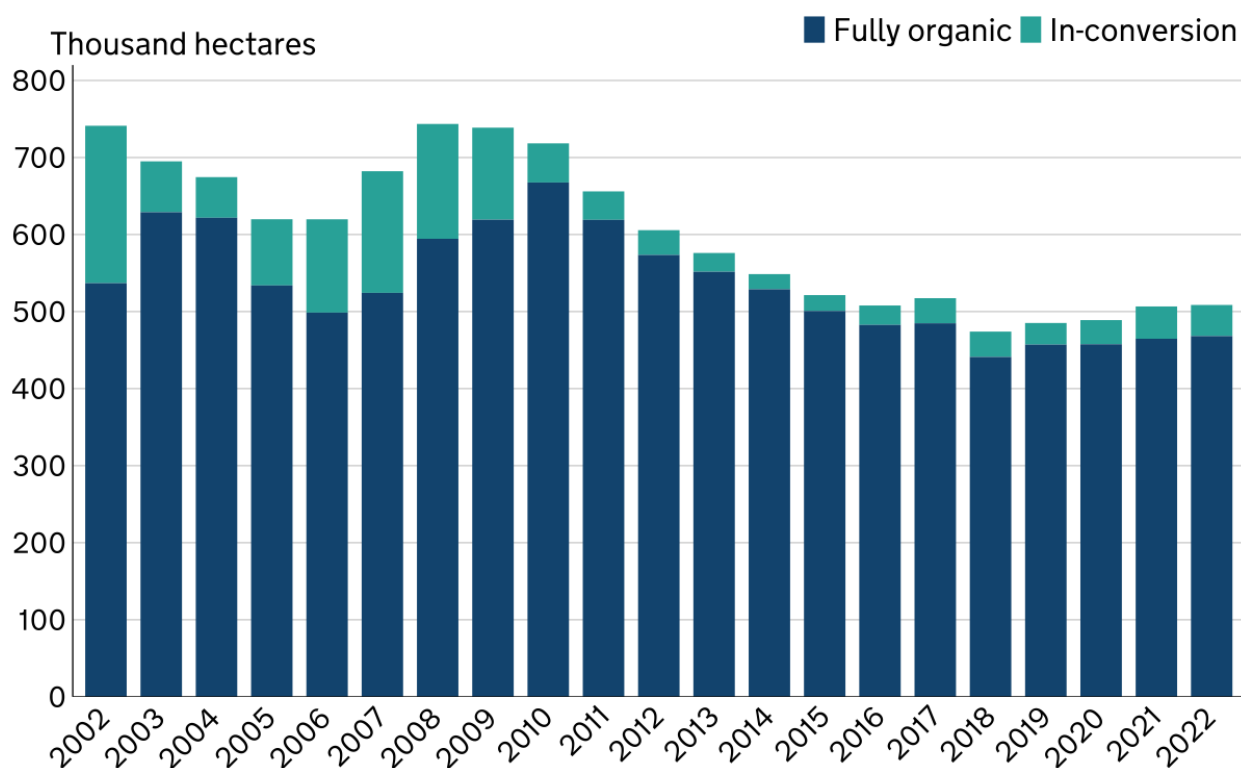
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## 2. Land area

### 2.1 Land farmed organically

In 2022, the UK had a total area of 509 thousand hectares of land farmed organically (i.e. the fully converted area and area under conversion), an increase of 0.4% compared to 2021. This increase was driven by an increase of 0.8% in the area of fully organic land, which was offset by a decrease of 3.9% in the area of in-conversion land. Since 2008, when the area of land farmed organically peaked, the organically farmed area has decreased by 31.6%. The organically farmed area represents 3.0% of the total farmed area on agricultural holdings in the UK.

**Figure 2.1: Land area farmed organically in the UK**



**Figure 2.1 description:**

Figure 2.1 shows the area of land farmed in the UK that is either fully organic or in-conversion to fully organic, in thousand hectares from 0 to 800, between 2002 and 2022. The area of organic land farmed in the UK peaked in 2008 at 744 thousand hectares, it then decreased to a low in 2018 of 474 thousand hectares. Since then the total area of organically farmed land has increased year on year to 2022. 2010 had the highest area of fully organic land (668 thousand hectares) and 2002 had the greatest area in-conversion (204 thousand hectares).

[Download the data for this chart \(ODS, 151KB\)](#)

**Table 2.1: Land area farmed organically in the UK, 2019 to 2022 (thousand hectares)**

Type	2019	2020	2021	2022	Percentage change 2022/2021
In-conversion	28.1	31.3	42.0	40.3	-3.9%
Fully organic	457.1	457.6	464.7	468.3	0.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>485.2</b>	<b>489.0</b>	<b>506.6</b>	<b>508.6</b>	<b>0.4%</b>

**Table 2.2: Land area farmed organically in England, 2019 to 2022 (thousand hectares)**

Type	2019	2020	2021	2022	Percentage change 2022/2021
In-conversion	19.0	20.4	25.8	19.6	-23.9%
Fully organic	281.6	281.3	285.4	292.7	2.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>300.6</b>	<b>301.8</b>	<b>311.2</b>	<b>312.4</b>	<b>0.4%</b>

**Table 2.3 Area farmed organically by country and English region, 2022 (thousand hectares)**

Region	Area in-conversion	Fully organic area	Total organic area	Total agricultural area at June	Total organic area as % of June area
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>40.3</b>	<b>468.3</b>	<b>508.6</b>	<b>16,912</b>	<b>3.0%</b>
Wales	2.1	75.5	77.6	1,766	4.4%
Scotland	18.4	92.5	110.9	5,013	2.2%
Northern Ireland	0.2	7.5	7.7	1,036	0.7%
<b>England</b>	<b>19.6</b>	<b>292.7</b>	<b>312.4</b>	<b>9,098</b>	<b>3.4%</b>
North East	1.7	23.2	24.9	622	4.0%
North West	0.8	11.1	11.9	963	1.2%
Yorkshire & The Humber	0.5	10.5	10.9	1,121	1.0%
East Midlands	2.7	11.5	14.2	1,177	1.2%
West Midlands	2.1	33.3	35.4	931	3.8%
Eastern	1.4	17.5	18.9	1,394	1.4%
South East (inc. London)	2.5	40.2	42.7	1,114	3.8%
South West	8.0	145.4	153.4	1,777	8.6%

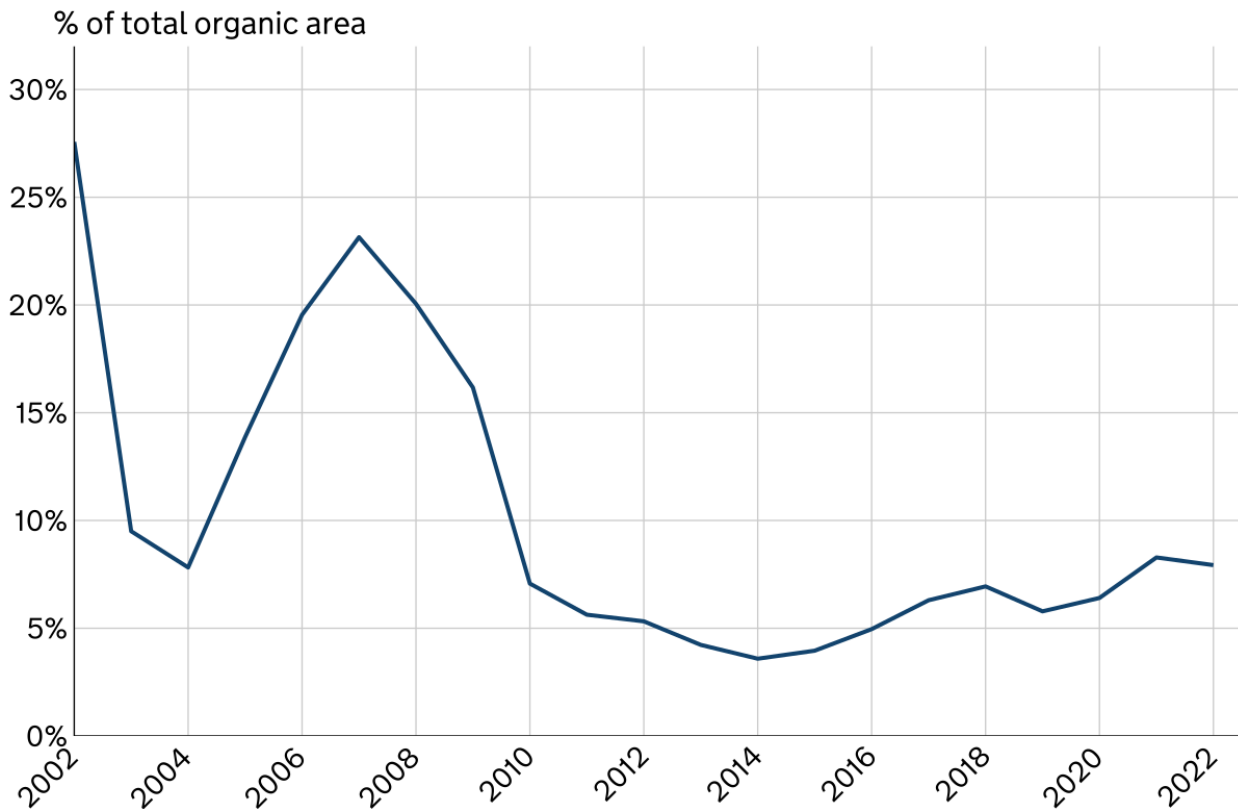
Notes:

1. Source: [June Survey of Agriculture](#) as at 1 June 2022. Excludes common land.

## 2.2 Land in-conversion

Organic production comes from fully converted land. Before an area can be considered as fully organic, it must undergo a conversion process. The area in-conversion expressed as a percentage of the total organic area can give an indication of the potential growth in the organic sector. With the exception of 2019, the area of land in-conversion had seen a modest increase every year since 2014. However, in 2022 there has been an area decrease of 3.9% compared to 2021.

**Figure 2.2: Land in-conversion as a proportion of the total area farmed organically in the UK**



**Figure 2.2 description:**

Figure 2.2 shows the area of land in-conversion as a proportion of total land area farmed organically in the UK, with percentage of in-conversion land ranging from 0% to 30%, between 2002 and 2022. The percentage of land in-conversion in the UK peaked in 2002 at 27.6%, it then fluctuated year on year, with the lowest area of in-conversion land occurring in 2014 at 3.6%. Since then the area of in-conversion land has risen steadily year on year, with the exception of 2019 and 2022, which saw a modest decreases.

[Download the data for this chart \(ODS, 151KB\)](#)

## 3. Land use

### 3.1 Organic land use

Permanent pasture accounts for the biggest share of the organic area (61.8%) followed by temporary pasture (18.9%) and cereals (9.7%). The full breakdown of organic land use in the UK is shown in figure 3.1 and tables 3.1 and 3.2.

**Figure 3.1: Organic land use in the UK, 2022**

Use	Area (thousand hectares)
Permanent pasture (inc. rough grazing)	314.1
Temporary pasture	96.1
Cereals	49.5
Woodland	17.3
Other arable crops	10.7
Vegetables (inc. potatoes)	10.3
Unutilised and unknown	7.7
Fruit & nuts	2.3
Herbaceous & ornamentals	0.7

Notes:

1. Includes fully organic land and land in-conversion.
2. On gov.uk this table is displayed as a barchart.

[Download the data for this chart \(ODS, 151KB\)](#)

**Table 3.1: Fully organic and in-conversion land use UK, 2019 to 2022 (thousand hectares)**

Use	2019	2020	2021	2022	Percentage change 2022/2021
Cereals	39.7	42.7	46.6	49.5	6.2%
Other arable crops	8.9	9.2	10.8	10.7	-1.0%
Fruit & nuts	2.0	2.0	2.4	2.3	-4.7%
Vegetables (inc. potatoes)	9.4	9.5	9.8	10.3	4.8%
Herbaceous & ornamentals	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.7	4.0%
Temporary pasture	95.1	97.1	99.7	96.1	-3.6%
Permanent pasture (inc. rough grazing)	305.4	304.5	310.8	314.1	1.1%
Woodland	15.2	16.0	17.4	17.3	-0.7%
Unutilised land	4.5	2.8	3.3	3.2	-1.5%
Unknown	4.5	4.9	5.2	4.4	-14.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>485.2</b>	<b>489.0</b>	<b>506.6</b>	<b>508.6</b>	<b>0.4%</b>

Notes:

1. Includes fully organic and in-conversion areas.
2. Some land areas are provided without a crop category or land use description, therefore these are classified as unknown.
3. In 2019 data issues were identified with the detailed split of crops provided for 2018. The overall totals for 2018 remain unaffected but the breakdowns are subject to a degree of error and therefore should be treated with caution.

**Table 3.2: Detailed fully organic and in-conversion land use UK, 2022 (thousand hectares)**

Use	Area in-conversion	Fully organic area	Total organic area	Total agricultural area at June	Total organic area as % of June area
<b>Cereals</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>46.3</b>	<b>49.5</b>	<b>3,156</b>	<b>1.6%</b>
Wheat	1.5	15.6	17.1	1,809	0.9%
Barley	1.1	7.0	8.0	1,104	0.7%
Oats	0.4	17.5	17.9	174	10.3%
Other cereals	0.2	6.2	6.4	69	9.3%
<b>Other arable crops</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>1,115</b>	<b>1.0%</b>
Sugar beet	0.0	0.3	0.3	91	0.3%
Fodder, forage & silage	1.2	8.2	9.4	90	10.4%
Maize, oilseeds & protein crops	0.1	1.0	1.0	934	0.1%
Fruit & nuts	0.3	2.0	2.3	32	7.0%
Vegetables	0.6	8.0	8.6	107	8.1%
Potatoes	0.0	1.7	1.7	127	1.4%
Herbaceous & ornamentals	0.0	0.6	0.7	10	6.5%
Temporary pasture	7.0	89.1	96.1	1,225	7.8%
Permanent pasture	12.6	233.5	246.1	6,030	4.1%
Rough grazing	13.9	54.1	68.0	3,567	1.9%
Woodland	1.2	16.1	17.3	931	1.9%
Unutilised land	0.2	3.0	3.2	X	X
Unknown	0.0	4.3	4.4	X	X
<b>Total</b>	<b>40.3</b>	<b>468.3</b>	<b>508.6</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>

Notes:

1. Source: [June Survey of Agriculture](#) as at 1 June 2022. Excludes common land.
2. Some land areas are provided without a crop category or land use description, therefore these are classified as unknown.
3. X - no comparable June survey data is available.



**Table 3.3: Fully organic and in-conversion land use England, 2019 to 2022  
(thousand hectares)**

Use	2019	2020	2021	2022	Percentage change 2022/2021
Cereals	33.8	36.4	39.9	42.7	7.0%
Other arable crops	7.0	7.3	8.7	8.6	-0.2%
Fruit & nuts	1.9	1.9	2.3	2.2	-5.2%
Vegetables (inc. potatoes)	7.8	7.7	7.9	8.4	5.5%
Herbaceous & ornamentals	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.6	2.1%
Temporary pasture	76.8	77.6	79.4	77.4	-2.6%
Permanent pasture (inc. rough grazing)	154.9	153.3	154.5	155.5	0.7%
Woodland	11.2	11.4	11.8	11.5	-2.7%
Unutilised land	2.9	1.4	1.4	1.4	0.9%
Unknown	4.1	4.4	4.7	4.1	-13.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>300.6</b>	<b>301.8</b>	<b>311.2</b>	<b>312.4</b>	<b>0.4%</b>

Notes:

1. Includes fully organic and in-conversion areas.
2. Some land areas are provided without a crop category or land use description, therefore these are classified as unknown.
3. In 2019 data issues were identified with the detailed split of crops provided for 2018. The overall totals for 2018 remain unaffected but the breakdowns are subject to a degree of error and therefore should be treated with caution.

**Table 3.4: Detailed fully organic and in-conversion land use England, 2022  
(thousand hectares)**

Use	Area in-conversion	Fully organic area	Total organic area	Total agricultural area at June	Total organic area as % of June area
<b>Cereals</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>40.0</b>	<b>42.7</b>	<b>2,649</b>	<b>1.6%</b>
Wheat	1.5	14.8	16.3	1,668	1.0%
Barley	0.8	5.0	5.8	782	0.7%
Oats	0.3	14.3	14.5	140	10.4%
Other cereals	0.2	5.9	6.0	59	10.3%
<b>Other arable crops</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>998</b>	<b>0.9%</b>
Sugar beet	0.0	0.3	0.3	91	0.3%
Fodder, forage & silage	1.0	6.4	7.4	54	13.8%
Maize, oilseeds & protein crops	0.1	0.8	0.9	853	0.1%
Fruit & nuts	0.3	1.9	2.2	30	7.4%
Vegetables	0.6	6.5	7.1	85	8.4%
Potatoes	0.0	1.3	1.3	93	1.4%
Herbaceous & ornamentals	0.0	0.6	0.6	9	6.7%
Temporary pasture	6.4	71.0	77.4	786	9.9%
Permanent pasture	7.5	136.0	143.5	3,213	4.5%
Rough grazing	0.3	11.7	12.0	430	2.8%
Woodland	0.4	11.0	11.5	392	2.9%
Unutilised land	0.1	1.3	1.4	X	X
Unknown	0.1	3.9	4.1	X	X
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.6</b>	<b>292.7</b>	<b>312.4</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>

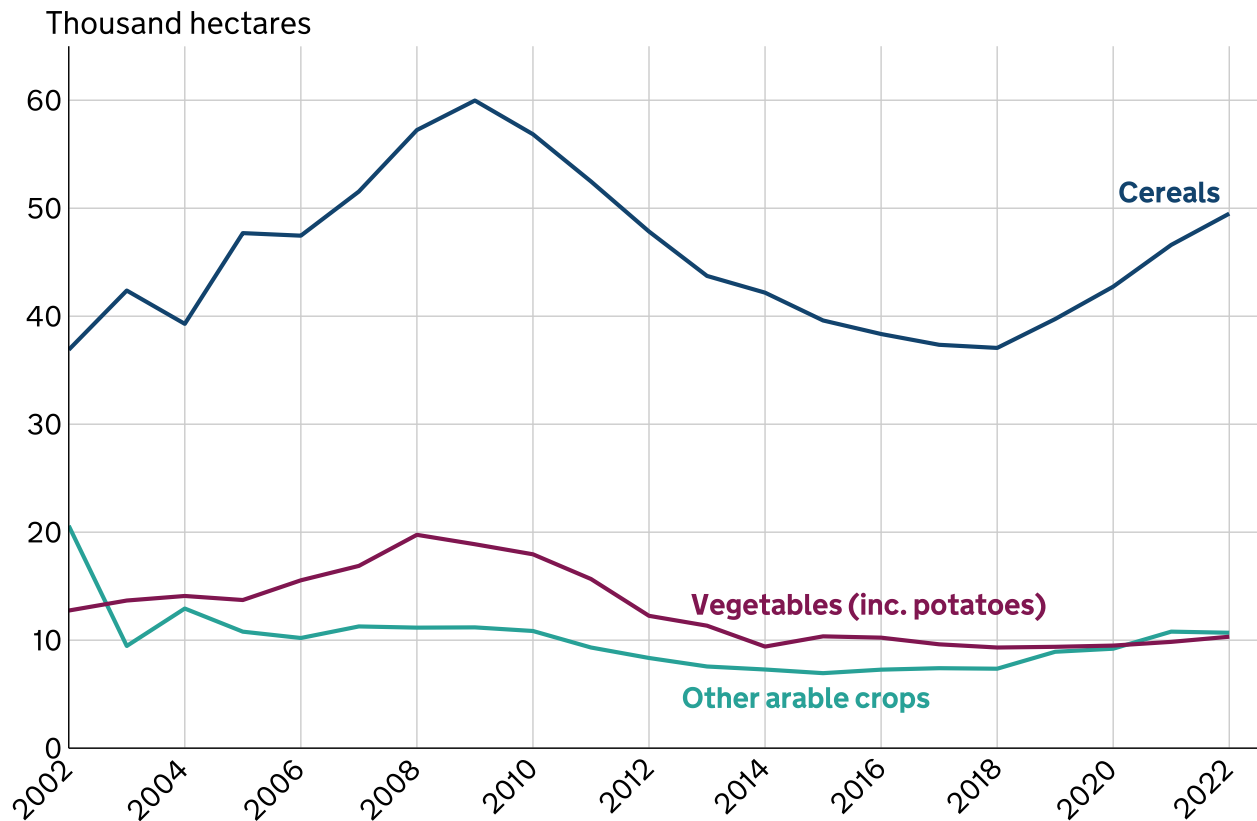
Notes:

1. Source: [June Survey of Agriculture](#) as at 1 June 2022. Excludes common land.
2. Some land areas are provided without a crop category or land use description, therefore these are classified as unknown.
3. X - no comparable June survey data is available.

### 3.2 Land use for crops

The three main crop types grown organically are cereals, vegetables including potatoes, and other arable crops. In the UK the area of organically grown cereal crops increased by 6.2% to 49 thousand hectares in 2022. Other arable crops decreased by 1.0% to 11 thousand hectares. The area of organically grown vegetables (including potatoes) increased by 4.8% to 10 thousand hectares compared to 2021.

**Figure 3.2: Organic crops in the UK**



Notes:

1. Includes fully organic land and land in-conversion.
2. Vegetables includes potatoes.

**Figure 3.2 description:**

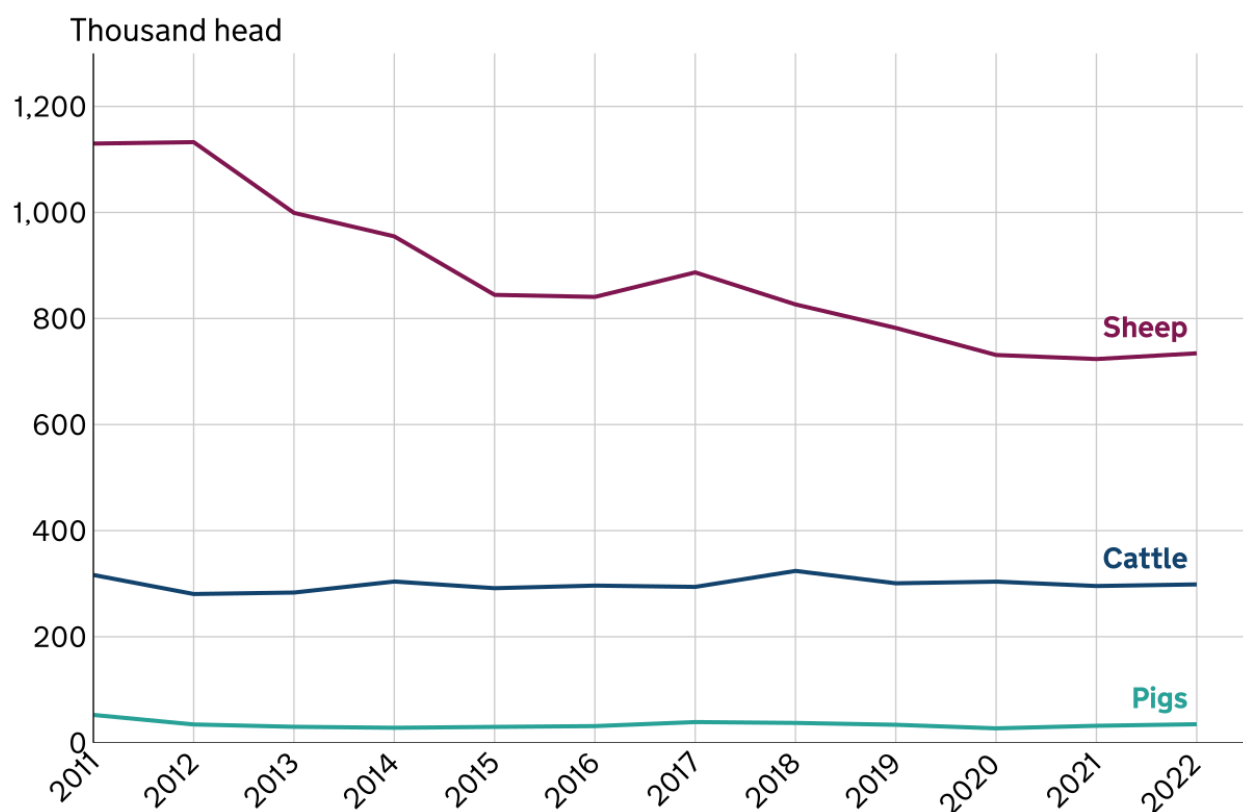
Figure 3.2 shows the area of land used to organically farm cereals, vegetables and other organic crops, in thousand hectares from 0 to 60, between 2002 to 2022. Cereals have the highest area of organic farming, which peaked in 2009 at 60.0 thousand hectares and then declined steadily until 2018, and has since increased year on year. Vegetables and other arable crops have had similar areas of organic farming throughout the time series. Vegetables peaked in 2008 at 19.8 thousand hectares and other arable crops peaked at 2002 with 20.6 thousand hectares. 2021 was the first time the area of organically farmed vegetables dipped below that of other arable crops since 2002.

[Download the data for this chart \(ODS, 151KB\)](#)

## 4. Livestock

In the UK organic red meat sector in 2022, sheep reared organically increased by 1.5% to 734 thousand animals and accounted for 2.2% of the total UK flock. Pigs reared organically increased by 9.2% to 35 thousand animals and accounted for 0.7% of the total UK pig herd. Organically reared cattle numbers increased by 1.0% to 299 thousand animals and accounted for 3.1% of the total UK herd.

**Figure 4.1: Organic livestock in the UK**



Notes:

1. Data relates to fully organic only.

**Figure 4.1 description:**

Figure 4.1 shows the number of livestock reared organically, from 0 to 1,200 thousand head, from 2011 to 2022. Sheep have consistently had the highest numbers of organically reared animals, peaking in 2012 at 1,133 thousand head. Since this peak, sheep numbers have fluctuated across the years, reaching an all time low in 2021. Both cattle and pig numbers have remained stable throughout the time series, with cattle ranging from 281 to 324 thousand head and pigs from 27 to 53 thousand head.

[Download the data for this chart \(ODS, 151KB\)](#)

**Table 4.1: Number of livestock farmed organically in the UK, 2019 to 2022 (thousand head)**

Livestock	2019	2020	2021	2022	Percentage change 2022/2021
Cattle	300.8	303.9	295.6	298.6	1.0%
Sheep	782.2	731.2	723.6	734.4	1.5%
Pigs	34.0	27.2	32.1	35.0	9.2%
Poultry	3,464.1	3,786.3	4,020.8	3,664.9	-8.9%
Other livestock	6.0	6.5	5.7	7.9	40.3%

Notes:

1. Data relates to fully organic only.
2. "Other livestock" includes goats, farmed deer, horses, camelids and any livestock not recorded elsewhere.

**Table 4.2: Detailed organic livestock numbers in the UK, 2022, (thousand head)**

Item	Total Organic livestock	Total livestock at June	Organic livestock as % of June livestock
<b>Cattle</b>	<b>298.6</b>	<b>9,632</b>	<b>3.1%</b>
For slaughter	122.3	3,801	3.2%
Dairy cows	57.4	3,234	1.8%
Other cattle	119.0	2,596	4.6%
<b>Sheep</b>	<b>734.4</b>	<b>33,066</b>	<b>2.2%</b>
Breeding females	385.1	15,779	2.4%
Other sheep	349.4	17,287	2.0%
<b>Pigs</b>	<b>35.0</b>	<b>5,192</b>	<b>0.7%</b>
Fattening pigs	22.5	4,766	0.5%
Breeding sows	3.4	343	1.0%
Other pigs	9.1	83	11.0%
<b>Poultry</b>	<b>3,664.9</b>	<b>188,187</b>	<b>1.9%</b>
Broilers	1,576.6	126,052	1.3%
Laying hens	2,004.8	40,246	5.0%
Other poultry	83.5	21,889	0.4%
<b>Other livestock</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Farmed deer	4.9	42	11.6%
Goats	1.2	111	1.1%
Horses	1.5	218	0.7%
Others	0.3	X	X

## Notes:

1. Data relates to fully organic only.
2. Source: [June survey of agriculture](#) as at 1 June 2022 and the Cattle Tracing system for cattle populations.
3. "Others" include camelids and any livestock not recorded elsewhere.
4. X - no comparable June survey data is available.

**Table 4.3: Number of livestock farmed organically in England, 2019 to 2022 (thousand head)**

Livestock	2019	2020	2021	2022	Percentage change 2022/2021
Cattle	220.8	220.4	213.8	217.1	1.6%
Sheep	350.6	312.0	299.8	311.8	4.0%
Pigs	30.6	23.9	23.7	26.5	11.7%
Poultry	2,071.6	2,411.2	2,550.3	2,265.5	-11.2%
Other livestock	5.0	5.0	4.5	5.2	15.6%

Notes:

1. Data relates to fully organic only.
2. "Other livestock" includes goats, farmed deer, horses, camelids and any livestock not recorded elsewhere.

**Table 4.4: Detailed organic livestock numbers in England, 2022 (thousand head)**

Item	Total Organic livestock	Total livestock at June	Organic livestock as % of June livestock
<b>Cattle</b>	<b>217.1</b>	<b>5,107</b>	<b>4.3%</b>
For slaughter	84.3	1,854	4.5%
Dairy cows	44.8	1,877	2.4%
Other cattle	88.1	1,376	6.4%
<b>Sheep</b>	<b>311.8</b>	<b>14,922</b>	<b>2.1%</b>
Breeding females	172.9	7,072	2.4%
Other sheep	138.9	7,850	1.8%
<b>Pigs</b>	<b>26.5</b>	<b>4,109</b>	<b>0.6%</b>
Fattening pigs	15.8	3,781	0.4%
Breeding sows	2.9	261	1.1%
Other pigs	7.7	68	11.4%
<b>Poultry</b>	<b>2,265.5</b>	<b>138,828</b>	<b>1.6%</b>
Broilers	794.8	97,305	0.8%
Laying hens	1,421.7	24,051	5.9%
Other poultry	49.0	17,472	0.3%
<b>Other livestock</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Farmed deer	2.9	24	12.0%
Goats	1.1	88	1.3%
Horses	1.1	138	0.8%
Others	0.1	X	X

## Notes:

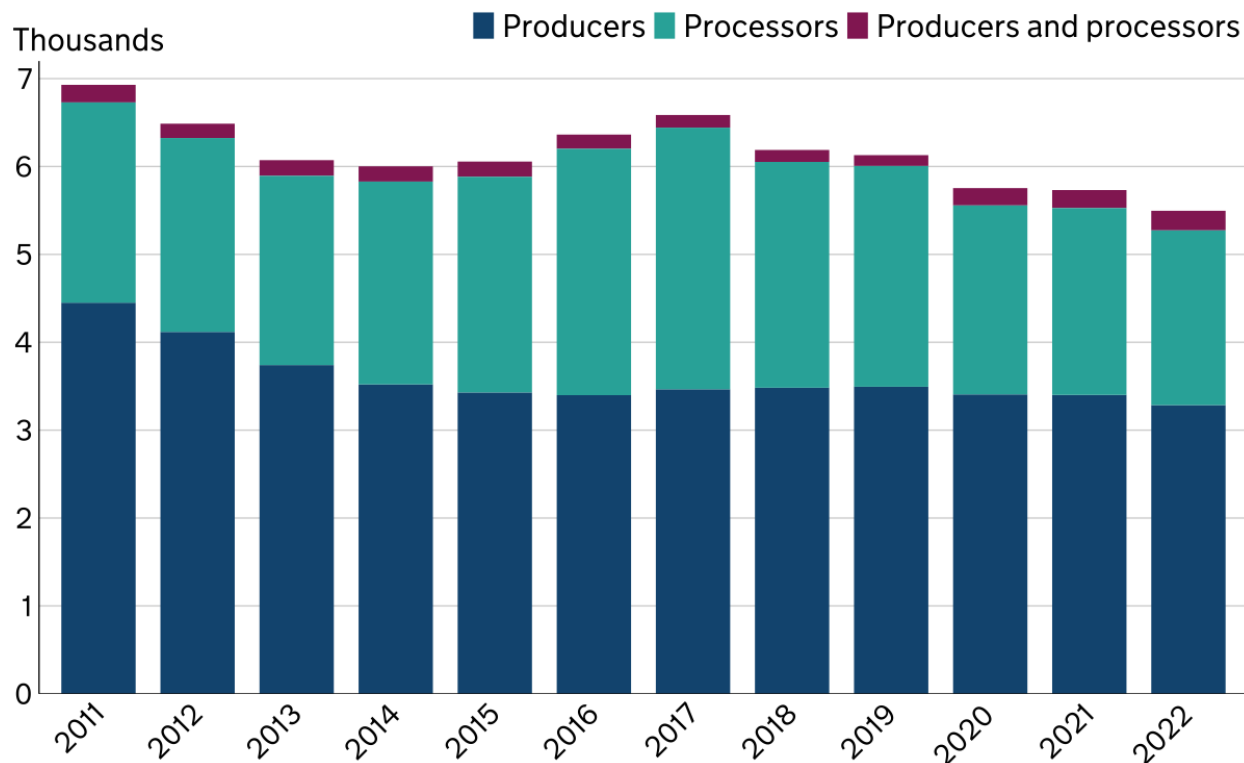
1. Data relates to fully organic only.
2. Source: [June survey of agriculture](#) as at 1 June 2022 and the Cattle Tracing system for cattle populations.
3. "Others" include camelids and any livestock not recorded elsewhere.
4. X - no comparable June survey data is available.



## 5. Organic producers and processors

In 2022, there were 5.5 thousand producers and processors registered with the organic certification bodies in the UK, a decrease of 4.1% from 2021.

**Figure 5.1: Organic producers and processors in the UK**



Notes:

1. In 2018 work was carried out to clarify how operators were recorded. This resulted in a number of operators that were previously recorded as processors being recorded in the correct categories of wholesalers/traders/retailers etc. We were unable to backdate these changes so earlier data are not directly comparable.
2. In 2020 work was carried out by some control bodies to group existing operators together, so they effectively became 'one operator' whilst previously they may have been separate operators with separate licenses.
3. Amendments have been made to 2018 and 2019 data following revisions to the number of organic producers and organic producer/processors.

### Figure 5.1 description:

Figure 5.1 shows the number of organic producers and processors, from 0 to 7 thousand, in the UK between 2011 and 2022. The total number of organic producers and processors was highest in 2011 at 6.9 thousand. More recently, the number of

organic producers and processors has decreased year on year since 2017, reaching an all time low in 2022 of 5.5 thousand. The number of organic producers was highest in 2011 at 4.4 thousand and the number of processors peaked in 2017 at 3.0 thousand.

[Download the data for this chart \(ODS, 151KB\)](#)

**Table 5.1: Number of organic producers and processors by country and English region, 2022**

Region	Number of producers only	Number of producers and processors	Number of processors only	Total organic producers and processors
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>3,285</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>1,988</b>	<b>5,496</b>
Wales	552	29	82	663
Scotland	379	11	138	528
Northern Ireland	152	7	43	202
<b>England</b>	<b>2,202</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>1,725</b>	<b>4,103</b>
North East	73	5	34	112
North West	107	11	115	233
Yorkshire & The Humber	89	6	103	198
East Midlands	151	8	139	298
West Midlands	297	19	133	449
Eastern	169	10	228	407
South East (inc. London)	336	41	665	1,042
South West	980	76	308	1,364

Notes:

1. In 2018 work was carried out to clarify how operators were recorded. This resulted in a number of operators that were previously recorded as processors being recorded in the correct categories of wholesalers/traders/retailers etc. We were unable to backdate these changes so earlier data are not directly comparable.
2. In 2020 work was carried out by some control bodies to group existing operators together, so they effectively became 'one operator' whilst previously they may have been separate operators with separate licenses.
3. Amendments have been made to 2018 and 2019 data following revisions to the number of organic producers and organic producer/processors.

**Table 5.2: Number of organic producers and processors by country and English region, 2019 to 2022**

Region	2019	2020	2021	2022	Percentage change 2022/2021
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>6,129</b>	<b>5,754</b>	<b>5,732</b>	<b>5,496</b>	<b>-4.1%</b>
Wales	737	701	693	663	-4.3%
Scotland	559	541	529	528	-0.2%
Northern Ireland	206	205	214	202	-5.6%
<b>England</b>	<b>4,627</b>	<b>4,307</b>	<b>4,296</b>	<b>4,103</b>	<b>-4.5%</b>
North East	116	117	118	112	-5.1%
North West	274	241	244	233	-4.5%
Yorkshire & The Humber	246	227	216	198	-8.3%
East Midlands	353	328	308	298	-3.2%
West Midlands	460	468	454	449	-1.1%
Eastern	457	419	412	407	-1.2%
South East (inc. London)	1,217	1,092	1,143	1,042	-8.8%
South West	1,504	1,415	1,401	1,364	-2.6%

Notes:

1. In 2018 work was carried out to clarify how operators were recorded. This resulted in a number of operators that were previously recorded as processors being recorded in the correct categories of wholesalers/traders/retailers etc. We were unable to backdate these changes so earlier data are not directly comparable.
2. In 2020 work was carried out by some control bodies to group existing operators together, so they effectively became 'one operator' whilst previously they may have been separate operators with separate licenses.
3. Amendments have been made to 2018 and 2019 data following revisions to the number of organic producers and organic producer/processors.

**Table 5.3 Number of organic crop and livestock producers and processors by country and English region, 2022**

Region	Crop producers	Crop producers and processors	Livestock producers	Livestock producers and processors
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>3,073</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>2,197</b>	<b>137</b>
Wales	532	28	451	21
Scotland	350	11	269	9
Northern Ireland	121	7	111	4
<b>England</b>	<b>2,070</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>1,366</b>	<b>103</b>
North East	71	5	50	4
North West	104	11	74	9
Yorkshire & The Humber	84	6	63	3
East Midlands	137	8	100	5
West Midlands	288	19	172	13
Eastern	142	8	67	4
South East (inc. London)	308	39	161	18
South West	936	72	679	47

Notes:

1. Mixed organic holdings will be recorded under both the crop and livestock headings above. The numbers shown cannot be added together to arrive at total producers / processors by region as this will lead to double counting.
2. In 2018 work was carried out to clarify how operators were recorded. This resulted in a number of operators that were previously recorded as processors being recorded in the correct categories of wholesalers/traders/retailers etc. We were unable to backdate these changes so earlier data are not directly comparable.
3. In 2020 work was carried out by some control bodies to group existing operators together, so they effectively became 'one operator' whilst previously they may have been separate operators with separate licenses.
4. Amendments have been made to 2018 and 2019 data following revisions to the number of organic producers and organic producer/processors.

## 6. About this release

### Contact details

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### National statistics status

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.

The continued designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in 2014 following a [full assessment](#) by the UK Statistics Authority 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:

Telephone: 0845 601 3034  
Email: [info@statistics.gov.uk](mailto:info@statistics.gov.uk)

You can find National Statistics on the [Gov.uk](#) website.

### Users and uses of these statistics

The information is heavily used by a broad range of people and organisations within the UK and also international organisations. The data is important to the government and the organic certification bodies in the UK, who provide the information used to compile the statistics, to formulate policies and provide support to organic farming. Other users include farming organisations, research bodies, and there is interest also from the general public

## Feedback

We welcome feedback and any thoughts to improve the publication further, please send any feedback to [organic-stats@defra.gov.uk](mailto:organic-stats@defra.gov.uk).

## 7. Methodology

### Organic statistics methodology

This statistical release contains summary results of data compiled by the UK Organic Certification Bodies. Each year, certifier bodies visit their registered farms to carry out annual inspections. During these inspections, certifiers record the crop areas and numbers of livestock present on the organic holding on that day. The data collected during these inspections are sent to Defra each January.

The information collated by Defra is checked thoroughly before the figures are presented in this statistical release. Data are checked against historical data for comparability and any unusual values are queried with the relevant certification bodies. Due to the nature of the inspections, the data are collected at varying times through the year. Therefore, the data presented here do not give an exact snapshot of organic farming at any specific time of year, so they should be treated with a degree of caution.

Defra is very grateful to the inspectors and members in the UK's Organic Certification Bodies for the information collected in the annual returns each year.

### Note

In this statistical release, unless specified otherwise, all figures include both in-conversion and fully organic holdings. Also, totals in this release are based on unrounded figures so may not agree with the sum of their components in the tables.

### Organics overview

Only food that has been produced in accordance with organic standards by farmers/producers registered with an approved UK organic control body may be legally sold as 'organic' within the UK. The inputs and practices used in organic farming are strictly regulated in accordance with UK Regulations.

### Key elements of organic farming systems

The main components of an organic farming system are the avoidance of artificial fertilisers and pesticides, and the use of crop rotations and other forms of husbandry to maintain soil fertility and control weeds, pests and diseases. Livestock also form an integral part of the majority of organic farms, although there are some successful stockless systems. Organic standards do not allow intensively housed stock or systems where a large amount of total feed has to be bought in. Pigs and poultry must be managed with extensive outdoor access under an organic system.

## Conversion

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.

## Other relevant data sources

Data on agricultural crop areas and livestock numbers are collected through the annual June Survey of Agriculture. Results from this survey can be accessed at [structure of the agricultural industry](#).