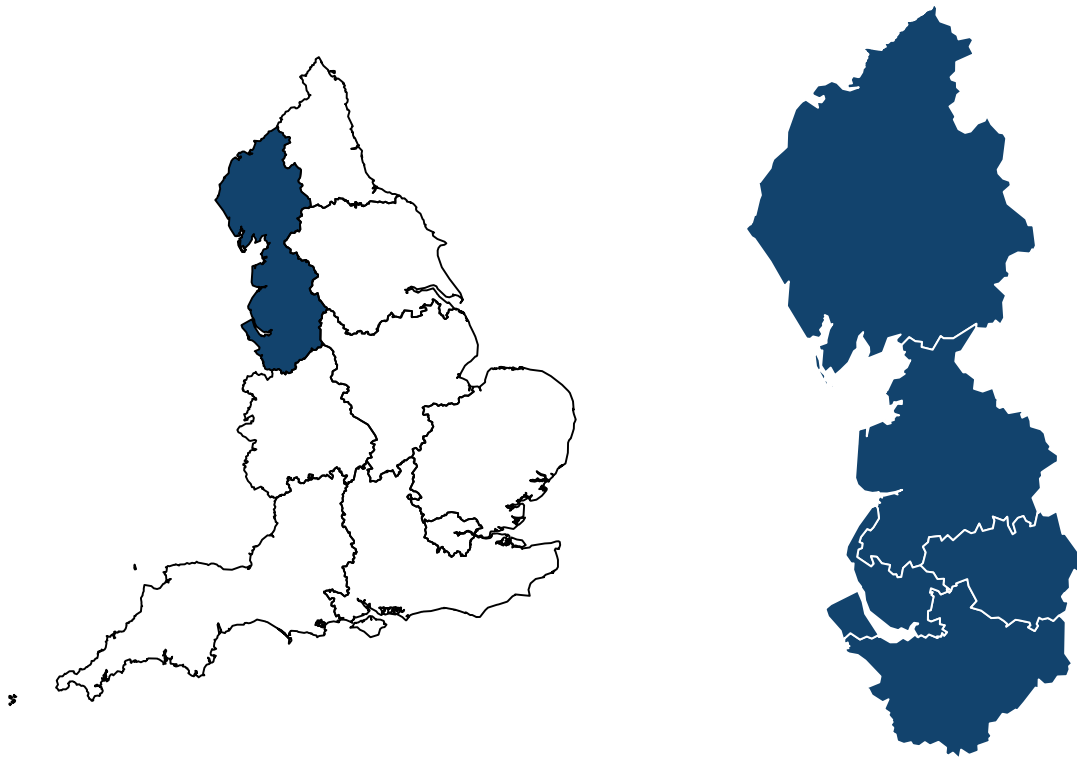


# Agricultural facts: North West region

25 April 2024

## Section 1: Key statistics

Figure 1.1: A map of England with the North West region highlighted



Source: [Office for National Statistics](#), [Open Geography Portal](#)

The North West region comprises Cumbria, Lancashire, Cheshire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside.

### Key statistics for the North West region

- Total Income from Farming<sup>1</sup> in 2022 was £383 million, an increase of 32% since 2021 (Source: [Total Income from Farming for the regions of England](#)).
- In 2022, the largest contributor to the gross output<sup>2</sup> value (£2.5 billion) was milk (£1.1 billion). This commodity accounted for 42% of the total output (Source: [Total Income from Farming for the regions of England](#)).
- The average farm size in 2023 was 76 hectares (Table 1.1). This is the third smallest average farm size of all the English regions and smaller than the English average of 88 hectares.
- The predominant farm types in 2023 were grazing livestock (55% of the region's holdings) and general cropping (20% of the region's holdings) farms (Figure 1.4).
- Across all farm types, average Farm Business Income<sup>3</sup> was £96,600 per farm in 2022/23, which was an increase of 20% from 2021/22 (Figure 1.6).

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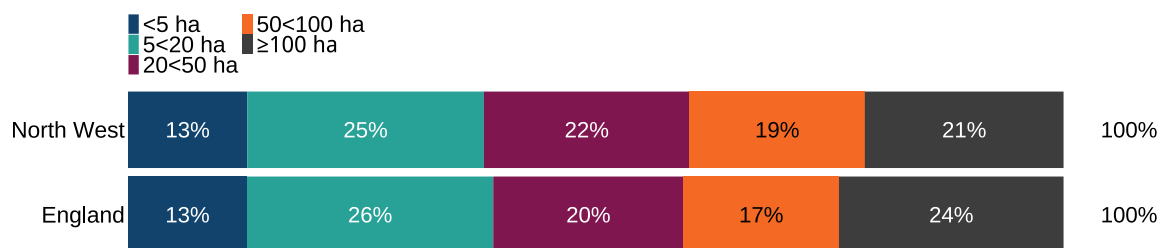
<sup>1</sup> Total Income from Farming (TIFF) is the net income to farms once costs have been accounted for, so is calculated as “outputs & subsidies” minus “inputs & costs”. [More information on aggregate agricultural accounts can be found on GOV.UK.](#)

<sup>2</sup> Total output is the gross value of commodities produced without considering production costs or any additional income received through subsidies. [More information on aggregate agricultural accounts can be found on GOV.UK.](#)

<sup>3</sup> In simple terms, Farm Business Income (FBI) is the output generated by the farm business minus total farm costs. [More information on Farm Business Income can be found on GOV.UK.](#)

Agricultural facts: North West region

**Figure 1.2: Distribution of farms by size in 2023 (percentage of farm holdings)**

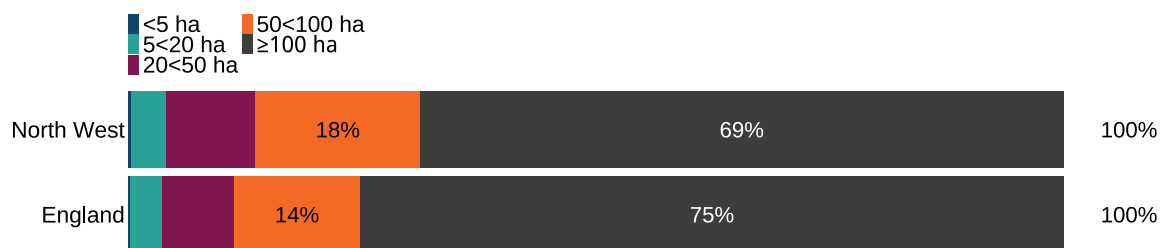


| Region     | <5 ha | 5<20 ha | 20<50 ha | 50<100 ha | ≥100 ha | Total |
|------------|-------|---------|----------|-----------|---------|-------|
| North West | 13%   | 25%     | 22%      | 19%       | 21%     | 100%  |
| England    | 13%   | 26%     | 20%      | 17%       | 24%     | 100%  |

Source: Defra, June Survey

Notes: “ha” means “hectares”. Proportions may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

**Figure 1.3: Distribution of farms by size in 2023 (percentage of farmed area)**



| Region     | <5 ha | 5<20 ha | 20<50 ha | 50<100 ha | ≥100 ha | Total |
|------------|-------|---------|----------|-----------|---------|-------|
| North West | 0.3%  | 3.7%    | 9.6%     | 18%       | 69%     | 100%  |
| England    | 0.3%  | 3.3%    | 7.7%     | 14%       | 75%     | 100%  |

Source: Defra, June Survey

Notes: “ha” means “hectares”. Proportions may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

## Agricultural facts: North West region

**Table 1.1: Land use in 2023**

| <b>Measure</b>                        | <b>North West</b> | <b>England</b> |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Total farmed area (thousand hectares) | 941               | 8,999          |
| Average farm size (hectares)          | 76                | 88             |
| Rented (% of farmed area)             | 36%               | 32%            |
| Arable (% of farmed area)             | 22%               | 53%            |
| Permanent pasture (% of farmed area)  | 61%               | 34%            |

Source: [Defra, June Survey](#)

Notes:

1. Arable includes arable crops, uncropped arable land and temporary grass.
2. Rented land must be rented for at least one year.

**Table 1.2: Crop areas in 2023 (thousand hectares)**

| <b>Crop</b>  | <b>North West</b> | <b>England</b> | <b>North West as % of England</b> |
|--------------|-------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Wheat        | 32                | 1,580          | 2.0%                              |
| Barley       | 37                | 799            | 4.7%                              |
| Maize        | 14                | 218            | 6.5%                              |
| Potatoes     | 5.3               | 82             | 6.4%                              |
| Oilseed rape | 5.5               | 342            | 1.6%                              |
| Field veg    | 3.3               | 77             | 4.3%                              |

Source: [Defra, June Survey](#)

Notes:

1. Crops displayed are those more predominant in the area.
2. Further data notes on crops can be found below the relevant tables in the [statistical dataset for England's regional breakdown of the structure of the agricultural industry at June](#).

## Agricultural facts: North West region

**Table 1.3: Livestock numbers in 2023 (thousand head)**

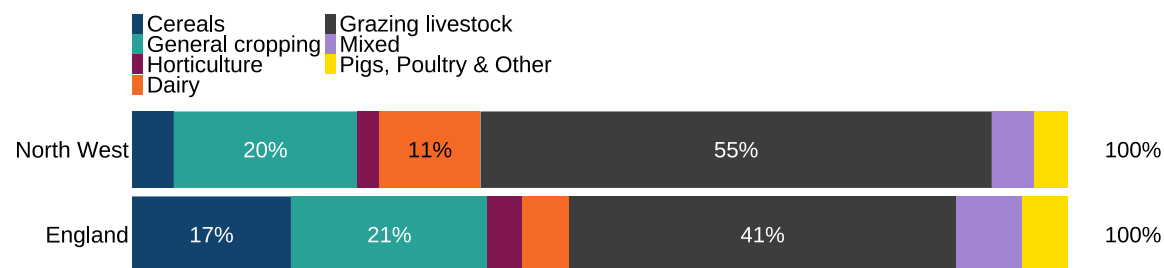
| Livestock      | North West | England | North West as % of England |
|----------------|------------|---------|----------------------------|
| <b>Cattle</b>  | 898        | 4,864   | 18%                        |
| Dairy herd     | 274        | 1,053   | 26%                        |
| Beef herd      | 73         | 602     | 12%                        |
| <b>Pigs</b>    | 85         | 3,633   | 2.3%                       |
| <b>Sheep</b>   | 2,971      | 14,451  | 21%                        |
| <b>Poultry</b> | 10,600     | 130,549 | 8.1%                       |
| Laying flock   | 2,738      | 23,007  | 12%                        |
| Table chickens | 7,102      | 91,096  | 7.8%                       |

Source: [Defra, June Survey](#)

Notes:

1. Livestock displayed are those more predominant in the area.
2. Cattle numbers relate to commercial holdings only.
3. Sheep numbers include lambs.

**Figure 1.4: Distribution of farms by type in 2023 (percentage of farm holdings)**



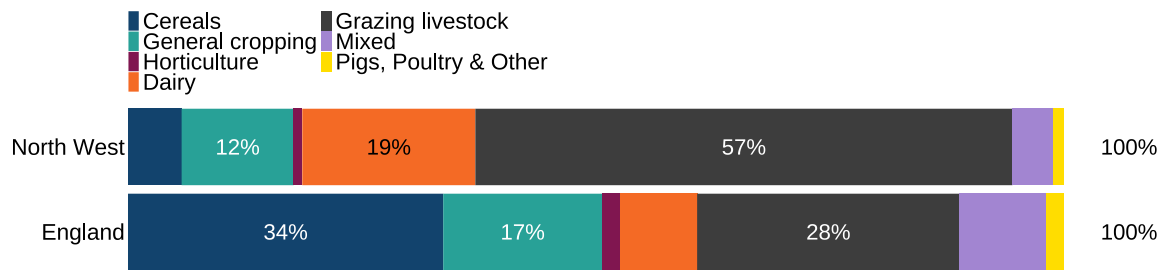
| Region     | Cereals | General cropping | Horticulture | Dairy | Grazing livestock | Mixed | Pigs, Poultry & Other | Total |
|------------|---------|------------------|--------------|-------|-------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|
| North West | 4.5%    | 20%              | 2.4%         | 11%   | 55%               | 4.5%  | 3.6%                  | 100%  |
| England    | 17%     | 21%              | 3.7%         | 5.0%  | 41%               | 7.0%  | 4.9%                  | 100%  |

Source: [Defra, June Survey](#)

Notes: Proportions may not sum to 100% due to rounding. "Other" refers to unclassified farm types.

## Agricultural facts: North West region

**Figure 1.5: Distribution of farms by type in 2023 (percentage of farmed area)**



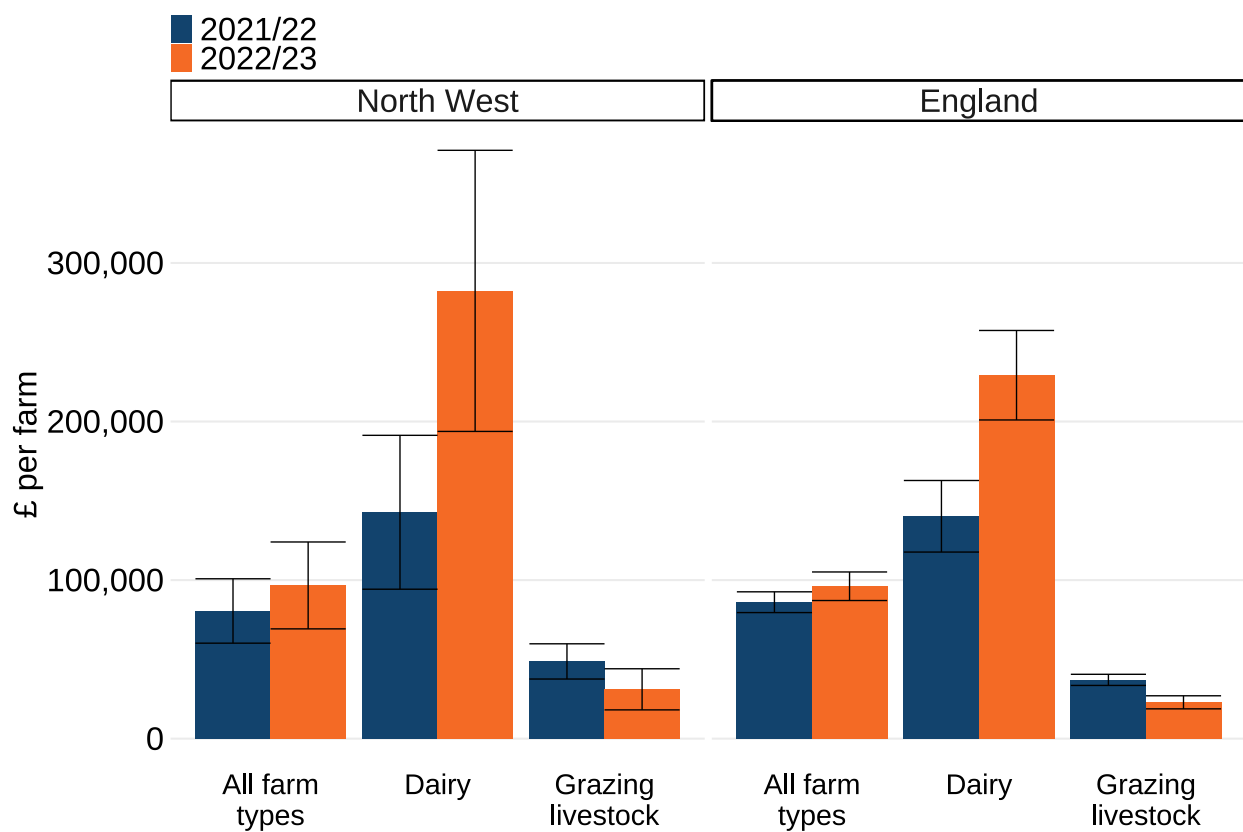
| Region     | Cereals | General cropping | Horticulture | Dairy | Grazing livestock | Mixed | Pigs, Poultry & Other | Total |
|------------|---------|------------------|--------------|-------|-------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|
| North West | 5.7%    | 12%              | 0.9%         | 19%   | 57%               | 4.3%  | 1.2%                  | 100%  |
| England    | 34%     | 17%              | 1.9%         | 8.3%  | 28%               | 9.2%  | 1.9%                  | 100%  |

Source: [Defra, June Survey](#)

Notes:

1. Proportions may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
2. "Other" refers to unclassified farm types.

**Figure 1.6: Average Farm Business Income in 2021/22 and 2022/23 (£ per farm)**



| Farm type                       | North West        | England           |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>All farm types (2022/23)</b> | 96,600 (±27,400)  | 96,100 (±9,000)   |
| Dairy (2022/23)                 | 282,400 (±88,600) | 229,200 (±28,200) |
| Grazing livestock (2022/23)     | 31,100 (±13,000)  | 22,900 (±4,100)   |
| <b>All farm types (2021/22)</b> | 80,500 (±20,300)  | 86,100 (±6,600)   |
| Dairy (2021/22)                 | 142,800 (±48,500) | 140,200 (±22,600) |
| Grazing livestock (2021/22)     | 48,700 (±11,100)  | 37,100 (±3,500)   |

Source: Defra, Farm Business Survey (regional breakdown not published elsewhere)

Notes:

1. The Farm Business Survey year runs from March to February.
2. Excludes farms with less than 25,000 euros of standard output.
3. Farm types displayed are those more predominant in the area.
4. Lines or values in parentheses indicate the 95% confidence intervals.
5. Values are rounded to the nearest £100

**Table 1.4: Labour force in 2023 (number of people)**

| <b>Measure</b>           | <b>North West</b> | <b>England</b> | <b>North West as % of England</b> |
|--------------------------|-------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Total labour             | 32,962            | 292,401        | 11%                               |
| Total labour per farm    | 2.7               | 2.9            | [z]                               |
| Regular workers          | 7,275             | 64,583         | 11%                               |
| Regular workers per farm | 0.6               | 0.6            | [z]                               |
| Casual workers           | 2,194             | 37,027         | 5.9%                              |
| Casual workers per farm  | 0.2               | 0.4            | [z]                               |
| % full time              | 53%               | 46%            | [z]                               |
| % part time              | 38%               | 37%            | [z]                               |
| % casual                 | 6.7%              | 13%            | [z]                               |

Source: [Defra, June Survey](#)

Notes:

1. “[z]” means “not applicable”
2. Total labour includes farmers, partners, directors, spouses, salaried managers, regular and casual workers.
3. Casual workers are those usually employed for less than 20 weeks of the year.
4. Number of workers per farm calculations are averages based on the total number of farm holdings in the region.
5. Part time workers are those employed for less than 39 hours a week.
6. Percentage calculations for full and part time workers do not include salaried managers.



Agricultural facts: North West region

## Section 2: Other geographical breakdowns

Further information and other geographical classifications related to the Defra June Survey can be found on our GOV.UK web page: [Structure of the agricultural industry in England and the UK at June](#).

England regional data for aggregate agricultural accounts can be found in the [Total Income from Farming for the regions of England](#) publication on GOV.UK.

English county data for farm accounts from the Farm Business Survey can be found on the [Farm Business Survey web page](#).

## Section 3: Data notes

Figures are for commercial holdings as at June 2023 (unless stated otherwise). Years may differ between measures since this publication uses data from a range of sources and is updated twice yearly to use the latest data available.

Commercial holdings are those with levels of farming activity above a specified threshold as detailed in this publication's [guidance note](#).

For further information about the June Survey of Agriculture and Horticulture please visit our [survey notes and guidance page](#) on GOV.UK.

## Section 4: Contact details

Responsible statistician: Thomas Pearson

Team: Farming Statistics - Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Email: [AUK\\_stats\\_team@defra.gov.uk](mailto:AUK_stats_team@defra.gov.uk)

For media queries between 9am and 5pm on weekdays:

Telephone: 0330 041 6560

Email: [newsdesk@defra.gov.uk](mailto:newsdesk@defra.gov.uk)