Animal & Plant Health Agency

Livestock Demographic Data Group: Pig population report

Livestock population density maps for Great Britain, using 2024 to 2025 data

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Data Year: 2024-2025 (eAML2 data downloaded between 16 May 2025 and 26 January 2026, and ScotEID data on 21 April 2026)

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APHA is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and also works on behalf of the Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Food Standards Agency to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.

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Who are these reports for?

These reports are suitable for use in animal health and welfare policy work that requires an estimate of the distribution and size of the pig population at Great Britain (GB) level. This type of population level information is often required to assess the economic or social impact of particular animal health policies, for contingency and resource planning, or to provide evidence to trading partners. There are important assumptions and uncertainties with these estimates, which the user must take into consideration; these can be found at Annex 1.

Who did this work?

The Livestock Demographic Data Groups (LDDG) were formed in January 2014. These are made up of Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) representatives from data systems, epidemiology, species expert and GIS work groups.

What do the data show about the population?

The maps in Figures 1 and 2 show the estimated pig density and pig holding density respectively, each with a small insert map to show how this compares with the estimated density of pig holdings or pigs respectively. A pig holding is defined here as any holding that pigs are moved to and/or from during the 2-year period of interest (2024 to 2025). This definition includes markets, abattoirs and other non-farm premises, although these are estimated to be a small proportion compared to the pig-keeping holdings (Pig Enhanced Demographics - summary for external report 2018 (defra.gov.uk)).

The pig population and pig holding density maps are similar to previous reports, although with a lower number of holdings. The data were cleaned using the same method as the previous report. The regions with highest densities of pigs (Figure 1) remain the same and are Yorkshire and Humber, the East of England and a small area of North-East Scotland. The majority of large commercial farms are known to exist in these regions. Figure 2 shows a high density of pig holdings in several areas, particularly in South-West England, and in small pockets of Wales, Yorkshire, the Midlands and Eastern and South-East England. Interestingly, as before, both Wales and South-East England have areas of relatively high pig holding density (Figure 2), while the pig density is low in these areas (Figure 1). This points to fewer pigs per holding and is, therefore, likely to reflect a greater proportion of small pig herds in these areas.

Tables 2 and 3 summarise the estimated number of pig holdings and pigs by country within GB, and the estimated number of holdings by size category for each country. The estimated total number of pigs in GB was 4,961,792 which was an increase from the estimate of 4,826,086 pigs from the previous report, which used movement data from 2022

to 2023. This increase in the estimated number of pigs was larger in Scotland than England, whereas Wales reported a reduction in the number of pigs.

The estimated total number of holdings has reduced in each report over the last 10 years, from 31,663 in the 2014 to 2015 report to 18,225 in this current report for 2024 to 2025. The reduction in the estimated number of pig holdings from 2022 to 2023 when compared to the current time period was more than 10% of the total number of holdings (Table 2). Comparisons between the estimated numbers of pig holdings in 2022 to 2023 data and 2024 to 2025 data indicated that there was a decrease in all size categories of farms in all 3 countries, except for a small increase in category 5 holdings. The largest proportionate decreases were in the 3 largest size category holdings (categories 3, 4 and 5) within Scotland and Wales. As the number of pig holdings was low in these areas, this only represented a small overall reduction in holdings.

Although the dataset collection and cleaning processes have not changed for this report, this year's (2024 to 2025) dataset covered a period of high prices for some feed products in 2024 and volatile cereal feed prices in 2025, due to global conflicts and subsequent shipping and trade issues. The subsequent effect on farm profitability may have led to the reduction in the number of pig farms. There was also anecdotal evidence that high productivity in 2025 exceeded the demand for pork causing an oversupply issue. Subsequently pigs were kept on farms for longer before being sent to slaughter. Additionally, the size of commercial finisher units was increasing to accommodate a greater number of pigs, which may have led to some units increasing in size category.

How accurate are the data?

Information for England and Wales on pig holding locations, and the data used to estimate pig density, was extracted from a dataset of pig movements reported to the electronic animal movements licencing scheme (eAML2) for England and Wales, from 2024 to 2025. Information on pig holdings and density in Scotland was accessed from the Scottish Electronic Identification (ScotEID) database from 2024 to 2025. These schemes record all movements reported by pig keepers in GB. The dataset is capable of identifying all holdings to or from which pigs have moved, regardless of the size or type of holding.

The datasets used may contain holdings that moved pigs at some point during the 24-month period but may have stopped keeping pigs by the end of that period. This issue is also relevant for other potential pig population data sources, including the Defra Agricultural Survey. Previous analyses determined a 24-month dataset derived from pig movement records as the most suitable, as this balanced the risk of missing smaller holdings with infrequent movements against the risk of including holdings which are no longer active.

These data sources are also considered most appropriate and most accurate for determining estimates of pig herd sizes, as this information is not centrally captured. Herd size (and hence pig density) was estimated using an algorithm, which assessed the

number of pigs moved from or to holdings during the 24-month period. The estimates made for a previous report (LDDG Pig Demographics and Indicators Report 2016) were validated using a subset of 2,007 accurately matched holdings with herd size information held in the 2014 Agricultural Survey. Inferring herd size from movement data may have introduced inaccuracies. The pig population estimates are presented as whole numbers derived directly from the underlying methodology; however, the apparent precision of these figures should not be interpreted as reflecting an equivalent level of accuracy. Values have not been rounded to avoid introducing additional distortion or obscuring differences between estimates. The supporting quality statement provides further detail on the limitations in the data (Annex 1).

What do the data not show?

There is uncertainty inherent in the information displayed. The limitations in the dataset are discussed in the supporting quality statement (Annex 1), and it is important that readers consider these in the context of their work and use of this dataset.

Previously, under-representation in the source data was identified where movements from some breeding herds had not been reported due to a misinterpretation of the regulations that underpin movement reporting (PRIMO; Pigs (Records, Identification and Movement) Order). Therefore, there is potential for the size of some commercial breeding herds to be underestimated, although efforts have been undertaken to correct misinterpretations where identified. The use of a 24-month time period of movements may also have caused error. Some holdings may no longer have pigs present, and hence the total number of holdings may be an overestimate. It is also important to note that the analysis estimates the average herd size during the time period, however the actual size may be larger or smaller at any specific time during the period. Population and holding density maps are classified using different scales and units. Due care must therefore be taken regarding their interpretation.

How were the maps produced?

Data providing summary information on pig movements for the 24-month period covering 2024 to 2025 held in eAML2 and ScotEID were merged and rationalised to remove duplicates. A series of data cleaning steps were used to consolidate information on the CPH and postcode of sending and receiving holdings, departure date and the number of pigs moved. Further details of the cleaning process are available on request.

The cleaned movement data were used to compile a list of all holdings referenced in the dataset. A summary of the number of movements and numbers of pigs moved on and off during the specified 24-month period was created. The number of pigs moved off a holding was used to estimate the number of pigs present on that departure holding. This was classed into 5 holding size categories, as indicated in the summary below (Table 1). If no outgoing

movements were recorded in the 24-month period for a holding, then the same criteria for determining the size categories were applied to the incoming movements.

In order to produce the maps of pig density, each size category of holding was designated a size weighting value. This value was previously determined based upon cross-reference to a subset of holdings present in the Agricultural Survey with a known herd size and extrapolated to the full dataset of holdings (Table 1).

Table 1: Description of the 5 categories of numbers of pigs moved (either incoming or outgoing movements) related to a holding in a 24-month period used to estimate relevant herd size categories and to provide weighted values for plotting pig density maps.

Size category of holding	Numbers of pigs moved in 24-month period	Size weighting	Comments
1	1 to 25	3	Size suggests pet pig owners or small holdings
2	26 to 300	20	Size suggests small holdings
3	301 to 2,000	110	Size suggests small commercial farms
4	2,001 to 8,000	550	Size suggests medium commercial farms
5	8000+	2800	Size suggests large commercial farms

The maps were created using the kernel density function in ArcGIS software. This tool distributes population information over a defined radius, creating a smooth density surface. Two key parameters that require adjustment are the search radius distance and the size of the output surface grid. Discussion at the LDDG meetings informed these criteria, and their selection is recognised as a subjective process[1]. A search radius of 15km was deemed sufficient to enable distinction between categories, and a 1km grid square was used for the density surfaces themselves. The classification bins were limited to 6, to aid in cross referencing areas of the map to the key. Note that the ArcGIS Kernel Density tool does not take into account edge effects[2], and as such density estimates in and around coastal areas may be underestimated.

Comparison between the maps was optimised by assigning similar parameters between the species in this series of reports. However, further refinement of the parameters for each species could represent the information more accurately.

Determining the number of pigs and pig holdings per country was completed by assigning a country to each holding based on the holding's geographical map reference co-ordinates (Easting and Northing - British National Grid). The spatial co-ordinates were calculated using

[1] Pfieffer, D. Spatial Analysis in Epidemiology, 2008. p47.
[2] https://www.e-education.psu.edu/geog586/l5_p15.html

the postcode recorded in the dataset. If a holding's postcode was missing from the cleaned dataset, the CPH was used to try and identify a holding location from the APHA's disease management database, Sam. The data shown in Tables 2 and 3 was produced using this method.

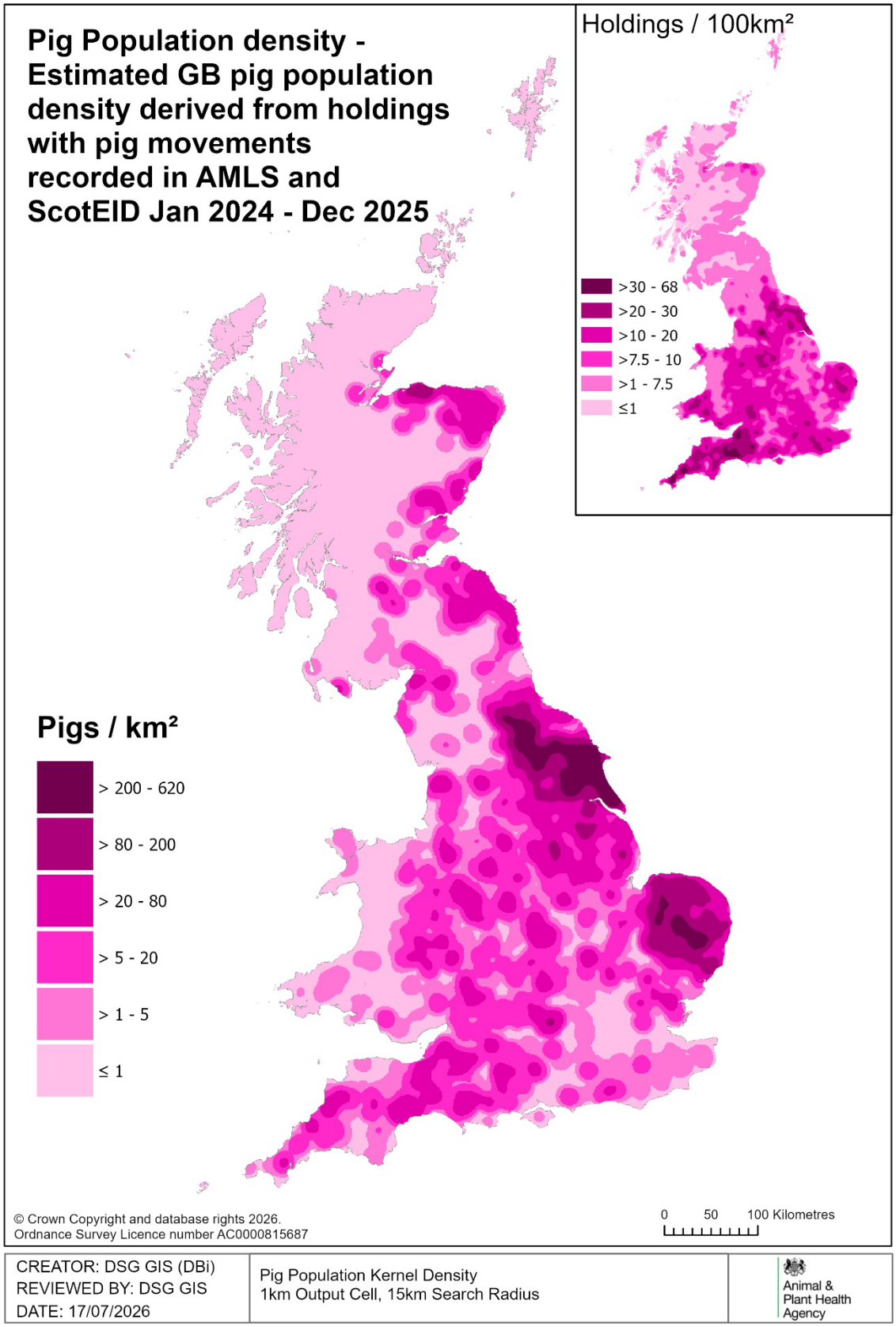


Figure 1: Pig population density in GB, estimated from pig movements recorded in eAML2 and ScotEID from January 2024 to December 2025. For a description of the figure see What do the data show about the population?

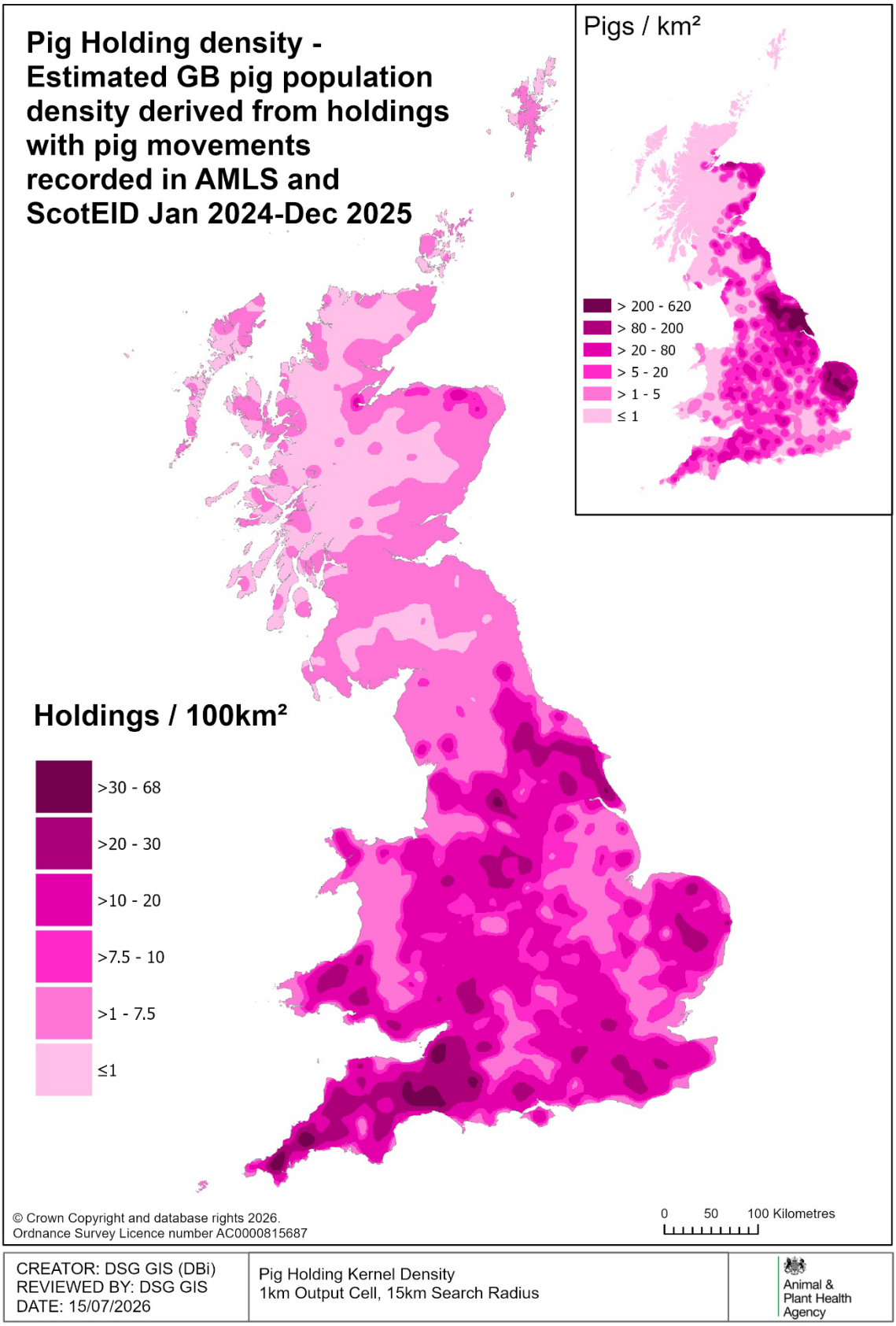


Figure 2: Pig holding density in GB, estimated from pig movements recorded in eAML2 and ScotEID from January 2024 to December 2025. For a description of the figure see What do the data show about the population?

GB pig population and holding data tables

A total of 18,225 holdings were identified in the dataset. Of these, 30 could not be related to holding location identifiers that allowed specific spatial coordinates to be generated, but information was provided that allowed the parish of origin to be determined. In these instances, the centroid location of the parish was used as a proxy for the location of the holding. Data which would enable a holding to be geolocated or referenced to a country were not available for thirteen holdings (estimated to hold a total of 599 pigs), so these were omitted from the tables and maps in the report.

Table 2. Count of pig holdings and animals, by country, from pig movement time periods 2024 to 2025, 2022 to 2023, 2020 to 2021, and 2018 to 2019.

Country	2024 to 2025 Holdings	2024 to 2025 Animals	2022 to 2023 Holdings	2022 to 2023 Animals	2020 to 2021 Holdings	2020 to 2021 Animals	2018 to 2019 Holdings	2018 to 2019 Animals
England	14,703	4,453,786	16,714	4,353,754	18,630	4,490,167	19,210	4,330,641
Scotland	1,399	454,814	1,820	410,863	2,109	461,231	1,952	368,054
Wales	2,110	53,192	2,321	61,469	2,690	66,531	2,560	54,772
GB Total	18,212	4,961,792	20,855	4,826,086	23,429	5,017,929	23,722	4,753,467

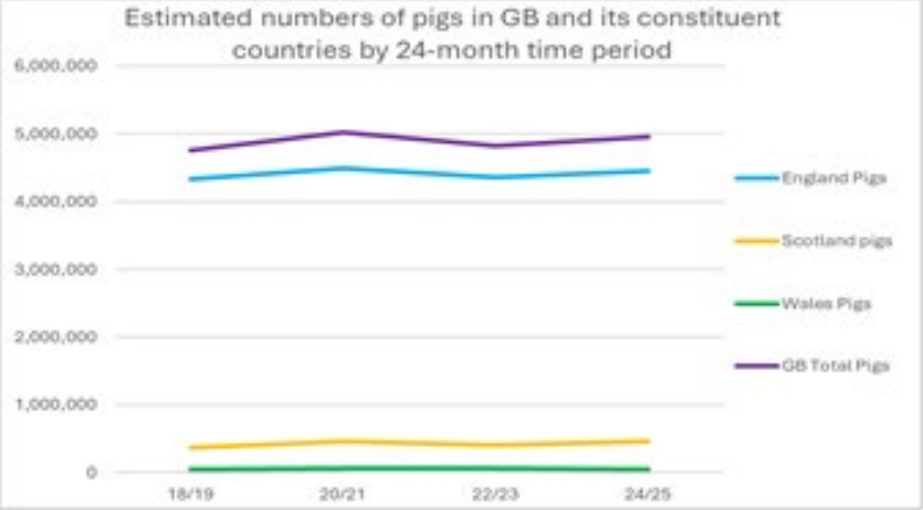


Figure 3: Estimated number of pigs present in Great Britain and its constituent countries, by time period, from which pig movement data were derived (2018 to 2019, 2020 to 2021, 2022 to 2023 and 2024 to 2025).

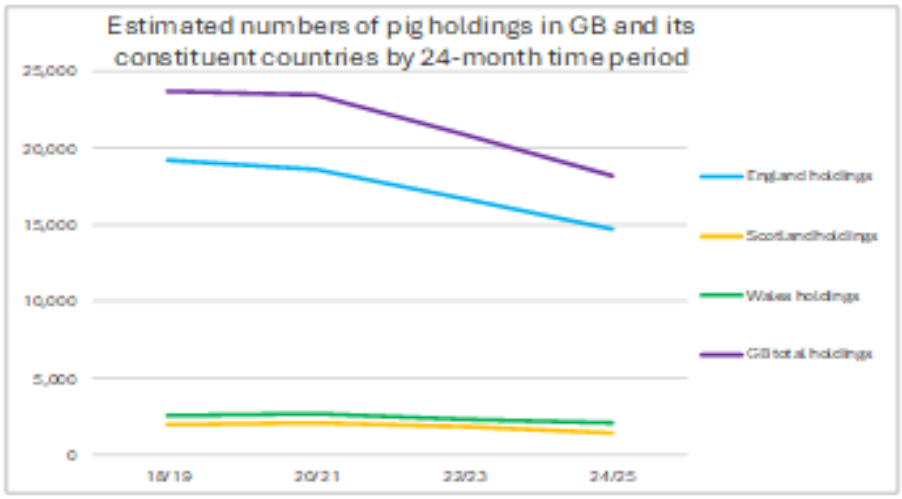


Figure 4: Estimated numbers of pig holdings present in Great Britain and its constituent countries, by time period, from which pig movement data were derived (2018 to 2019, 2020 to 2021, 2022 to 2023 and 2024 to 2025).

The previous Pig Demographic Reports (Pig population in Great Britain: annual reports - GOV.UK) for the 2022 to 2023, 2020 to 2021 and 2018 to 2019 time periods, also used pig movement data from eAML2 and ScotEID. The estimated total number of holdings in GB has decreased in every time period (Table 2, Figure 3 and 4). The largest reduction was observed when comparing 2022 to 2023 with 2024 to 2025 data, during which the largest decrease was in Scotland (a drop of 23.1%) with smaller reductions in holdings in Wales and England (9.1% and 12.0% respectively).

The estimated total number of pigs in GB has remained relatively constant when comparing 2018 to 2019 with 2024 to 2025. For England and Scotland, the number of pigs estimated in 2024 to 2025 was higher than that in 2022 to 2023, although this increase was proportionally larger in Scotland (10.7%), than in England (2.3%). In Wales, the number of pigs reduced by 13.5% during this period.

Table 3: The number of pig holdings in each country, by estimated herd size category (2024 to 2025).

Country	England	Scotland	Wales	GB Total
Size Category (No. of holdings): 1	10,282	1,008	1,784	13,074
Size Category (No. of holdings): 2	1,873	139	257	2,269
Size Category (No. of holdings): 3	418	36	25	479
Size Category (No. of holdings): 4	722	71	37	830
Size Category (No. of holdings): 5	1,408	145	7	1,560
Total	14,703	1,399	2,110	18,212
% of Country total: 1	69.9%	72.1%	84.5%	71.8%
% of Country total: 2	12.7%	9.9%	12.2%	12.5%
% of Country total: 3	2.8%	2.6%	1.2%	2.6%
% of Country total: 4	4.9%	5.1%	1.8%	4.6%
% of Country total: 5	9.6%	10.4%	0.3%	8.6%

Table 3 shows a breakdown of holdings by estimated size category and country. The majority of holdings (71.8%) were size category 1, which are likely to be pet pig and small holdings. There were 5,138 holdings in categories 2 to 5. The proportion of holdings in each size category remained relatively constant for GB when comparing 2022 to 2023 with 2024 to 2025; only the percentage of size category 5 holdings increased by more than 1% (1.5%) during this time period.

The overall number of holdings in GB reduced during this period. This was mainly in size category 2 and 3; the number of holdings showed an 18.6% and 19.5% reduction, respectively. Size category 1 and 4 reduced by 13.1% and 12.9%, respectively, and size category 5 increased by 5.6%.

As in previous reports, more holdings of each size category were in England than Wales or Scotland. There were very few categories 3 to 5 holdings in Wales, which are considered to represent commercial pig herds. The number of farms in most size categories within each country decreased when comparing 2022 to 2023 data with 2024 to 2025 data. The only exceptions were category 5 holdings in England and Scotland and category 4 holdings in Wales, which increased in number. The largest decreases were size category 3 holdings in Scotland and Wales (reduction of 47.1% and 35.9%, respectively), size category 4 holdings in Scotland (reduction of 31.1%) and size category 5 holdings in Wales (30.0% reduction).

Acknowledgments

The LDDG is grateful to Defra, Scottish Government, Welsh Government, and APHA's Data Systems Group (DSG) staff who handle the Sheep and Goat Inventory data and Rapid Analysis and Detection of Animal Related Risks (RADAR) data warehouse for their assistance in producing this report.

References

Pfeiffer, D. U., Robinson, T. P., Stevenson, M., Stevens, K. B., Rogers, D. J., & Clements, A. C. A. (2008). *Spatial Analysis in Epidemiology* (1st ed.). Oxford University Press.

Annex 1: Data quality statement for pigs

Introduction

This statement provides an overview of the quality of the data used to underpin the kernel density holding and livestock maps, and the supporting data tables. This statement is written in the context of the data being used to provide an overview of the livestock demographics within Great Britain. The statement may not necessarily relate to data quality for other purposes.

Overview and purpose of source data used

Data from the eAML2 database were accessed through the AHDB PigHub. Movements of pigs between holdings in Scotland (not held by eAML2) recorded by the ScotEID scheme were supplied by the ScotEID support team.

Both the eAML2 and ScotEID datasets describe the movement of pigs between locations and record the number and type of pigs moved. This information was used to estimate herd size.

1. **Relevance of data** *[degree to which data meets user needs in terms of currency, geographical coverage, content and detail]*

Spatial coverage: The data cover GB (England, Scotland, and Wales).

Temporal coverage: Data was extracted from the eAML2 data source between May 2025 and January 2026 and from ScotEID in April 2026. The datasets represented movements recorded as occurring from January 2024 to December 2025.

Key data items available: The main data items within the dataset are Date of Movement, Number of Animals Moved, CPH (county parish holding) and the postcode of the departing and destination locations; other fields are also available within the data.

2. **Timeliness** *[the degree to which data represent reality from the required time point]*

How often is the data collected? The data is collected continuously throughout the year with users of the 2 systems registering a movement, which is then finalised after the receiving user confirms receipt of the animals.

When do the data become available? The eAML2 and ScotEID databases are live with data continuously being added. Cancelled or incomplete movements were omitted for the analysis.

Data reference period: These data reflect all holdings in GB that recorded sending or receiving pigs between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025.

How often are the data updated? Once a movement record has been confirmed, this is not changed or updated after import by the client entering the data. However, holding location details may be updated due to cleaning exercises completed by AHDB. Additionally, occasionally movements are uploaded some time after the movement occurred due to missing movements being flagged by internal or external audits. This is believed to affect abattoirs (AHDB personal communication).

3. **Accuracy and precision** *[extent of data error and bias and how well data portrays reality]*

How were the data collected? The data was collected via submissions by registered users via a web portal or a telephone bureau system. Separate movement forms are submitted as movements off and movements on; these are paired by AHDB prior to being made available, that is, the 'from' and 'to' herd forms are combined into a single record.

Sample & collection size: There are approximately 20,000 unique CPHs listed in the dataset that had a pig movement.

What steps have been taken to minimise processing errors? Data was cleansed by AHDB by comparing holding records with those held elsewhere on the AHDB PigHub. Further cleaning was completed by APHA to remove or improve records with insufficient data to meet the LDDG project's criteria to fully identify a holding, and to rationalise holdings that had been recorded with varying amounts of identifying information (for example, movements for a CPH, which had been recorded with and without a postcode, were assigned to the same holding rather than as 2 separate holdings).

What are the non-reporting or non-response rates? We have no information on pig owners who either do not register their holding or do not record pig movements, although it has been suggested that some farms within pig breeding companies do not record some movements between sites due to a misunderstanding of the requirements.

Are any parts of the population unaccounted for in the data collection? It is believed all parts of the population are accounted for. However, commercial breeding farms may have their herd size underrepresented due to the failure to record movements to other units within the same pig production company.

4. **Comparability** [*how well these data can be compared with data taken from the same dataset and with similar data from other sources]*

Within dataset comparability: Checks show that data extracted at different times are comparable.

Other dataset comparability: A previous comparison of holdings present in eAML2, the Agricultural Survey, APHA's operational database called Sam, the Red Tractor assurance scheme and the British Pig Association (BPA) membership indicated that eAML2 consistently matched the highest percentage of holdings in the other datasets. eAML2 was also the only dataset that included most of the BPA holdings (LDDG annual report 2014/15).

5. **Coherence** [*degree to which data can be or have been merged with other data sources]*

How consistent are the data over time? If there are differences, what are they and what is their impact? Have there been changes to the underlying data collection? Analysis of the data has suggested that improvements to data cleansing processes and recording of holding identifiers in the eAML2 dataset by AHDB staff had occurred between the 2014/15 report and the 2016/17 report. However, we assume that minimal bias was caused.

Have any real-world events impacted on the data since the previous release? No

How have these impacts on the data been managed? N/A

What other data sources are this dataset comparable with? Other datasets with relevant pig location data available include the Agricultural Survey, Red Tractor and Sam. The Agricultural Survey collects demographical information from a proportion (~30%) of holdings each year, with the remaining population having information imputed from previous records. Holdings included in the Agricultural Survey must meet minimum thresholds for various farmed livestock and crops, including criteria of 50 pigs or 10 breeding sows. Therefore, some small holdings and hobby farms are underrepresented in these data.

Red Tractor Quality Assurance scheme is an industry dataset that is regularly updated. This dataset only covers commercial herds that use Quality Assured abattoirs. Therefore, holdings present are biased towards large commercial finisher or breeder-finisher farms.

Sam is an APHA transactional database, which holds a dataset of information regularly collected from farms visited by APHA staff. The information collected would be suitable, but there is concern regarding whether the current quality of the data is of sufficient standard. Due to the reason for collection of data (largely for statutory purposes) and frequency of APHA visits to herds, concerns include that data may not be up to date or that data may not offer complete coverage of the pig industry.

The British Pig Association has a record of pig holdings registered with them, although these are typically smaller, heritage breed pig holdings.

6. **Interpretability** *[how well the data are understood and utilised appropriately]*

Is there a particular context that these data need to be considered within? In this report, the dataset has been used to obtain information regarding animal movements and animal population counts. Although pig numbers fluctuate on farms, large seasonal differences are not believed to occur that would affect the interpretation of the maps. The dataset analysed in this report covers a 24-month period from 2024 to 2025. As registration of holdings and movements is a legal requirement, we expect the data to be a near complete representation of holdings moving pigs within GB.

The definition of a unique “holding” is based on the combination of postcode and CPH (county parish holding) number. However, postcodes were not always present for every movement record. The herd size category assigned to each holding was based on an algorithm applied to the number of pigs moved off of the holding during a 2-year period. If no pigs were moved off, it was based on pigs moved onto the holding. It should be noted that a holding in this context includes abattoirs, markets and other non-farm locations.

What other information is available to help users better understand this data source? Details of the eAML2 system and a guide on how movements are reported can be found here: https://www.eaml2.org.uk/ami/helpline.eb.

Are there any ambiguous or technical terms that may need further explanation? No.

7. **Accessibility** [*availability of relevant information and access to these data in a convenient and suitable manner]*

What data are shared and with whom? Due to restrictions on sharing data provided by a confidentiality agreement between APHA and AHDB/ ScotEID, these data cannot be shared externally without AHDB/ ScotEID consent.

Where approval for the use of data has been provided, data must be aggregated to at least a county level before publishing, so individual farms cannot be identified (for example, by CPH or postcode). Estimates based on less than 5 holdings should not be used, as this could breach confidentiality.

Contact details for data source queries

AHDB-Pork: pig.health@ahdb.org.uk

ScotEID: help@scoteid.com