



Department
for Environment,
Food & Rural Affairs

Accredited official statistics

Agricultural Land Use in United Kingdom at 1 June 2024

Updated 19 March 2025

Contents

Key points

Section 1 Detailed results

Section 2 About these statistics

Section 3 What you need to know about this release



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This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/agricultural-land-use-in-the-united-kingdom/agricultural-land-use-in-united-kingdom-at-1-june-2023>

This release contains the estimates of land use and crop areas on agricultural holdings in the UK. The notice is compiled using data available at the time of publication.

Results are sourced from the June Surveys run in each country.

The results tables are available at [Agricultural Land Use in the United Kingdom](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/agricultural-land-use-in-the-united-kingdom). (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/agricultural-land-use-in-the-united-kingdom>) This dataset contains detailed breakdowns for all land use and crop areas, as well as a summary table showing breakdowns by country.

Key points

Agricultural land use

- The utilised agricultural area (UAA) is 16.8 million hectares in 2024 and accounts for 69% of the total area of the UK.
- The total croppable area is 6.2 million hectares in 2024 and accounts for over a third (37%) of UAA.

Crops

- The total area of arable crops saw a 5.4% decrease between 2023 and 2024, falling to 4.1 million hectares.
- Cereals account for the majority (72%) of the total arable crop area, covering almost 3.0 million hectares in 2024.
- The area of uncropped arable land increased by 98% to 616 thousand hectares.
- The area of wheat decreased by 11% to 1.5 million hectares, whilst the area of barley increased by 5.1% to 1.2 million hectares.
- The area of oilseed crops decreased by 24% to 317 thousand hectares in 2024. Oilseed rape accounts for 92% of this area and fell by 25% to 293

thousand hectares in 2024.

- Potatoes increased by 3.1%, rising to 118 thousand hectares in 2024.
- In 2024 the total area of horticultural crops decreased by 2.0% to 142 thousand hectares. Vegetables and salad for human consumption make up the majority (68%) of this area and decreased by 3.5% to 97 thousand hectares in 2024.

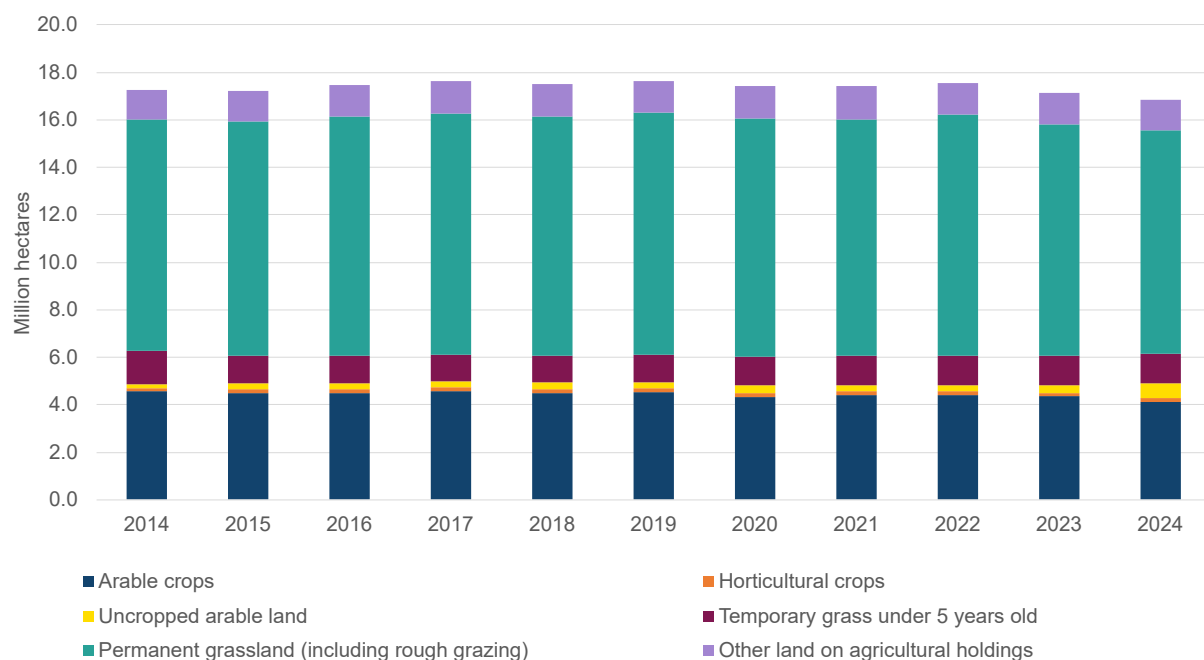
Section 1 Detailed results

1.1 Utilised agricultural area

The utilised agricultural area is made up of all arable and horticultural crops, uncropped arable land including bare fallow and arable land used for environmental benefit, land used for outdoor pigs, temporary and permanent grassland and common rough grazing (Figure 1).

The total utilised agricultural area in the UK decreased by 1.5% to 16.8 million hectares in 2024 and accounts for 69% of the total UK land area. The fall is largely due to a 1.0% decrease in the area in England and a 3.2% decrease in the area in Scotland.

Figure 1 - Agricultural land use areas in the United Kingdom at 1 June



Croppable area

In 2024, the croppable area increased by 1.3% to 6.2 million hectares. This represents over a third of the UK utilised agricultural area. The croppable area consists of cereals, oilseed, potatoes, other arable crops, horticultural crops, uncropped arable land and temporary grassland.

Figure 2 shows that in the years prior to 2024, the proportion of croppable land used for each purpose remained similar; however, in 2024 some categories did see value changes. In particular, cereals and oilseed crops saw decreases in area as a result of bad weather causing difficult planting conditions. Consequently, the area of uncropped arable land increased by 98% to 616 thousand hectares, with increases seen across all the UK nations.

Potatoes also saw an increase in 2024, rising by 3.1%, whilst other arable crops and horticultural crops saw decreases of 2.4% and 2.0% respectively.

Figure 2 - Total croppable area in the United Kingdom at 1 June

Year	Cereals	Temporary grass	Oilseeds	Other arable crops	Uncropped arable land	Horticult
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Year	Cereals	Temporary grass	Oilseeds	Other arable crops	Uncropped arable land	Horticul
2022	52%	20%	7%	12%	4%	3%
2023	51%	21%	7%	12%	5%	2%
2024	48%	21%	5%	12%	10%	2%

1.3 Arable crops

The total area of arable crops decreased by 5.4% between 2023 and 2024 and stands at 4.1 million hectares. This was largely due to a decrease in the cereals area, which accounts for 72% of arable crops. Difficult weather conditions in the autumn and restricted opportunities for spring drilling affected cereal plantings and led to the decrease in area.

The total area of cereal crops in the UK decreased by 3.9% in 2024 and stands at almost 3.0 million hectares.

Figure 3 shows the area of the three most popular crops grown in the UK; wheat, barley and oilseed rape.

The wheat area decreased by 11% to 1.5 million hectares in 2024. This is the lowest wheat area since 2020 when crop plantings were last affected by very wet weather in the autumn. Barley increased by 5.1%, from 1.1 million hectares to 1.2 million hectares. A 15% decrease in winter sown barley was more than offset by a 19% increase in spring sown barley.

The total area of oilseed rape decreased by 25%, from 391 thousand hectares in 2023 to 293 thousand hectares in 2024. The decrease was due to a 26% fall in the area of winter sown oilseed rape which accounts for 98% of the total oilseed rape area.

Figure 3 - Area of wheat, barley and oilseed rape in the United Kingdom at 1 June (thousand hectares)

year	2022	2023	2024
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year	2022	2023	2024
wheat	1,813	1,720	1,531
barley	1,116	1,137	1,194
oilseed rape	365	391	293

The total potato area increased by 3.1% to 118 thousand hectares in 2024.

Other arable crops covered 732 thousand hectares in 2024, a decrease of 2.4% when compared to 2023. Peas for harvesting dry saw the largest proportional area change, increasing by 46% to 89 thousand hectares. However, they only account for 12% of the other arable crops area. The biggest area decrease within this group was seen by field beans, with a fall of 37% and which accounts for 19% of the total croppable area.

Maize, which accounts for almost a third of other arable crops, saw an increase of 11%.

1.4 Horticultural crops

Horticultural crops covered 142 thousand hectares in 2024, falling by 2.0% since 2023. This area is mostly used to grow fruit and vegetables, which covered 89% of the total horticultural area.

Figure 4 shows the breakdown of the total horticultural area in 2024. The area of vegetables and salad for human consumption saw a decrease of 3.5% between 2023 and 2024 but still accounts for 68% of the total horticultural area. Orchards and small fruit together account for a further 21% of the horticultural area with hardy nursery stock and glasshouse accounting for the remaining 11%.

Figure 4 - Total horticultural area in the United Kingdom at 1 June

Year	Vegetables and salad	Orchards	Hardy nursery stock	Small fruit	Glasshouse	Total
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Year	Vegetables and salad	Orchards	Hardy nursery stock	Small fruit	Glasshouse	Total
2022	70%	14%	7%	7%	2%	100%
2023	69%	15%	7%	7%	2%	100%
2024	68%	14%	9%	7%	2%	100%

Section 2 About these statistics

2.1 Data uses and users

- Data on crop areas (both arable and horticultural) help us monitor the long-term trends in cropping. Amongst many other things, this helps us assess the impacts of the abolition of formal set-aside.
- The data will enable us to assess how land areas vary across the UK regions and in different geographic areas (such as the Uplands, National Parks, and River Basin Districts).
- Any changes in the agricultural sector also affect people. For many, it is their livelihood and a way of life.

Results from the England June Survey of Agriculture and Horticulture also have a wide range of uses and users with requests for data being made daily. A document providing information of specific uses and users can be found on our [guidance and notes \(https://www.gov.uk/guidance/structure-of-the-agricultural-industry-survey-notes-and-guidance\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/structure-of-the-agricultural-industry-survey-notes-and-guidance).

2.2 Other survey results and publications

More detailed results from the June Survey can be found on our [Structure of the agricultural industry in England and the UK at June web page \(https://](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/structure-of-the-agricultural-industry-in-england-and-the-uk-at-june-web-page)

www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/structure-of-the-agricultural-industry-in-england-and-the-uk-at-june). This includes various time series of crop areas and livestock numbers dating back as early as 1866 and detailed geographical breakdowns of the results.

The results from the June Survey of Agriculture 2025 in England are expected to be published as follows:

- Cereal, oilseed and uncropped arable land areas and Livestock populations in August 2025.
- Agricultural land use and Agricultural workforce data expected to be available in September 2025.

United Kingdom results are expected to be published in December 2025.

[Provisional cereal and oilseed harvest statistics \(https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cereal-and-oilseed-rape-production\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cereal-and-oilseed-rape-production) for England are expected to be published in October 2025, with United Kingdom estimates expected in December 2025.

The definitive publication dates for all UK nations will be announced on the [research and statistics \(https://www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics\)](https://www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics) webpage on gov.uk.

2.3 Methodology: June Survey of Agriculture and Horticulture

Data on crop areas and livestock populations are collected in the June Survey of Agriculture and Horticulture carried out by each of the UK agriculture departments. The methodology adopted by each country is below.

England

England results are from the June Survey of Agriculture and Horticulture in 2024. The June Survey of Agriculture and Horticulture has been run predominantly online since 2011, with an option for farmers to complete a paper form if they prefer. The survey is annual and samples around 30,000 holdings most years, with a full census run once a decade. The last census was run in 2021.

The June 2024 survey was sent to a sample of 56,000 commercial holdings and responses were received from 30,000 holdings, representing a response rate of almost 53%. This is a larger sample than usual which will enable us to provide detailed geographical breakdowns later in the year and help to understand changes currently happening within the farming sector, e.g. changes in land use following the introduction of ELM schemes. Commercial holdings are defined as those with more than five hectares of agricultural land, one hectare of orchards, 0.5 hectares of vegetables or 0.1 hectares of protected crops, or more than 10 cows, 50 pigs, 20 sheep, 20 goats or 1,000 poultry.

Table 1 provides details of the sample survey population broken down by farm size. The size of a farm is determined by its Standard Labour Requirement (SLR). i.e. the typical number of full-time workers required on the holding. In the SLR system, each livestock type and land-use has a theoretical amount of labour required each year. This value is multiplied by the land area or livestock numbers and then summed to give the SLR for the holding. For pig and poultry sectors, an additional data collection exercise was run to collect data from a central point for some of the largest companies.

Table 1: June 2024 population size and sampling rate

Stratum	Description	Sampling rate (%)	Population size
1	SLR < 0.5	30%	50,264
2	SLR >= 0.5 and < 1	51%	15,271
3	SLR >= 1 and < 2	71%	13,527
4	SLR >= 2 and < 3	80%	6,773
5	SLR >= 3 and < 5	80%	6,675
6	SLR >= 5	80%	7,182
10	SLR unknown	97%	5,649
All		52%	105,341

Cattle results are sourced from the Cattle Tracing System (CTS). The data include returns from all holdings with cattle so are not subject to survey

error. More information on the use of this administrative data can be found on the [survey notes and guidance report \(https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/182225/defra-stats-foodfarm-landuselivestock-june-results-BovineRegisters.pdf\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/182225/defra-stats-foodfarm-landuselivestock-june-results-BovineRegisters.pdf)

The data are subject to rigorous validation checks which identify inconsistencies within the data or large year-on-year changes. Any records that have not been cleaned by the results production stage are excluded from the analysis.

Population totals are estimated for each question on the survey to account for the non-sampled and non-responding holdings. This survey uses the technique known as ratio raising, in which the trend between the sample data and base data (previous year's data) is calculated for each stratum. The calculated ratio is then applied to the previous year's population data to give England level estimates. For holdings where we do not have base data (new holdings or long-term non-responders) the sample estimates are raised according to the inverse sampling fraction.

Cereal and oilseed areas and cattle, sheep and pig populations from the England 2024 June Survey were published on 29 August 2024 and Land use and agricultural workforce data were published on 26 September 2024. All can be viewed on our [Statistics about the structure of the agricultural industry web page \(https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/departement-for-environment-food-rural-affairs/series/structure-of-the-agricultural-industry\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/departement-for-environment-food-rural-affairs/series/structure-of-the-agricultural-industry)

More details on the June Survey methodology can be found on the [Structure of the agricultural industry: survey notes and guidance web page \(https://www.gov.uk/structure-of-the-agricultural-industry-survey-notes-and-guidance\)](https://www.gov.uk/structure-of-the-agricultural-industry-survey-notes-and-guidance)

Changes to June Survey design

Three new questions were introduced to the survey this year to gather information on how land use is changing. First estimates are now available on the area of arable land used for environmental benefit but not in production and the area of agricultural land used for solar panels (including and excluding land also used for grazing or production).

Arable land used for environmental benefit but not in production includes pollen and nectar flower mixes, winter bird food, buffer strips on arable land, flower rich margins and in field strips. It would previously have been recorded as uncropped arable land along with bare fallow as a single item.

Scotland

Final results for Scotland were published by the Scottish Government on 24 October 2024 at: www.gov.scot/collections/june-scottish-agricultural-census (<https://www.gov.scot/collections/june-scottish-agricultural-census/>).

The June Agricultural Census is conducted annually by the Scottish Government's Rural and Environmental Science Analytical Services division (RESAS). Data are requested from all holdings who submitted a Single Application Form (SAF) in the previous year, together with some other large businesses that would not be eligible for support payments. A sample of smaller holdings which didn't submit a SAF or who didn't return a form for the previous census were also sent a census form.

Data for the June census is collected from three sources:

- Land data were extracted from the Single Application Form (SAF) database for around 22,600 holdings that are claiming under the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS).
- All holdings within our sample were sent a census form covering land, livestock and labour. Holdings completing a SAF were not expected to complete section 3 (land area) of the census form.
- All cattle data (including data on cattle breeds) were collected from the Cattle Tracing Scheme administrative source. Farmers are required by law to register any births, deaths and movements of their cattle to the British Cattle Movement service who maintain an online database. More information can be found online [here \(https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/british-cattle-movement-service/about\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/british-cattle-movement-service/about). By using this data source we effectively have 100 per cent coverage, even for those smaller holdings that were not selected for inclusion in the census.

RESAS categorises all agricultural holdings in Scotland as either a Main holding or a Min holding. A holding is a Main if it meets certain thresholds such as a certain area of land or a certain amount of animals. All Main holdings in Scotland are included in the census. The smaller holdings are only surveyed around once every four years to reduce the burden on the smaller farms. Holdings which have not received a form in the past four years are included in the sample.

In 2024, there were 45,453 agricultural holdings in Scotland and within the census 35,379 were selected to complete a census form (the majority of these online). Of those who received a request to complete the census 18,767 provided a return, resulting in a final response rate of 54 per cent.

Table 2 below shows the response rates for different types of farms. The first column shows the percentage of holdings that responded. Due to the

fact that some larger farms account for a larger proportion of overall activity or land area in Scotland, the second column shows what percentage of land area, livestock or workforce each category represents. In most cases this is higher than the percentage of holdings, indicating that there is better coverage in the census of larger holdings.

Table 2: Percentage cover of holdings, land area, livestock and workforce for different farm features

	percentage cover of holdings	percentage cover of land, livestock or workforce
Total cereals (hectares)	87%	97%
Total crops, set aside & fallow (hectares)	68%	96%
Total sole right agricultural land (hectares)	59%	97%
Total cattle (number)	100%	100%
Total sheep (number)	49%	72%
Total pigs (number)	32%	81%
Total occupiers and spouses (number)	52%	53%
Total regular & seasonal staff (number)	63%	66%
Total agricultural workforce (number)	53%	59%

For further details contact Scottish Government: RESAS Statistics
(Agriculture) Email: agric.stats@gov.scot.

Wales

The Welsh population currently stands at around 25,000 active holdings. In 2024 a total of 9,800 farms were sampled. Returns were made both by paper form and online. Online returns comprised 46% of responses received. Final results were based on a response rate of 45%. Final results for Wales were published by the Welsh Government on 21 November 2024 at:

<https://gov.wales/survey-agriculture-and-horticulture> (<https://gov.wales/survey-agriculture-and-horticulture>)

For further details contact Agricultural & Rural Affairs Statistics, Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ (telephone: Cardiff 03000 255049). E-mail: stats.agric@gov.wales

Northern Ireland

In 2024, the Northern Ireland Agricultural and Horticultural Survey was conducted as a full census using online data collection. Data for the pig and poultry sections are also complete censuses extracted from the NI Annual Inventory of Pigs and Update of NI Bird Register respectively. Data for the cattle section was extracted from the Northern Ireland Food Animal Information System (NIFAIS).

Telephone support was provided for farmers who could not complete online and a focussed telephone follow-up of non-responding farms was carried out.

A statistical estimation and imputation methodology was used to create statistics for those who did not provide a return.

A total of 28,434 letters were issued and a final farm register of 26,190 created. Results are based on 16,358 completed questionnaires.

Final results will be published on 12th December 2024 by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) for Northern Ireland and can be viewed at: www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/agricultural-census-northern-ireland (<http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/agricultural-census-northern-ireland>)

2.4 Feedback

We welcome feedback and any thoughts to improve the publication further.

Please send any feedback to: farming-statistics@defra.gov.uk.

Section 3 What you need to know about this release

3.1 Contact details

Responsible statistician: Sarah Thompson

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

Email: farming-statistics@defra.gov.uk

Tel: 0300 060 0170

3.2 Accredited official statistics

Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007. An explanation can be found on the [Office for Statistics Regulation website \(https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/accredited-official-statistics/\)](https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/accredited-official-statistics/).

Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

These accredited official statistics were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation in 2014. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics and should be labelled accredited official statistics .

You are welcome to contact us directly with any comments about how we meet these standards (see [contact details](#)). Alternatively, you can contact

OSR by emailing regulation@statistics.gov.uk or via the OSR website.

Since the latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- Reviewed and amended the validation checks carried out on response data including validation against new administrative data sources to better assure ourselves of the quality of the statistics.
- Enhanced trustworthiness by removing pre-release access.



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