



**Police Service**  
of Northern Ireland



# Agriculture and Rural Crime in Northern Ireland

## Update to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021

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Agricultural crime has shown an overall downwards trend since the start of the data series in 2010/11.

In the 12 months from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021:

- There were 194 agricultural crimes recorded in Northern Ireland, a fall of 134 on the previous 12 months and continuing the downward trend seen since 2010/11.
- 98 per cent of agricultural crime was identified as occurring in rural settlement areas
- Agricultural crime represented 0.9 per cent of all burglary, robbery and theft offences
- Nine policing districts experienced a fall in levels of agriculture crime.

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We welcome comment and feedback on these statistics. If you would like to forward your views, receive notification of new publications or be kept informed of developments relating to PSNI statistics, please email your contact details using the email address provided on the cover page.

# 1. Things you need to know about this release

## Coverage

This release is produced in accordance with the pillars and principles set out in the Code of Practice for Statistics.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) publishes figures on the levels and trends in agricultural and rural crime in Northern Ireland. These figures are based on police recorded crime data and details of the definitions and methodology used are provided below. The statistics are collated and produced by statisticians seconded to PSNI from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

This bulletin presents agricultural and urban/rural crime for the following time periods:

- Latest 12 months 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 and previous 12 months 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.
- Current financial year to date 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 and previous financial year to date 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.

Figures were compiled on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022, using data extracted from the police administrative system on that date. All tables and charts in the bulletin, along with figures for financial years dating back to 2010/11 and for calendar years dating back to 2011 are available from the PSNI website in the [Agriculture and Rural Crime spreadsheet for December 2021, 120KB \(opens in a new window\)](#).

The next update covering the 12 months to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 will be published in May 2022. A full [publication schedule, 32KB \(opens in a new window\)](#) is available on the PSNI website.

## Definitions

**Agricultural Crime** – the agricultural crime figures in this bulletin represent offences of burglary, robbery and theft where the victim is involved in an agricultural-based activity. Agricultural crime covers burglary, robbery and theft offences where the property or vehicles stolen have an agricultural link (e.g. farm equipment, agricultural vehicles, livestock) or where the location was agricultural (e.g. farm, farmhouse). This information is identified from both drop down pick lists and free text searches using key agricultural-related words.

**Urban/Rural crime** – this covers all burglary, robbery and theft offences, split into these two geographical areas based on an aggregation of settlement bands. Please note that not all agricultural crime will occur in a rural settlement.

The urban/rural crime split is based on classification boundaries that are available for Northern Ireland as defined by the Planning Service, these areas being defined from Settlement Development Limits. Further details are available from the [NISRA website \(opens in a new window\)](#). Crimes are allocated to urban or rural by linking the available postcode information for the crime location to the Central Postcode Directory.

## Data Revisions

**Agricultural crime tables:** As the methodology used to identify agricultural crimes relies on data extracted from a live operational system, figures contained in the agricultural crime tables may be subject to revision. Further information is provided in the NOTES section on the last page of this bulletin.

**Urban/Rural tables:** Revisions to previously published data are applied on an annual basis to financial year crime figures from 2015/16 onwards, as a result of the introduction of the wider outcomes framework in April 2015. These revisions take account of crime cancellations and sanction outcomes identified since the previous annual publication. Revisions of this nature will next be applied in May 2022. Further guidance on crime cancellation can be found in the [Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime \(opens in a new window\)](#).

## 2. What is happening to levels of agricultural crime over the longer term?

The number of burglary, robbery and theft offences relating to agricultural-based activity has shown an overall downwards trend from 937 offences recorded in 2010/11 to 291 recorded in 2020/21. The figures for 2020/21 show a decrease of 94 when compared with 2019/20 and are less than a third of the level recorded in 2010/11. [Figure 1]

**Figure 1 Trends in agricultural crime since 2010/11**

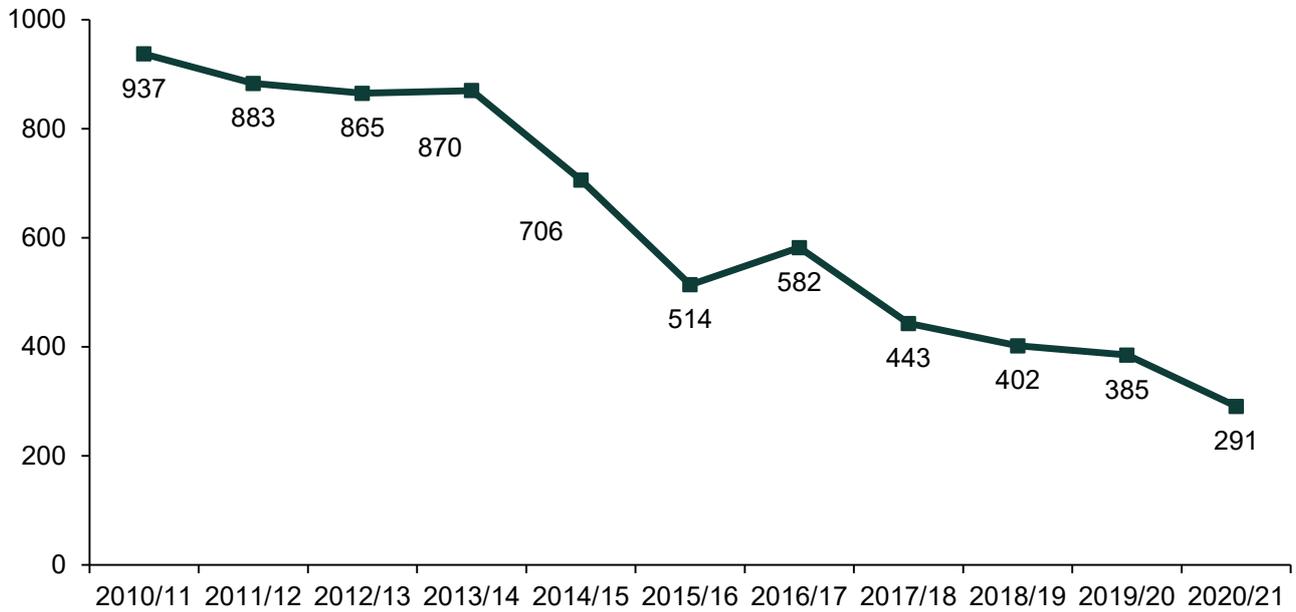
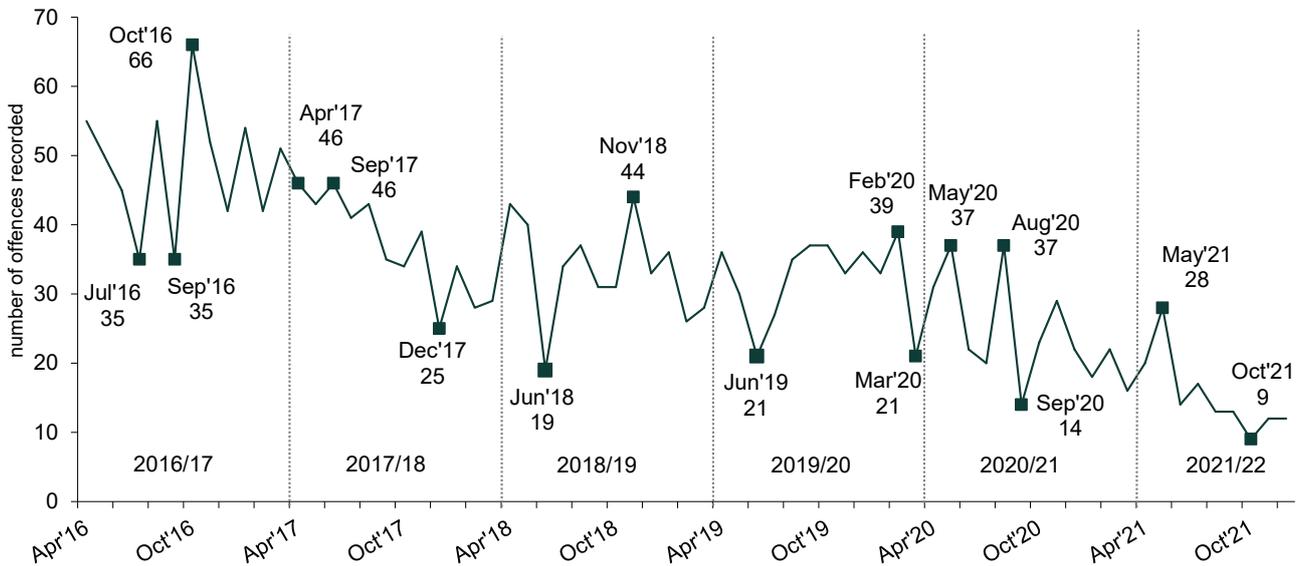


Figure 2 below shows the falling levels of agriculture crime since April 2016.

**Figure 2 Agricultural crime each month**

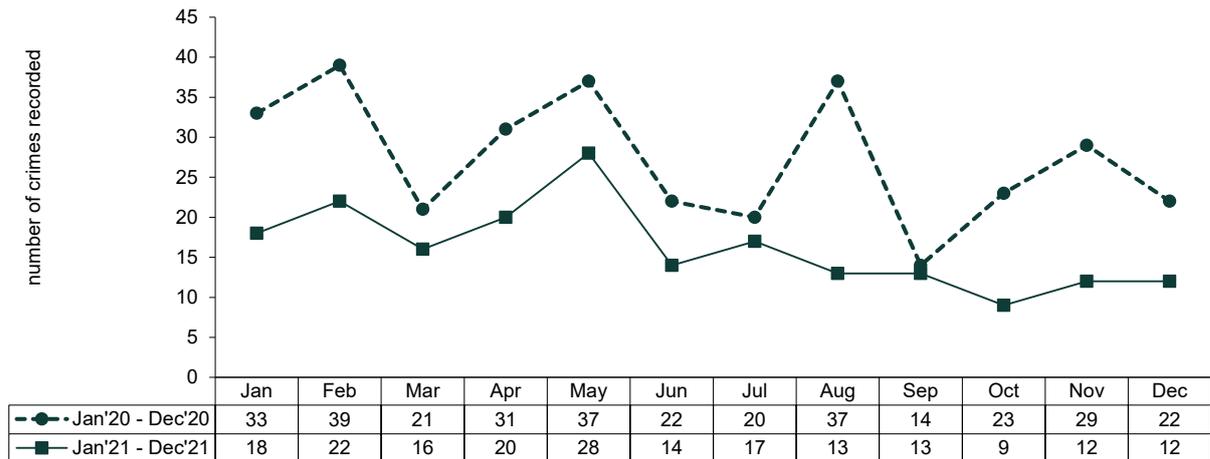


### 3. What has been happening to levels of agricultural crime more recently?

In the 12 months from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021:

- There were 194 agricultural crimes recorded in Northern Ireland, a fall of 134 on the previous 12 months and continuing the downward trend since 2010/11. [Table 1 and Figure 1]
- 98 per cent of agriculture crime was identified as occurring in rural settlement areas. Since 2010/11 this proportion has ranged between 95 and 99 per cent<sup>1</sup>. [Table 2, accompanying spreadsheet]
- Burglary and robbery represented 29 per cent of agricultural crime, while theft represented 71 per cent. Since 2010/11 burglary and robbery have represented between 27 and 36 per cent of agricultural crime while theft has represented between 64 and 73 per cent. [Table 3, accompanying spreadsheet]
- Agriculture crime represented 0.9 per cent of all burglary, robbery and theft offences. This compares with 1.4 per cent during the previous 12 months. The highest proportion of 2.4 per cent was seen in 2010/11, 2012/13 and 2013/14. [Tables 1 and 5]
- The highest level of agriculture crime was seen in Newry, Mourne & Down (34), followed by Mid Ulster (31), Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon (30), Fermanagh & Omagh (26), Mid & East Antrim (22) and Causeway Coast & Glens (18). [Table 1]
- Nine of the policing districts showed a decrease in levels of agricultural crime. Causeway Coast & Glens had the greatest decrease (-24). Mid & East Antrim and Belfast City both showed an increase of 1. [Table 1]

**Figure 3 Agricultural crime January 2020 to December 2021**



<sup>1</sup> Urban/rural settlement figures are identified through matching the postcode of the occurrence with the Central Postcode Directory.

**Table 1 Agriculture Crime (burglary, robbery and theft offences for agricultural-based activity) by Policing District**

Policing district	Agricultural Crimes Jan'20-Dec'20	Agricultural Crimes Jan'21-Dec'21	Change
Belfast City	0	1	1
Lisburn & Castlereagh City	20	7	-13
Ards & North Down	12	4	-8
Newry, Mourne & Down	49	34	-15
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	53	30	-23
Mid Ulster	37	31	-6
Fermanagh & Omagh	46	26	-20
Derry City & Strabane	24	12	-12
Causeway Coast & Glens	42	18	-24
Mid & East Antrim	21	22	1
Antrim & Newtownabbey	24	9	-15
No district assigned	0	0	0
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>-134</b>

**Table 2 Agriculture Crime (burglary, robbery and theft offences for agricultural-based activity) split by Urban/Rural settlements**

	Agricultural Crimes Jan'20-Dec'20	Agricultural Crimes Jan'21-Dec'21	Change
Urban	4	4	0
Rural	324	190	-134
Not known	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>-134</b>

**Table 3 Agriculture Crime (burglary, robbery and theft offences for agricultural-based activity) split by type of offence**

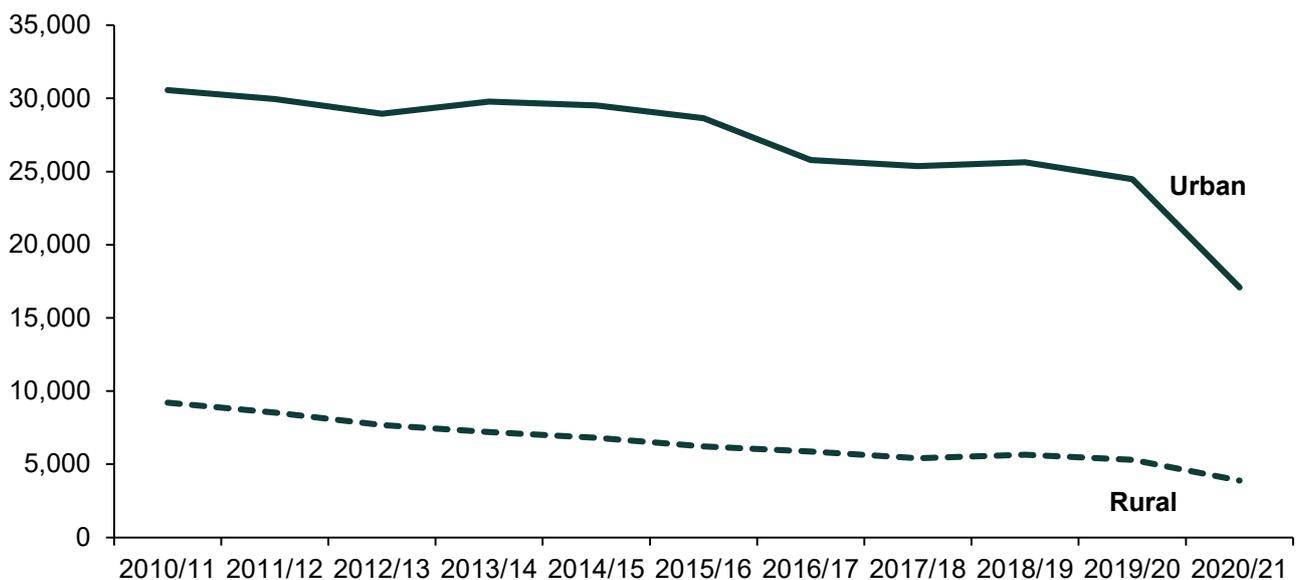
	Agricultural Crimes Jan'20-Dec'20	Agricultural Crimes Jan'21-Dec'21	Change
Burglary / Robbery	103	57	-46
Theft	225	137	-88
<b>Total</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>-134</b>

## 4. What is happening to levels of urban and rural crime over the longer term?

Between 2010/11 and 2020/21:

- Looking at Northern Ireland as a whole, burglary, robbery and theft offences showed an overall downwards trend between 2010/11 and 2020/21, with the level recorded in 2020/21 representing a fall of 47.3 per cent when compared with 2010/11. [Table 6]
- The number of burglary, robbery and theft offences in **rural settlements** fell each year between 2010/11 and 2020/21 with the exception of 2018/19. The level of 3,883 recorded in 2020/21 is a 57.8 per cent reduction on the 9,211 offences recorded in 2010/11. [Table 6]
- Levels of burglary, robbery and theft offences in **urban settlements** have shown an overall downwards trend since 2010/11. The level of 17,085 recorded in 2020/21 shows a fall of 44.1 per cent when compared with 2010/11. [Table 6]
- Between 2010/11 and 2020/21 the *proportion* of burglary, robbery and theft offences occurring in urban settlement areas increased from 77 per cent in 2010/11 to 81 per cent in 2013/14 and has remained at either 81 per cent or 82 per cent since then. Correspondingly the *proportion* of these offences occurring in rural settlements fell from 23 per cent in 2010/11 to 19 per cent in 2013/14 and has remained at 18 per cent or 19 per cent in each year since. The proportion occurring in urban settlements in 2020/21 was 81 per cent, with 19 per cent occurring in rural settlements. [Table 6]
- For information on the effect of Covid-19 restrictions on recorded crime, please see the latest [Police Recorded Crime Monthly Update to 31st December 2021 bulletin, 0.5MB \(opens in a new window\)](#).

**Figure 4 Trends in burglary, robbery and theft offences by urban and rural split since 2010/11**



## 5. What has been happening to levels of urban and rural crime more recently?

In the 12 months from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021:

- In Northern Ireland as a whole, burglary, robbery and theft offences decreased by 8.1 per cent (1,859 offences). [bulletin Table 4, spreadsheet Table 5]
- The number of burglary, robbery and theft offences in **rural settlements** decreased by 6.1 per cent (248 offences). [bulletin Table 4, spreadsheet Table 5]
- Levels of burglary, robbery and theft offences in **urban settlements** decreased by 8.5 per cent (1,611 offences). [bulletin Table 4, spreadsheet Table 5]
- The *proportion* of burglary, robbery and theft offences occurring in urban settlement areas was 82 per cent, with the *proportion* of these offences occurring in rural settlements sitting at 18 per cent, the same *proportions* that were recorded during the previous 12 months. [bulletin Table 4, spreadsheet Table 5]
- The percentage of burglary, robbery and theft offences occurring in rural settlement areas was 52 per cent in Mid Ulster, 51 per cent in Fermanagh & Omagh, 40 per cent in Newry, Mourne & Down, 35 per cent in Causeway Coast & Glens, 26 per cent in Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon, 25 per cent in Mid & East Antrim, 24 per cent in Lisburn & Castlereagh City, 21 per cent in Ards & North Down, 19 per cent Derry City & Strabane and 16 per cent Antrim & Newtownabbey. The figure was less than 1 per cent in Belfast City. [bulletin Table 4, spreadsheet Table 5]

**Table 4 Urban/Rural Crime (burglary, robbery and theft offences based on geographical location) by Policing District, Current and previous 12 months**

Policing district	Urban Crimes Jan'20-Dec'20	Urban Crimes Jan'21-Dec'21	Rural Crimes Jan'20-Dec'20	Rural Crimes Jan'21-Dec'21	Total Crimes Jan'20-Dec'20	Total Crimes Jan'21-Dec'21
Belfast City	8,616	8,235	19	33	8,635	8,268
Lisburn & Castlereagh City	1,161	986	333	316	1,494	1,302
Ards & North Down	872	818	224	214	1,096	1,032
Newry, Mourne & Down	1,143	969	732	634	1,875	1,603
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	1,550	1,391	505	487	2,055	1,878
Mid Ulster	501	465	498	506	999	971
Fermanagh & Omagh	498	404	410	414	908	818
Derry City & Strabane	1,522	1,424	317	325	1,839	1,749
Causeway Coast & Glens	783	642	406	349	1,189	991
Mid & East Antrim	1,115	813	322	278	1,437	1,091
Antrim & Newtownabbey	1,174	1,177	270	232	1,444	1,409
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>18,935</b>	<b>17,324</b>	<b>4,036</b>	<b>3,788</b>	<b>22,971</b>	<b>21,112</b>

## 6. Background notes

Like any administrative data, police recorded crime statistics are affected by the rules governing the recording of data, systems in place and operational decisions in respect of the allocation of resources. More proactive policing in a given area could lead to an increase in crimes recorded without any real change in underlying crime trends. These issues need to be taken into account when using these data.

### Definitions

**Agricultural crime** covers burglary, robbery and theft offences where the property or vehicles stolen have an agricultural link (e.g. farm equipment, agricultural vehicles, livestock) or where the location was agricultural (e.g. farm, farmhouse). This information is identified from both drop down pick lists and free text searches using key agricultural-related words.

**Urban/Rural crime** covers all burglary, robbery and theft offences, split into these two geographical areas based on an aggregation of settlement bands.

Please note that not all agricultural crime will occur in a rural settlement.

### Data Accuracy and Revisions

Agricultural crime figures are based on a range of information extracted from a live crime recording system and, as such, will always be subject to revision.

Within the current financial year revisions may occur because:

- There will be incidents identified as crimes but not processed on the crime recording system by the time the figures are extracted for presentation in these tables.
- Figures may change from month to month due to crimes being reclassified from one crime type to another during the financial year. This may be because quality checks have identified the crime as incorrectly classified, or further information may indicate that the circumstances surrounding the crime were not as initially recorded.
- The Home Office Counting Rules allow crimes initially recorded to be 'no crime'd' or removed from the crime figures.

Revisions to any records within the dataset may also occur as information in relation to property stolen, vehicles stolen and location may be updated on the live system. This may be through adding additional information or updating existing information based on more up-to-date details.

The urban/rural figures are identified through matching the available postcode to the Central Postcode Directory. Postcode accuracy and availability within the current financial year will not be of the same quality or completeness as a full financial year. This is because additional quality checks are completed at the end of each financial year to improve postcode quality and completeness. Further details are available in the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland, 1MB \(opens in a new window\)](#).

**Annual Revisions:** Revisions to previously published data are applied on an annual basis to financial year crime figures from 2015/16 onwards, as a result of the introduction of the wider outcomes framework in April 2015. These revisions take account of crime cancellations and sanction outcomes identified since the previous annual publication. Revisions of this nature will next be applied in May 2022. Further guidance on crime cancellation can be found in the Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime.

### Web links to other information you may be interested in

[Trends in Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland 1998/99 to 2020/21, 3MB \(opens in a new window\)](#) was published on 20 November 2020 and provides detailed trend information covering this time period.

Further details on Police Recorded Crime statistics are available in the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland, 1MB \(opens in a new window\)](#), and in the [Police Recorded Crime Statistics Quality Report, 293KB \(opens in a new window\)](#). These are reference guides with explanatory notes regarding the issues and classifications which are key to the production and presentation of police recorded crime statistics.

Copies of other PSNI publications are available from the [PSNI website \(opens in a new window\)](#)