

STATISTICAL NEWS RELEASE

FINAL RESULTS OF THE JUNE AGRICULTURAL CENSUS 2016

The final results of the June 2016 Agricultural Census have been released by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

The statistics are compiled from a survey of farm businesses augmented by administrative data. The statistics provide robust estimates of crop areas, numbers of livestock and of farmers and workers on active farm businesses on the survey date of 1st June 2016.

The main changes between June 2015 and June 2016 are:

Cereals: The area of cereals grown increased by 2 per cent to 33,400 ha with winter wheat, winter barley and oats all increasing in 2016. Spring barley fell by 6 per cent but still remains the most popular cereal crop with 14,700 ha planted across Northern Ireland.

Other crops: The area of potatoes increased by 4 per cent to 3,700 ha, a slight recovery from 2015 which had the lowest area ever recorded for the crop. The area of arable crop silage remained similar to 2015 levels at 3,300 ha, whereas, the area of forage maize fell by 15 per cent to 1,300ha. This fall in the forage maize area continues a downward trend that began in 2008 when 3,500 ha was grown.

Cattle: Total cattle numbers were 3 per cent higher than in June 2015. The number of dairy cows increased by 2 per cent to 317,100 head, which is an all time high. The number of beef cows increased by 4 per cent to 269,700.

Sheep: There was a 2 per cent rise in the number of breeding ewes compared with 2015. Numbers have fluctuated in recent years, falling to a 20 year low of 876,000 in 2010 before increasing to 955,200 this year, which is the highest level since 2007. Lamb numbers have increased by 2 per cent which links in with the increase in ewe numbers. Overall, the total number of sheep recorded surpassed 2 million which again is a level not seen since 2007.

Pigs: In comparison to 2015, there were a 13 per cent decrease in the number of gilts in pig, a 5 per cent increase in sows in pig and a 3 per cent increase in other sows. With these changes the total female breeding herd increased by 2 per cent to 46,400. Overall, the pig herd was 6 per cent larger, mainly as a result of growth in the number of fattening pigs. Imports of pigs for finishing had an influence on numbers, however a small number of large, highly productive businesses, drive most of the change in the sector.

Poultry: Laying birds recorded for the 1st June 2016 increased by 12 per cent to 3.6 million birds while the number of growing pullets increased by 6 per cent at that date. The laying bird population has shown strong growth since 2013 and this is partly due to new producers who have entered the industry.

Farmers and workers: The size of the agricultural labour force decreased by 1 per cent from the previous year to 47,700. Within this, there was a 2 per cent reduction in the number of full-time farmers and business partners and a 1 per cent increase in the numbers of part-time farmers and business partners. Overall the numbers of farmers and business partners decreased by 1 per cent to 29,800. A similar pattern was recorded for other farm workers, with full-time categories showing a 7 per cent decrease while part-time categories increased by 6 per cent.

Notes for Editors

1. The survey results were prepared by Statistics and Analytical Services Branch, CAP Policy, Economics and Statistics Division of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3SB.

2. In an effort to reduce the compliance burden on farmers, the survey form sent to farmers omitted most of the cattle and all of the poultry and pig questions. Survey information was then augmented with data from APHIS for missing cattle variables, the Update of the Northern Ireland Bird Register for poultry and the Annual Inventory of Pigs.
3. Full details of the coverage of the census and of terms used were given in the booklet *“The Agricultural Census in Northern Ireland: Results for June 2015”* (DAERA, 2016) and will be repeated in the 2016 issue of this annual publication, available in January 2017. These booklets may be accessed on the Department’s internet site, free of charge.
4. These statistics are released according to the [Statement of Compliance with the Pre-release access to Official Statistics Order \(NI\) 2009](#).
5. These results were compiled from a sample of approximately 14,000 statistical returns, augmented with data from the APHIS cattle tracing system, the Update of the NI Bird Register returns and the Annual Inventory of Pigs.
6. All recent DAERA statistical press releases can be found at: www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics/statistical-bulletins
7. All media queries to DAERA Press Office on 028 90524619

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Table 1 Crops, grass and other land

	June 2014	June 2015	June 2016	% Change 2016/2015
	'000 ha			%
Crops and grass				
Cereal crops				
Oats	2.1	2.1	2.3	9
Wheat	8.5	8.0	8.6	8
Barley (winter)	6.7	7.0	7.6	9
Barley (spring)	16.8	15.7	14.7	-6
Total cereals⁽¹⁾	34.2	32.9	33.4	2
Other field crops				
Potatoes	4.2	3.6	3.7	4
Arable silage	4.0	3.3	3.3	2
Forage Maize	1.6	1.5	1.3	-15
Other crops	2.8	3.0	2.7	-10
Total	12.5	11.3	11.0	-3
Horticultural crops				
Fruit	1.5	1.5	1.5	-1
Vegetables for sale	1.3	1.4	1.2	-10
Bulbs , flowers & nursery stocks	0.1	0.2	0.2	2
Total	3.0	3.1	2.9	-5
Total crops	49.8	47.3	47.4	0
Grass for mowing and grazing				
Under 5 yrs old	146.2	149.9	148.2	-1
5 yrs old and over	641.8	650.4	652.6	0
Total grass	788.0	800.3	800.8	0
Total crops and grass	837.8	847.7	848.2	0
Rough grazing⁽²⁾				
Rough land for grazing	140.1	131.1	137.2	5
Other land				
Woods and plantations	11.1	11.1	16.1	46
Other land ⁽³⁾	7.8	7.9	11.8	12
Total area⁽²⁾	996.8	997.7	1,013.2	2

(1) Includes mixed corn

(2) Excludes common rough grazing

(3) Includes Fallow land, roads, buildings, bogs, wasteland, gardens etc.

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Table 2 Cattle

	June 2014	June 2015	June 2016	% Change 2016/2015
	'000 head			%
Cows mainly for producing milk for sale				
Total dairy cows	294.2	311.5	317.1	2
Cows mainly for producing and rearing calves for beef				
Total beef cows	254.9	260.3	269.7	4
Total cows	549.1	571.8	586.9	3
Heifers in calf with first calf intended mainly for producing milk for sale				
Heifers in calf with first calf (2 yrs +)	27.2	26.6	25.3	-5
Heifers in calf with first calf (< 2 yrs)	34.8	34.1	33.6	-2
Total	62.1	60.8	58.8	-3
Heifers in calf with first calf intended mainly for producing calves for beef				
Heifers in calf with first calf (2 yrs +)	19.1	19.1	18.8	-2
Heifers in calf with first calf (< 2 yrs)	12.7	12.6	12.4	-2
Total	31.9	31.7	31.1	-2
Bulls for service				
2 years old and over	14.5	14.2	13.7	-3
1 year old and under 2 years	3.6	3.5	3.7	4
Total	18.1	17.7	17.4	-2
All other cattle and calves				
2 years old and over				
Male	49.0	46.9	43.7	-7
Females for slaughter	72.7	64.2	49.5	-23
Females for breeding but not in calf	10.8	10.0	8.5	-15
Total	132.6	121.1	101.7	-16
1 year old and under 2 years				
Male	154.3	153.4	166.6	9
Females for slaughter	106.0	104.4	116.0	11
Females for breeding but not in calf	71.5	70.4	75.5	7
Total	331.8	328.3	358.1	9
6 months old and under 1 year				
Male	84.3	90.4	97.7	8
Female	103.4	111.4	115.6	4
Total	187.8	201.8	213.3	6
Under 6 months old				
Male	119.6	131.3	142.0	8
Female	134.4	144.3	155.2	8
Total	254.0	275.6	297.2	8
Total cattle	1,567.3	1,608.9	1,664.6	3

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Table 3 Sheep, pigs and poultry

	June 2014	June 2015	June 2016	% Change 2016/2015
	<hr/> '000 head <hr/>			%
Sheep				
Female sheep for breeding				
Ewes put to the ram in the previous year	794.1	814.3	833.6	2
Other ewes for breeding	116.5	124.3	121.6	-2
Total breeding ewes	910.6	938.6	955.2	2
Rams for service	26.5	27.4	28.3	3
Other sheep over 1 year(a)	15.9	17.8	18.1	2
Total sheep over 1 year	953.0	983.9	1,001.6	2
Under 1 year old	969.9	1,005.8	1,021.4	2
Total sheep & lambs	1,922.9	1,989.7	2,023.0	2
Pigs				
Breeding herd				
Sows in pig	29.3	30.2	31.7	5
Gilts in pig	6.8	7.2	6.3	-13
Others sows (being suckled or dry sows kept for further breeding)	6.8	8.2	8.5	3
Total female breeding herd	42.8	45.6	46.4	2
Gilts 50kg (110lb) liveweight and over, not yet in pig	5.0	5.6	5.5	-2
Boars being used for service	0.9	0.8	0.8	3
Cull Sows	0.6	0.6	0.5	-12
Other Pigs				
Suckling/Weaners/Finishers	467.8	517.2	547.9	6
Total pigs	517.1	569.7	601.1	6
Poultry				
Commercial laying flock				
Total laying birds	3,044.6	3,174.1	3,550.0	12
Growing pullets from day old to point of lay	916.3	908.0	961.9	6
Breeding flock (mainly for producing hatching eggs)	2,413.7	2,404.9	2,282.7	-5
Table birds				
Broilers and other table birds	13,614.2	14,273.1	14,459.2	1
Total ordinary fowl	19,988.8	20,760.1	21,253.8	2
Turkeys and other poultry	412.4	485.6	530.0	9
Total poultry	20,401.1	21,245.7	21,783.8	3

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Table 4 Farm Labour

	June 2014	June 2015	June 2016	% Change 2016/2015
	<u>'000 persons</u>			%
Farmers and workers				
Farmers and partners				
Full-time	16.2	16.6	16.2	-2
Part-time	12.9	13.4	13.6	1
Total farmers	29.1	30.1	29.8	-1
Spouses				
Full-time	1.9	1.8	1.8	0
Part-time	4.4	4.3	4.6	8
Total spouses	6.3	6.1	6.4	5
Other workers				
Full-time				
Paid	2.4	2.5	2.3	-7
Other	1.1	1.0	0.9	-7
Total	3.5	3.5	3.2	-7
Part-time				
Paid	1.5	1.4	1.5	6
Other	2.6	2.6	2.7	6
Total	4.1	4.0	4.2	6
Casual				
Paid	3.2	2.8	2.6	-7
Other	1.7	1.6	1.5	-8
Total	4.9	4.4	4.1	-7
Total other workers	12.5	11.8	11.5	-3
Total farmers, spouses and other workers	47.9	48.0	47.7	-1