

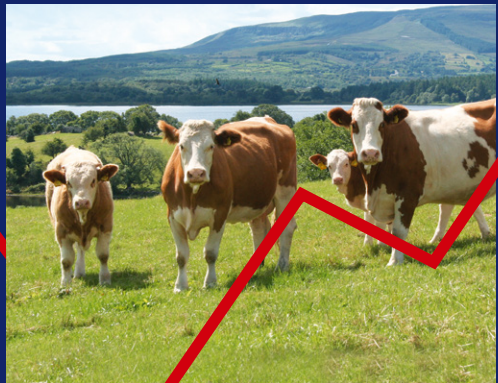
POLICY, ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS DIVISION

Northern Ireland Agri-Food Sector

*Key Statistics December 2022*



Agriculture, Fishing & Forestry



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IN PEOPLE**

Northern Ireland Agri-Food Sector  
Key Statistics  
December 2022

Key Facts on  
Agriculture,  
Fishing and Forestry

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**Table 1: General economic data**

	NI	Scotland	Wales	England	UK	EU 27
GVA per head (£, 2020)	23,035	26,572	21,010	29,757	29,063	24,008
Population ('000, 2021)	1,905	5,480	3,105	56,536	67,026	448,235
Area (sq. km)	13,547	77,901	20,737	130,310	242,741	4,125,107
Population Density (per sq. km, 2021)	141	70	150	434	276	109
Bank Base interest rate (% , December 2022)					3.50	
RPI (% change, April 2021 - April 2022)					11.1	
Unemployment rate (% , Quarter 1 2022)	2.6	3.1	3.0	3.8	3.7	6.2

Unemployment rates are not seasonally adjusted and taken from the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

Rewighting of the Labour Force Survey and Annual Population Survey has made the estimates for UK, EU and non-EU more robust but there remains a high level of uncertainty for data below this level. Changes in those more detailed estimates are likely to reflect the fact that the methodological changes were not targeted at the detailed level, and therefore numbers should not be compared against previous years.

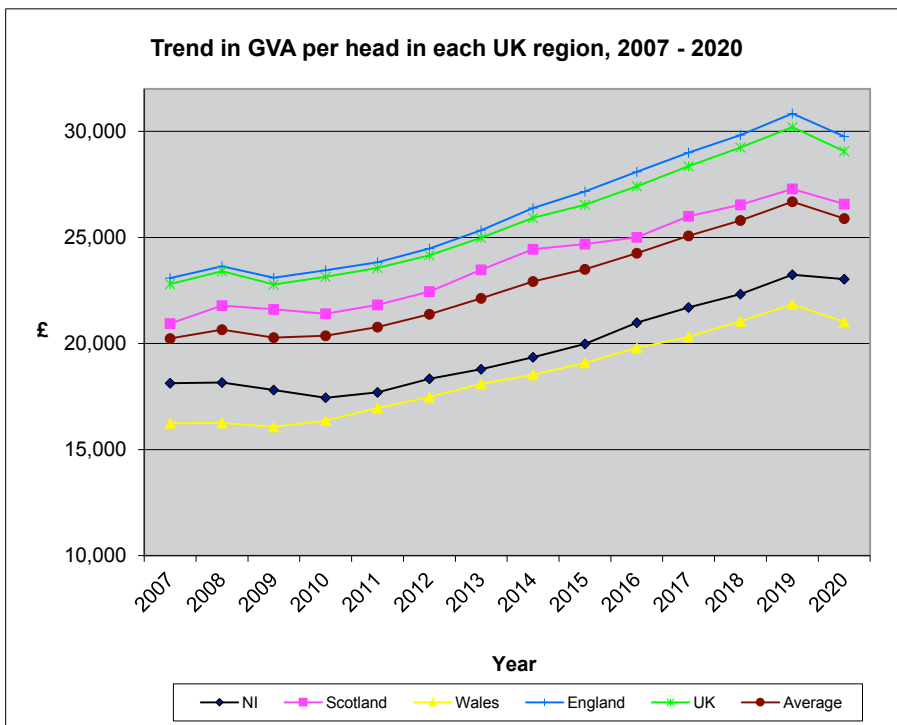
GVA - Gross Value Added (at basic prices).

Note: For GVA figures of UK and individual countries the methodology changed in 2019 from income approach to balanced approach. Take care when comparing with previous publications.

RPI - Retail Price Index

1. 2018

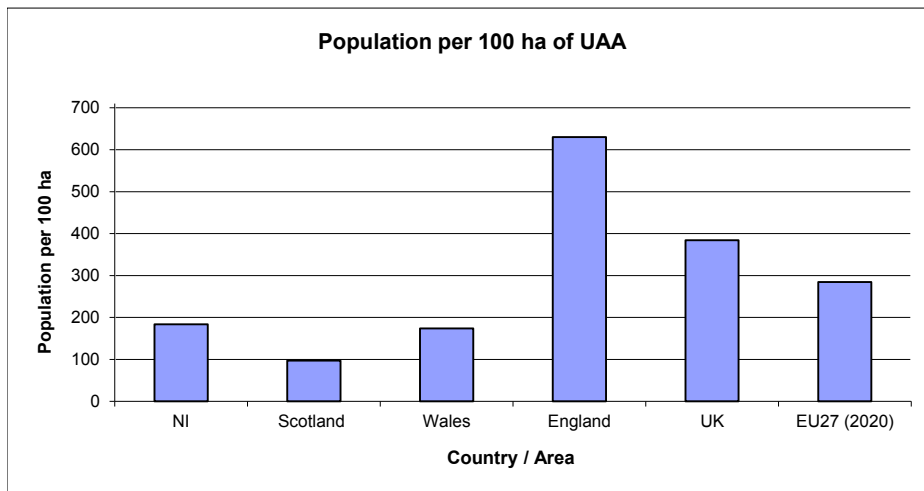
**Figure 1 - Trend in GVA per head in each UK region, 2007 - 2020**



Note: GVA is in current basic prices

Note: The GVA figures this year use the balanced approach. All years in this graph have been restated using this methodology.

**Figure 2 - Population per 100 ha of Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA), 2021**



**Table 2: Agriculture: general data, 2021**

	NI	Scot	Wales	Eng	UK	ROI	EU27
Agriculture share of total GVA (%)	1.6 <sup>P</sup>	0.8 <sup>2</sup>	0.9 <sup>2</sup>	0.5 <sup>2</sup>	0.5	0.9 <sup>1</sup>	1.5 <sup>1</sup>
No. employed in agriculture forestry & fishing ('000)	20	38	25	198	281	101	8,457 <sup>1</sup>
Share of employment (%)	2.3 <sup>4</sup>	1.5 <sup>4</sup>	1.8 <sup>4</sup>	0.7 <sup>4</sup>	0.9 <sup>4</sup>	4.2	4.3 <sup>1</sup>
Number of farms ('000)	26	50	37	105	219	135 <sup>1</sup>	10,283 <sup>3</sup>
Average farm size (Ha)	40	112	48	85	81 <sup>1</sup>	33 <sup>1</sup>	15 <sup>3</sup>
LFA (% Agricultural area)	69	85	80	17	50 <sup>1</sup>	-	-

P. Provisional, 1. 2020, 2. 2018, 3. 2016

4. % of total LFS employment (849,000 in NI, 2,602,000 in Scotland, 1,450,000 in Wales, 27,272,000 in England, 32,173,000 in UK at 2021)

Reweightings of the Labour Force Survey and Annual Population Survey has made the estimates for UK, EU and non-EU more robust, but there remains a high level of uncertainty for data below this level. Changes in those more detailed estimates are likely to reflect the fact that the methodological changes were not targeted at the detailed level, and therefore numbers should not be compared against previous years.

Due to National Accounting principles, GVA figures do not include Direct Subsidy Receipts

Source for UK employment data (SIC 2007, main job) - Labour force survey (2021)

Note: EU27 refers to 27 countries from 2020 which exclude the UK. Take care when comparing with previous publications.

**Table 3: Agriculture in NI: structural adjustment, 2001, 2011 and 2019 - 2021**

	2001	2011	2019	2020	2021
Number of farms	29,818	24,436	24,827	25,896	26,077
Average farm size (Ha)	35.8	40.6	41.2	39.8	39.7
Total farmers and workers	56,362	46,848	49,423	51,301	52,195

There were a number of changes to methodology in 2020 that have had a significant impact on the number of farms and farm workers.

The change between 2019 and 2020 is more likely because of these changes than anything in happening in agriculture itself.

Further details of this available at:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/daera/Farm%20Census%20Methodology%20Changes%202020.pdf>

**Table 4: Agri - food sector GVA and employment, 2021**

	NI		UK	
	£m	% of GVA	£m	% of GVA
<b>Gross value added<sup>1</sup></b>				
Agriculture	716	1.6 <sup>3</sup>	11,222 <sup>3</sup>	0.5 <sup>3</sup>
Food and drink processing	1,088 <sup>2</sup>	2.6 <sup>2</sup>	29,828 <sup>3</sup>	1.6 <sup>3</sup>
<b>Employment</b>	<b>'000 persons</b>	<b>% of total employment</b>	<b>'000 persons</b>	<b>% of total employment</b>
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	20	2.3 <sup>4</sup>	281	0.9 <sup>5</sup>
Food and drink processing <sup>7</sup>	12 <sup>6</sup>	1.4 <sup>4</sup>	351	1.1 <sup>5</sup>

1. GVA figures are at basic prices.

2. Northern Ireland Food and Drinks Processing Report 2020. This excludes the value added of those food and drinks processing businesses with a turnover of less than £250,000.

3. UK and NI GVA agriculture are 2021 provisional figures. UK GVA food and drink processing are 2018 figures.

4. % of total LFS employment (849,000 NI at 2021)

5. % of total LFS employment (32,173,000 in UK at 2021)

6. Please note that the 95% confidence interval for this figure ranges from 9,000 to 15,000

7. Includes SIC 2007 10.11 - 11.07

**Table 5: Distribution of farm outputs in NI and share of UK totals, 2021**

	% of NI total		NI output as % of UK output
	Gross output	Gross Margin	
<b>Enterprise</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Dairy	33.1	50.1	16.9
Cattle	19.9	18.4	14.8
Sheep & wool	3.9	4.8	6.2
Pigs	8.6	6.3	14.5
Poultry & eggs	18.5	7.7	12.1
Cereals & other crops	2.6	4.7	1.0
Potatoes	0.9	1.5	3.0
Horticulture	3.6	5.7	2.1
Others	9.0	0.7	4.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>8.1</b>

Source: Aggregate Agricultural Account.

Note: Figures are based on provisional estimates

**Table 6: NI food and drink processing sector - gross turnover, value added, employment by subsector, external and export sales, 2020**

Subsector	Gross turnover	Value added	Employees <sup>1</sup>	External <sup>2</sup> Sales	Export Sales <sup>3</sup>
	£m	£m		£m	£m
Animal by-products	48	11	110	*	*
Bakeries	442	153	4,403	241	112
Beef and sheepmeat	1,470	236	5,639	1,246	243
Drinks	422	119	1,306	244	206
Eggs	190	29	405	131	12
Fish	90	20	604	75	28
Fruit and vegetables	416	120	3,068	294	84
Milk and milk products	1,187	126	2,132	913	588
Pigmeat	454	72	1,922	354	129
Poultrymeat	706	203	5,491	*	*
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,424</b>	<b>1,088</b>	<b>25,078</b>	<b>4,165</b>	<b>1,514</b>

1. Full - time equivalents. This is an estimation of the total direct employment in the sector, as some workers are provided by employment agencies and not shown in these figures. The August 2022 edition of the Size and Performance publication presented an estimation of agency employment in 2020 at 1,480 full-time equivalents.

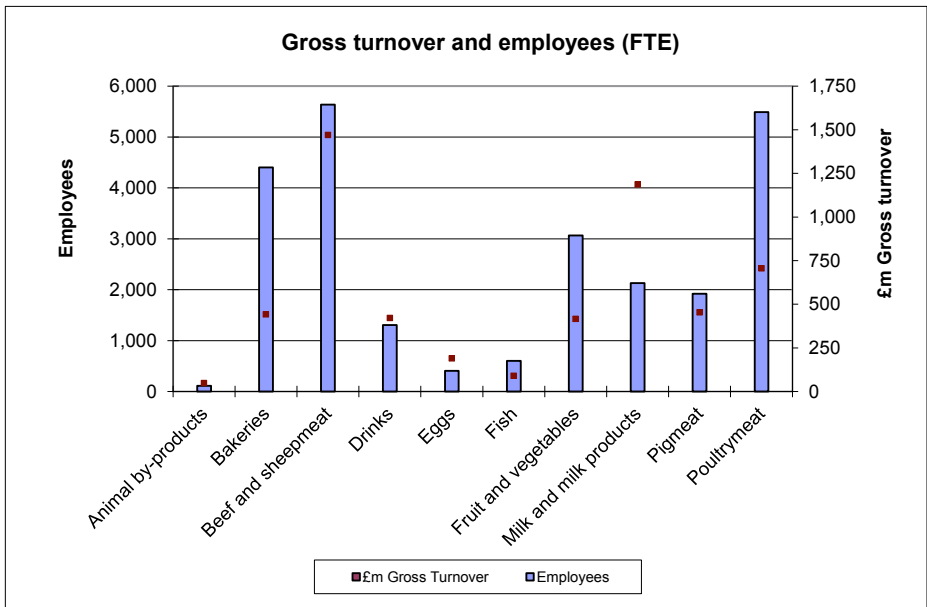
2. Sales outside NI

3. Sales outside UK

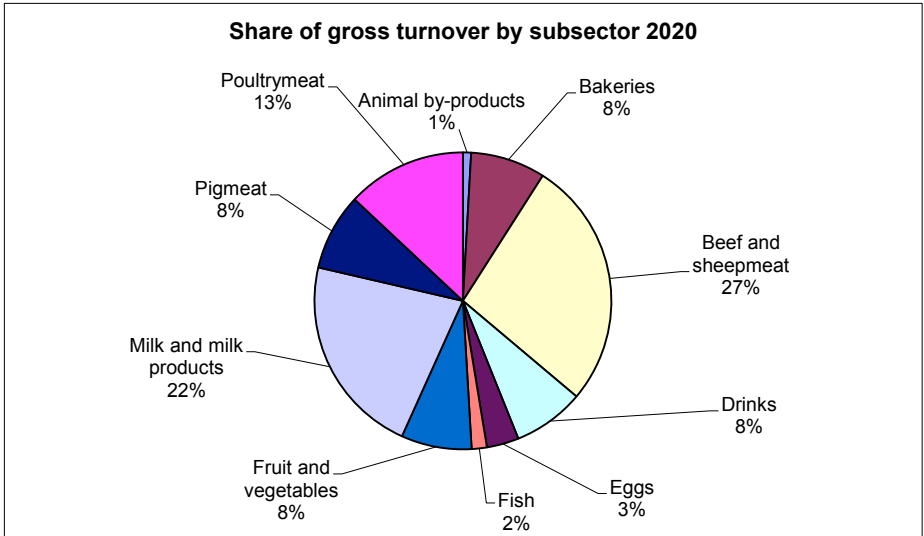
Source: Northern Ireland Food and Drinks Processing Report 2020

These figures exclude those food and drinks processing businesses with a turnover of less than £250,000.

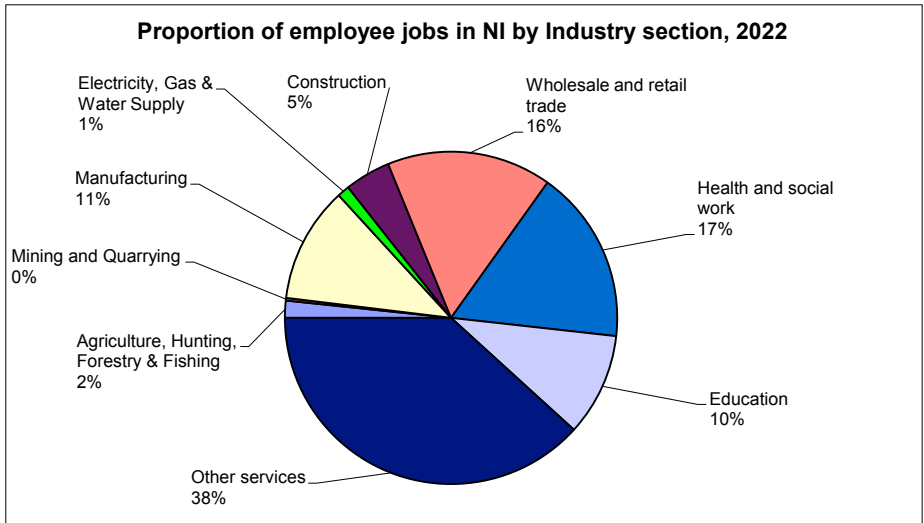
**Figure 3 - Gross turnover and full time equivalent (FTE) workforce by food processing subsector in NI, 2020**



**Figure 4 - Proportion of gross turnover by subsector in NI, 2020**



**Figure 5 - Proportion of employee jobs by Industry section, March 2022**





**Table 7: Total income from farming, NI and UK, 2021**

	NI	UK
Total income from farming (£)	£501m	£5,998
% change on previous year :		
Current prices	8%	14%
Real terms	8%	14%

Source: Aggregate Agricultural Account

Note: For an explanation of the change in TIFF in NI and UK see Chapter 1 of the Statistical Review of NI Agriculture 2021 and Chapter 4 of Agriculture in the UK 2021.

**Table 8: Average income<sup>1</sup> by type of farm, NI, 2019/20 and 2020/21**

	Net farm income <sup>2</sup>		Farm Business Income <sup>3</sup>		Cash income <sup>4</sup>	
	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21
<b>Type of farm:</b>						
Cereals	32,675	32,628	33,563	33,514	64,198	63,729
Dairy	44,157	55,292	50,701	62,758	82,454	90,700
Cattle & sheep (LFA)	6,049	12,996	13,460	20,454	24,800	29,246
Cattle & sheep (Lowland)	4,814	11,573	13,784	21,242	19,270	23,440
Mixed	10,535	32,229	32,145	53,395	64,203	60,463

Source: Farm Business Survey in Northern Ireland 2019/20 and 2020/21

1. Based on information gathered from farms over 0.5 Standard Labour Requirements
2. The calculation of net farm income assumes that all farms are tenanted: net farm income therefore represents the return to the principal farmer and spouse for their manual and managerial labour and on the tenant-style capital of the business.
3. Farm Business income is the return to all unpaid labour and to their capital invested (inc land and buildings) in the business
4. Cash income is the difference between total receipts and total expenditure

**Table 9: Net farm Income, Farm Business Income and Cash Income for dairy, LFA cattle & sheep, and mixed farms throughout the UK, 2019/20 and 2020/21**

	Dairy		LFA Cattle & Sheep		Mixed	
	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21
<b>Net farm income</b>						
England	68,900	75,700	14,000	23,600	11,400	21,900
Wales	33,922	42,898	11,534	18,103	2,815	24,270
Scotland	51,332	93,479	6,474	10,636	-7,078	20,467
NI	44,157	55,292	6,049	12,996	10,535	32,229
<b>Farm Business Income</b>						
England	84,800	92,500	22,800	33,400	28,900	40,200
Wales	50,719	60,167	22,600	29,932	17,808	38,269
Scotland	51,712	99,637	15,278	20,456	10,540	45,327
NI	50,701	62,758	13,460	20,454	32,145	53,395
<b>Cash income</b>						
England	128,200	137,100	36,200	43,500	73,100	82,300
Wales	83,179	94,120	37,334	44,433	47,345	69,008
Scotland	90,690	121,740	32,227	40,088	50,255	71,114
NI	82,454	90,700	24,800	29,246	64,203	60,463

Source: Farm Business Survey in Northern Ireland 2019/20 and 2020/21

Note: All regions define farm types using Standard Output Methodology. All regions use 2013SO averages

Note: England figures to nearest £100

**Table 10: Number of farms in the UK by size & country, 2021**

	<b>Business size (SLR) <sup>1</sup></b>				<b>Total</b>
	<b>Very small</b>	<b>Small</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Large / Very Large</b>	
<b>Farms</b>					
NI	20,454	2,747	1,177	1,699	26,077
England <sup>2</sup>	69,461	13,686	7,273	14,800	105,220
Scotland	39,708	2,975	1,832	5,716	50,231
Wales	27,971	3,178	1,754	3,415	36,318
<b>Total</b>	<b>157,594</b>	<b>22,586</b>	<b>12,036</b>	<b>25,630</b>	<b>217,846</b>

1. Standard Labour Requirements

2. Figures which relate to commercial holdings only as defined by EU regulation.

3. Excludes holdings with a SLR of zero

**Table 11: Percentage distribution of farms in the UK by size & country, 2021**

	<b>Business size (SLR)</b>				<b>Total</b>
	<b>Very small</b>	<b>Small</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Large / Very Large</b>	
<b>Farms (%)</b>					
NI	78	11	5	7	100
England <sup>1</sup>	66	13	7	14	100
Scotland	79	6	4	11	100
Wales	77	9	5	9	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 12: Number of farms in NI by size and type, 2021**

<b>Business type</b>	<b>Business size (SLR)</b>				
	<b>Very small</b>	<b>Small</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Large</b>	<b>All sizes</b>
Cereals	213	39	10	5	<b>267</b>
General cropping	1,118	30	17	36	<b>1,201</b>
Horticulture	94	42	28	62	<b>226</b>
Pigs	62	25	27	68	<b>182</b>
Poultry	137	254	123	108	<b>622</b>
Dairy	229	693	578	1,062	<b>2,562</b>
Cattle and sheep (LFA)	13,739	1,116	229	151	<b>15,235</b>
Cattle and sheep (Lowland)	4,582	466	121	86	<b>5,255</b>
Mixed and Other type	280	82	44	121	<b>527</b>
<b>All types</b>	<b>20,454</b>	<b>2,747</b>	<b>1,177</b>	<b>1,699</b>	<b>26,077</b>

Source: June 2021 Agricultural Survey

**Table 13: Crop areas and livestock numbers, NI, 2001, 2011 and 2019 - 2021**

	2001	2011	2019	2020	2021
<b>Livestock ('000 head)</b>					
<b>Cattle</b>					
Dairy cows	295.0	282.5	313.5	313.3	318.4
Beef cows	311.8	269.5	247.0	244.7	247.0
Total cattle	1,679.1	1,590.5	1,611.8	1,611.5	1,682.0
<b>Sheep</b>					
Breeding ewes	1,232.3	895.2	938.5	946.1	968.3
Total sheep	2,525.6	1,887.6	1,986.9	1,990.9	2,034.8
<b>Pigs</b>					
Female Breeding pigs	40.6	38.0	47.5	45.9	50.1
Total pigs	385.6	425.3	674.4	681.5	716.8
<b>Poultry</b>					
Laying flock	2,142.6	2,429.7	4,998.7	4,936.6	4,313.2
Broilers	8,863.6	14,069.4	15,351.6	15,364.5	15,946.7
<b>Crops ('000 hectares)</b>					
Cereals	39.5	37.9	29.8	29.5	30.5
Potatoes	6.7	4.8	3.8	3.7	3.5
Horticultural crops	3.1	3.0	2.8	2.7	2.8

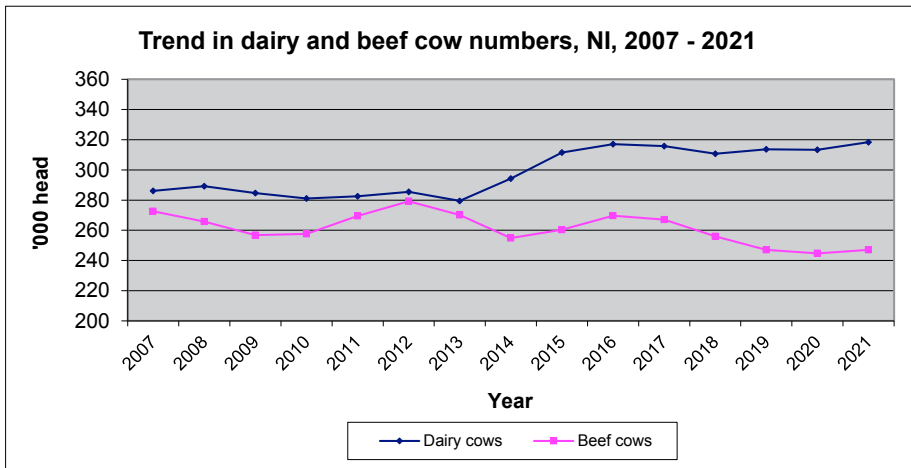
Source: June Agricultural Survey

Notes: From 2005 onwards, cattle figures were derived from APHIS

From 2007 onwards, poultry figures were taken from the Northern Ireland Bird Register Update

From 2013 onwards, pig figures derived from the Northern Ireland Annual Inventory of Pigs

**Figure 6 - Trend in dairy and beef cow numbers, NI, 2007 - 2021**



**Table 14: Average size of enterprise, NI, 2001, 2011 and 2019 - 2021**

	2001	2011	2019	2020	2021
<b>Average livestock numbers (per herd/flock)</b>					
Dairy cows	58	80	95	96	98
Beef cows	19	18	17	17	17
Total cattle	67	78	81	79	82
Ewes	119	106	97	97	101
Total sheep	240	218	200	200	207
Sows	68	90	174	169	186
Total pigs	568	750	1,843	1,721	1,774
Total poultry (farms with 500 or more birds)	23,931	28,928	32,388	32,679	33,498
<b>Average cropping areas (ha)</b>					
Cereals	10	13	15	15	15
Potatoes	6	7	9	10	9

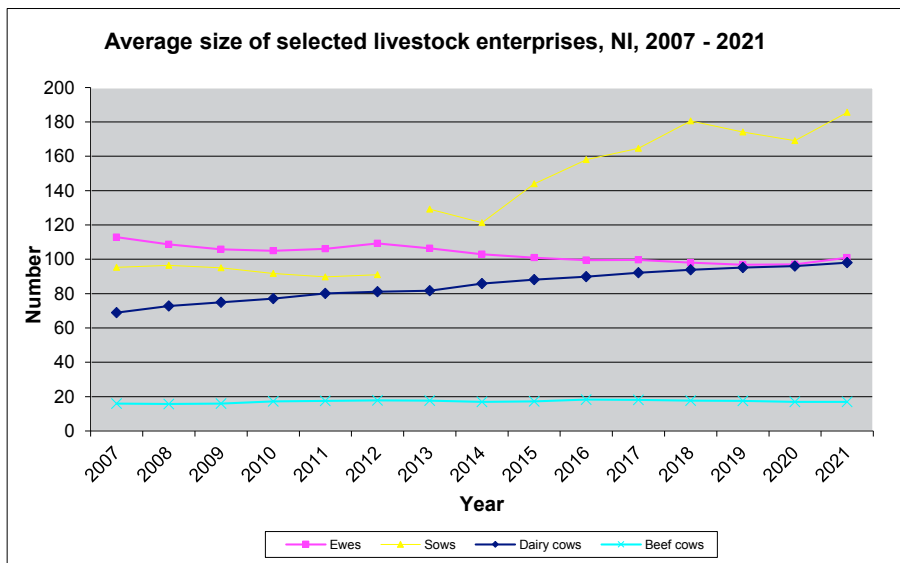
Source: June Agricultural Survey

Notes: From 2005 onwards, cattle figures were derived from APHIS

From 2007 onwards, poultry figures were taken from the Northern Ireland Bird Register Update

From 2013 onwards, pig figures derived from the Northern Ireland Annual Inventory of Pigs

**Figure 7 - Average size of selected livestock enterprises, NI, 2007 - 2021**



Note: From 2013 onwards, pig figures derived from the Northern Ireland Annual Inventory of Pigs

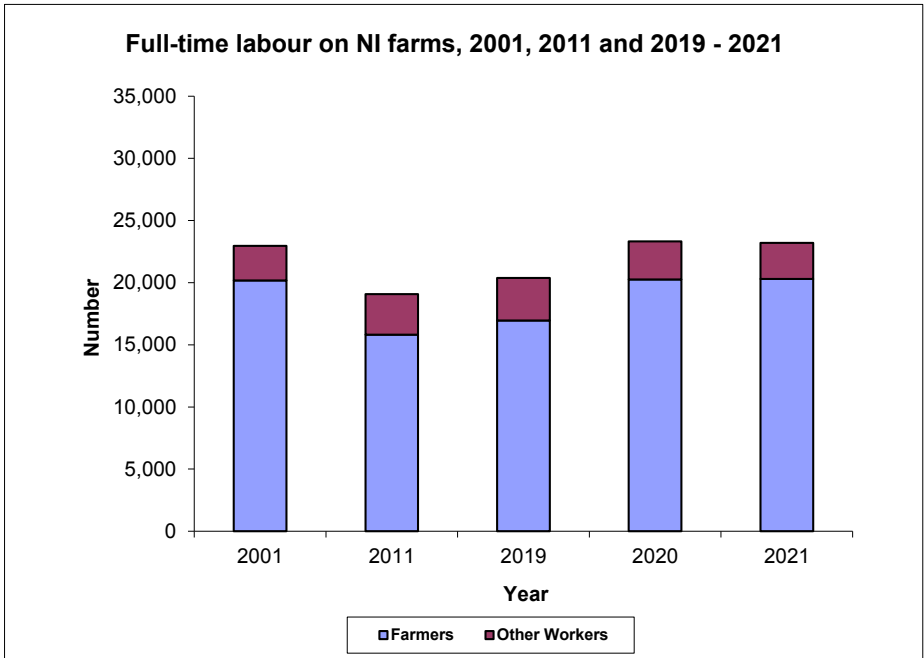
**Table 15: Number of farmers and workers, NI, 2001, 2011 and 2019 - 2021**

	2001	2011	2019	2020	2021
<b>Farmers, partners &amp; directors:</b>					
Full-time	20,169	15,823	16,954	20,253	20,294
Part-time	15,786	13,320	13,859	19,065	20,073
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,955</b>	<b>29,143</b>	<b>30,813</b>	<b>39,318</b>	<b>40,367</b>
<b>Spouses</b>	<b>6,520</b>	<b>6,263</b>	<b>6,700</b>	<b>N/A<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>N/A<sup>1</sup></b>
<b>Other workers</b>					
Full-time	2,797	3,249	3,430	3,058	2,902
Part-time	2,691	3,436	4,453	3,829	4,018
Casual/Seasonal	8,308	4,757	4,027	5,096	4,908
<b>Total other workers</b>	<b>13,796</b>	<b>11,442</b>	<b>11,910</b>	<b>11,983</b>	<b>11,828</b>
<b>Total agricultural labour force</b>	<b>56,271</b>	<b>46,848</b>	<b>49,423</b>	<b>51,301</b>	<b>52,195</b>

Source: June Agricultural Survey

1. From 2020 on Spouses were included in the Farmers, Partners and Directors questions. In previous years data on spouses was collected as a separate question.

**Figure 8 - Full-time labour on NI farms, 2001, 2011 and 2019 - 2021**

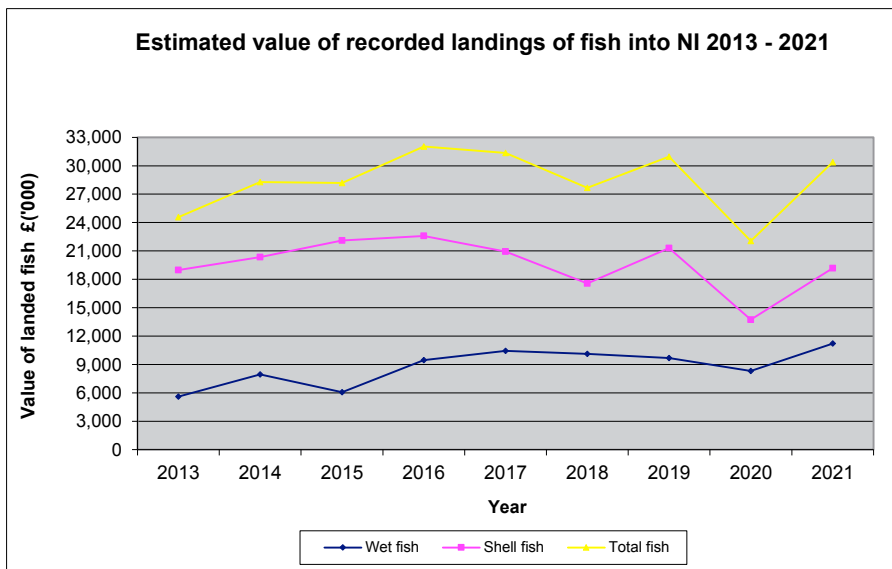


**Table 16: Liveweight and estimated value of recorded landings of fish into NI, 2018 - 2021**

	2018		2019		2020		2021	
	Tonnes	£ ('000)	Tonnes	£ ('000)	Tonnes	£ ('000)	Tonnes	£ ('000)
<b>Total wet fish</b>	13,965	10,113	11,414	9,683	11,896	8,309	19,125	11,206
<b>Total shell fish</b>	8,452	17,553	8,841	21,289	7,272	13,740	9,560	19,170
<b>Total fish</b>	22,417	27,666	20,255	30,972	19,168	22,048	28,685	30,376

Source: Marine and Fisheries Division, DAERA

**Figure 9 - Estimated value of recorded landings of fish into NI, 2013 - 2021**



**Table 17: Employment in NI fishing industry, 2018 - 2021**

	2018		2019		2020		2021	
	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time
<b>Catching</b>	686	168	654	168	633	176	632	184
<b>Processing and marketing</b>	618	263	470	250	583	257	573	237
<b>Others</b>	118	58	111	56	91	49	117	54
<b>Total</b>	1,422	489	1,235	474	1,337	482	1,322	475

Source: Marine and Fisheries Division, DAERA

**Table 18: Area of woodland throughout the UK by forest type, 2021**

	Conifers ('000 HA)	Broadleaves ('000 HA)	Total ('000 HA)	% of Total Land Area in Forestry
<b>United Kingdom</b>	1,645	1,584	3,229	13.3%
<b>England</b>	342	979	1,320	10.1%
<b>Scotland</b>	1,088	392	1,480	19.0%
<b>Wales</b>	152	158	310	14.9%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	64	55	119	8.8%

Source: Forestry Commission

**Table 19: Number of farms using agricultural contractors in 2016**

	Very Small	Small	Med/Large	All
Hay/Silage Making	14,043	2,096	2,015	18,154
Crop Harvesting	990	307	518	1,815
Spreading slurry/fertilisers etc	7,559	1,399	1,639	10,597
Other field work	2,601	568	715	3,884
Milking	65	117	255	437
Sheep shearing	4,697	884	572	6,153
Other livestock work	1,253	218	208	1,679
Hedge cutting	11,891	2,030	1,890	15,811

Source: EU Farm Structure Survey 2016, NI

**Table 20: Percentage of farms using agricultural contractors by business size in 2016**

	Very Small	Small	Med/Large	All
Hay/Silage Making	75	71	69	74
Crop Harvesting	5	10	18	7
Spreading slurry/fertilisers etc	41	48	56	43
Other field work	14	19	24	16
Milking	0	4	9	2
Sheep shearing	25	30	19	25
Other livestock work	7	7	7	7
Hedge cutting	64	69	64	64

Source: EU Farm Structure Survey 2016, NI

**Table 21: Number of farms using agricultural contractors from 2007-2016**

	2007	2010	2013	2016
Hay/Silage Making	18,015	16,787	17,514	18,154
Crop Harvesting	1,979	1,932	2,023	1,815
Spreading slurry/fertilisers etc	10,500	10,257	10,520	10,597
Other field work	3,749	3,613	3,742	3,884
Milking	599	443	415	437
Sheep shearing	4,432	3,877	5,417	6,153
Other livestock work	1,474	1,178	1,363	1,679
Hedge cutting	14,705	13,905	15,007	15,811

Source: EU Farm Structure Survey 2016, NI



## Further information

### 1. Northern Ireland

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), [www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)  
[www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics)

Agricultural Census in N.I. 2021 publication

Statistical Review of N.I. Agriculture 2021 publication

Northern Ireland Food and Drinks Processing Report 2020 publication

EU Farm Structure Survey 2016 (ISBN no. 978-1-84807-798-0)

Farm Incomes in N.I. publication

Food consumption and expenditure information

Fisheries statistics

Forestry statistics

### 2. United Kingdom

Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), [www.gov.uk/defra](http://www.gov.uk/defra)  
[www.gov.uk/government/collections/agriculture-in-the-united-kingdom](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/agriculture-in-the-united-kingdom)

GOV.UK statistics release calendar  
[www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)

### 3. Republic of Ireland

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, [www.agriculture.gov.ie](http://www.agriculture.gov.ie)  
[www.agriculture.gov.ie/](http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/)

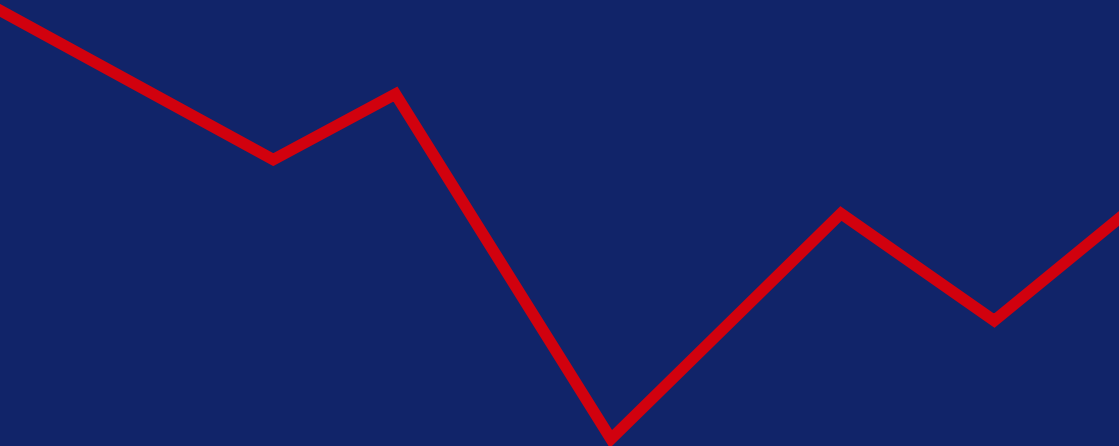
Central statistics office Ireland, [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)  
[www.cso.ie/en/statistics/agriculture/](http://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/agriculture/)

Ireland's Open Data Portal, <https://data.gov.ie/>  
<https://data.gov.ie/dataset?theme=Agriculture>

### 4. European Union

Eurostat, [www.ec.europa.eu/eurostat](http://www.ec.europa.eu/eurostat)  
<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/agriculture/overview>

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