

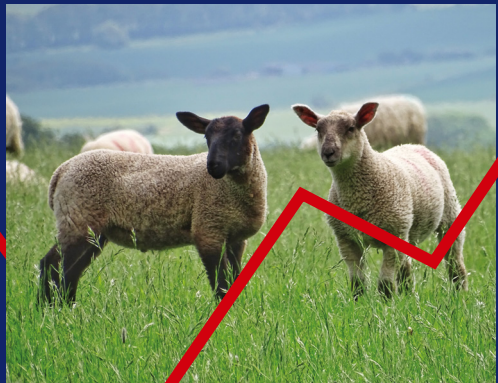
POLICY, ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS DIVISION

Northern Ireland Agri-Food Sector

*Key Statistics December 2021*



Agriculture, Fishing & Forestry



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**INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE**

Northern Ireland Agri-Food Sector  
Key Statistics  
December 2021

Key Facts on  
Agriculture,  
Fishing and Forestry

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Policy, Economics and Statistics Division  
DAERA

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**Table 1: General economic data**

	NI	Scotland	Wales	England	UK	EU 27
GVA per head (£, 2019)	22,298	26,968	21,295	30,239	29,599	24,574
Population ('000, 2020)	1,896	5,466	3,170	56,550	67,081	447,164
Area (sq. km)	13,588	77,911	20,736	130,310	242,545	4,125,107 <sup>1</sup>
Population Density (per sq. km, 2020)	139	70	153	434	277	108
Bank Base interest rate (% , August 2021)					0.10	
RPI (% change, April 2020 - April 2021)					2.9	
Unemployment rate (% , Quarter 1 2021)	3.4	4.3	4.4	4.9	4.8	7.4

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

Reweighting 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.

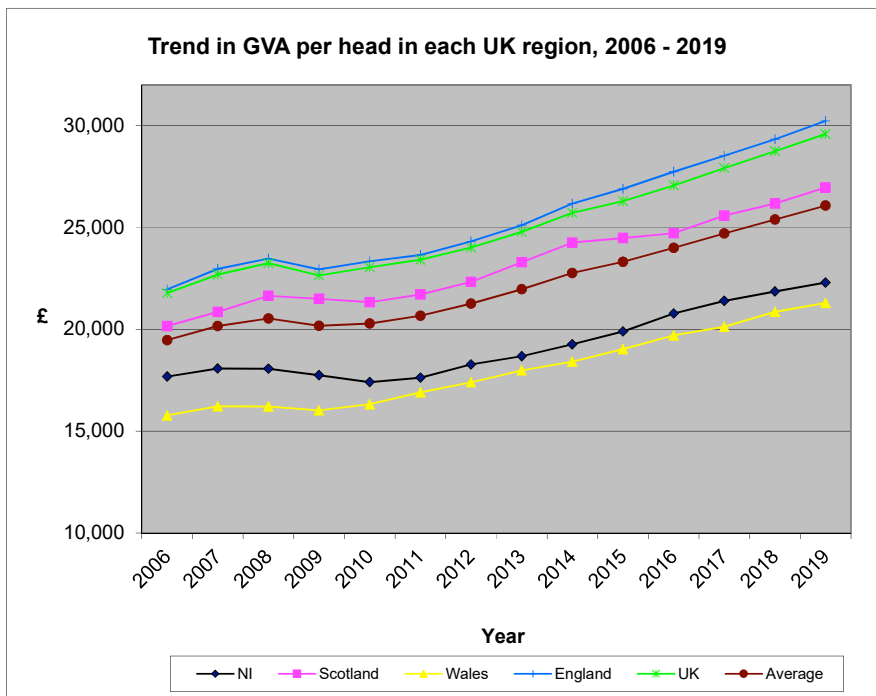
GVA - Gross Value Added (at basic prices).

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

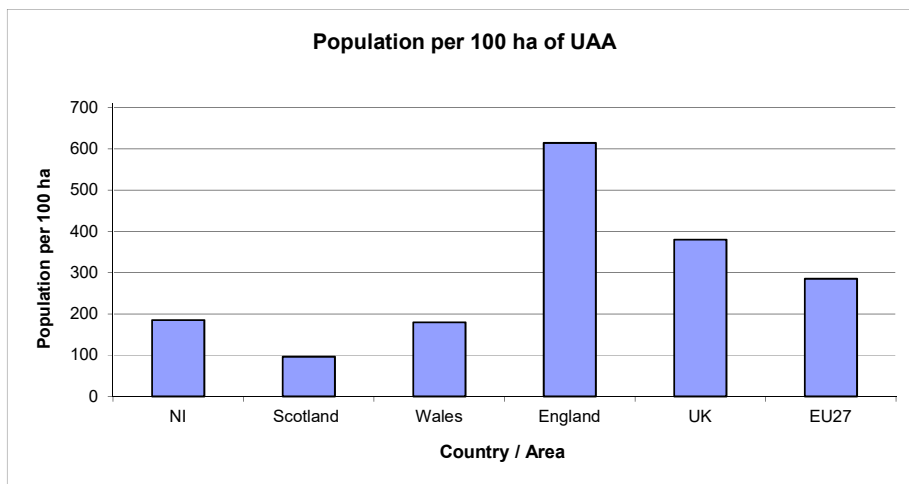
**Figure 1 - Trend in GVA per head in each UK region, 2006 - 2019**



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), 2019**



**Table 2: Agriculture: general data, 2020**

	NI	Scot	Wales	Eng	UK	ROI	EU27
Agriculture share of total GVA (%)	1.6	0.8 <sup>2</sup>	0.9 <sup>2</sup>	0.5 <sup>2</sup>	0.5	0.9	1.5
No. employed in agriculture forestry & fishing ('000)	23	39	31	211	304	106 <sup>5</sup>	8,457
Share of employment (%)	2.7 <sup>4</sup>	1.5 <sup>4</sup>	2.1 <sup>4</sup>	0.8 <sup>4</sup>	0.9 <sup>4</sup>	4.6 <sup>5</sup>	4.3
Number of farms ('000)	26	51	37	107	221	138 <sup>3</sup>	10,283 <sup>3</sup>
Average farm size (Ha)	40	122	46	85	81 <sup>1</sup>	32 <sup>3</sup>	15 <sup>3</sup>
LFA (% Agricultural area)	69	86	80	18	50 <sup>1</sup>	-	-

1. 2019, 2. 2018, 3. 2016

4. % of total LFS employment (859,000 in NI, 2,615,000 in Scotland, 1,437,000 in Wales, 27,451,000 in England, 32,361,000 in UK at 2020) Reweighting 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.

5. CSO Labour Force Survey, 4th quarter, 2020

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 (2020)

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, 2000, 2010 and 2018-2020**

	2000	2010	2018	2019	2020	
Number of farms	28,891	24,471	24,895	24,827	25,896	
Average farm size (Ha)		36.7	40.6	41.1	41.2	39.8
Total farmers and workers	57,823	46,948	49,248	49,423	51,301	

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, 2020**

	NI		UK	
	£m	% of GVA	£m	% of GVA
<b>Gross value added<sup>1</sup></b>				
Agriculture	673	1.6 <sup>3</sup>	9,435 <sup>3</sup>	0.5 <sup>3</sup>
Food and drink processing	998 <sup>2</sup>	2.4 <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	23	2.7 <sup>4</sup>	304	0.9 <sup>5</sup>
Food and drink processing <sup>7</sup>	12 <sup>6</sup>	1.5 <sup>4</sup>	337	1.0 <sup>5</sup>

1. GVA figures are at basic prices.

2. Northern Ireland Food and Drinks Processing Report 2019. 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 2020 provisional figures. UK GVA food and drink processing are 2018 figures.

4. % of total LFS employment (859,000 in NI at 2020)

5. % of total LFS employment (32,361,000 in UK at 2020)

6. Please note that the 95% confidence interval for this figure ranges from 9,000 to 16,000

7. Includes SIC 2007 10.11 - 11.07

**Table 5: Distribution of farm outputs in NI and share of UK totals, 2020**

Enterprise	% of NI total		NI output as % of UK output
	Gross output	Gross Margin	
	%	%	%
Dairy	30.0	45.1	15.2
Cattle	19.7	18.1	14.9
Sheep & wool	3.8	4.6	6.2
Pigs	9.7	9.9	15.0
Poultry & eggs	19.2	10.2	12.0
Cereals & other crops	1.9	3.0	1.0
Potatoes	0.9	1.6	2.5
Horticulture	4.3	6.9	2.4
Others	10.7	0.7	5.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>8.3</b>

Source: Aggregate Agricultural Account.

**Table 6: NI food and drink processing sector - gross turnover, value added, employment by subsector, external and export sales, 2019**

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	45	11	102	*	*
Bakeries	406	135	4,541	246	125
Beef and sheepmeat	1,390	190	5,617	1,184	242
Drinks	449	109	1,442	250	210
Eggs	190	29	417	130	15
Fish	93	19	624	78	29
Fruit and vegetables	393	104	2,959	268	80
Milk and milk products	1,228	138	2,299	1,035	573
Pigmeat	400	66	1,730	299	177
Poultrymeat	772	199	5,215	*	*
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,365</b>	<b>998</b>	<b>24,945</b>	<b>4,123</b>	<b>1,575</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 July 2021 edition of the Size and Performance publication presented an estimation of agency employment in 2019 at 2,034 full-time equivalents.

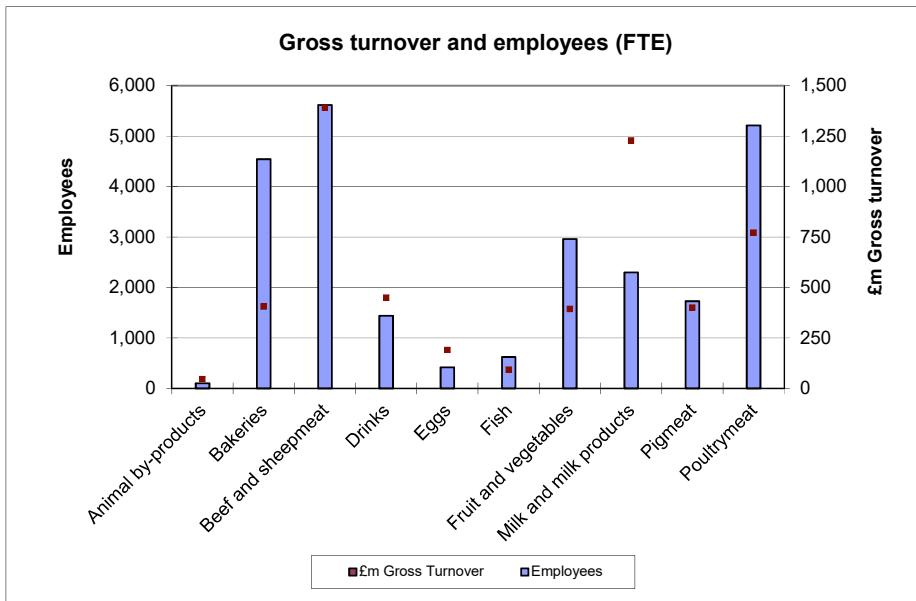
2. Sales outside NI

3. Sales outside UK

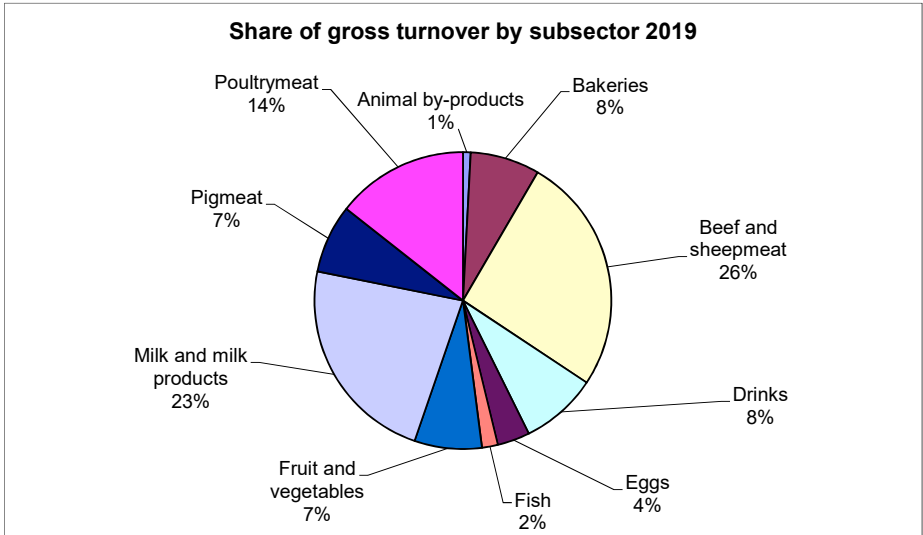
Source: Northern Ireland Food and Drinks Processing Report 2019.

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

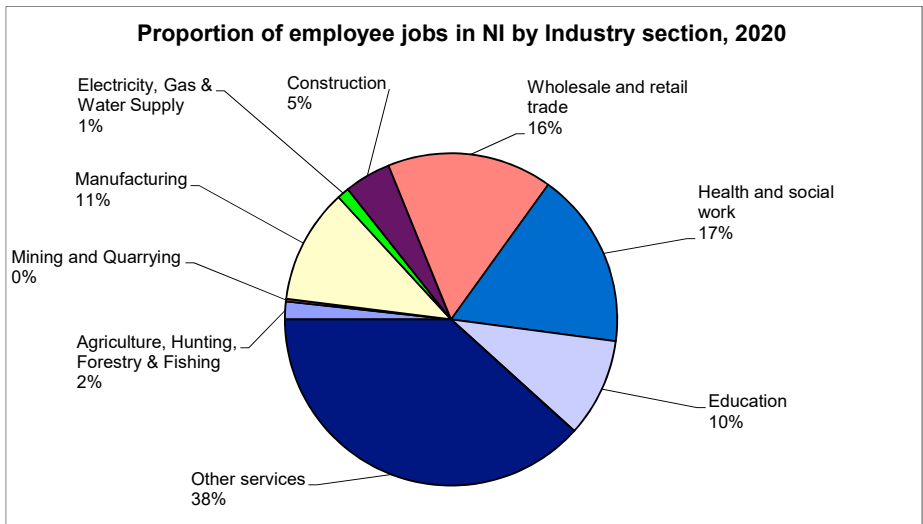
**Figure 3 - Gross turnover and full time equivalent (FTE) workforce by food processing subsector in NI, 2019**



**Figure 4 - Proportion of gross turnover by subsector in NI, 2019**



**Figure 5 - Proportion of employee jobs by Industry section, December 2020**





**Table 7: Total income from farming, NI and UK, 2020**

	NI	UK
Total income from farming (£)	£456m	£4,119
% change on previous year :		
Current prices	34%	-16%
Real terms	26%	-20%

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 2020 and Chapter 4 of Agriculture in the UK 2020.

**Table 8: Average income<sup>1</sup> by type of farm, NI, 2018/19 and 2019/20**

	Net farm income <sup>2</sup>		Farm Business Income <sup>3</sup>		Cash income <sup>4</sup>	
	2018/19	2019/20	2018/19	2019/20	2018/19	2019/20
<b>Type of farm:</b>						
Cereals	41,783	25,619	47,334	30,440	73,820	53,503
Dairy	54,725	45,195	58,576	51,803	91,905	82,038
Cattle & sheep (LFA)	6,701	6,466	14,268	15,244	27,257	26,830
Cattle & sheep (Lowland)	5,761	2,876	14,524	11,869	29,057	24,962
Mixed	36,290	29,277	36,328	30,029	58,172	75,582

Source: Farm Business Survey in Northern Ireland 2018/19 and 2019/20

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, 2018/19 and 2019/20**

	Dairy		LFA Cattle & Sheep		Mixed	
	2018/19	2019/20	2018/19	2019/20	2018/19	2019/20
<b>Net farm income</b>						
England	64,600	68,900	5,900	14,000	30,300	11,400
Wales	31,632	33,922	8,043	11,534	6,890	2,815
Scotland	71,333	50,653	6,483	6,535	18,940	-9,596
NI	54,725	45,195	6,701	6,466	36,290	29,277
<b>Farm Business Income</b>						
England	79,700	84,800	15,500	22,800	45,500	28,900
Wales	46,603	50,719	18,874	22,600	23,523	17,808
Scotland	68,029	51,022	15,782	15,417	35,709	8,074
NI	58,576	51,803	14,268	15,244	36,328	30,029
<b>Cash income</b>						
England	122,000	128,200	31,100	36,200	80,200	73,100
Wales	78,589	83,179	33,421	37,334	52,170	47,345
Scotland	96,982	90,415	34,317	32,784	64,034	48,465
NI	91,905	82,038	27,257	26,830	58,172	75,582

Source: Farm Business Survey in Northern Ireland 2018/19 and 2019/20

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, 2020**

	<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	20,329	2,765	1,167	1,635	25,896
England <sup>2,4</sup>	68,953	14,149	7,827	15,171	106,100
Scotland	40,556	2,902	1,839	5,669	50,966
Wales <sup>3</sup>	28,723	3,137	1,782	3,260	36,902
<b>Total</b>	<b>158,561</b>	<b>22,953</b>	<b>12,615</b>	<b>25,735</b>	<b>219,864</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

4. Figures for England for 2020 are unavailable, 2019 data used

**Table 11: Percentage distribution of farms in the UK by size & country, 2020**

	<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	79	11	5	6	100
England <sup>1</sup>	65	13	7	14	100
Scotland	80	6	4	11	100
Wales	78	9	5	9	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>

1. Figures for England for 2020 are unavailable, 2019 data used

**Table 12: Number of farms in NI by size and type, 2020**

<b>Business type</b>	<b>Business size (SLR)</b>				<b>All sizes</b>
	<b>Very small</b>	<b>Small</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Large</b>	
Cereals	197	39	12	6	<b>254</b>
General cropping	1,016	36	16	37	<b>1,105</b>
Horticulture	92	38	28	68	<b>226</b>
Pigs	61	26	22	64	<b>173</b>
Poultry	143	263	118	104	<b>628</b>
Dairy	261	700	597	1,045	<b>2,603</b>
Cattle and sheep (LFA)	13,698	1,093	215	131	<b>15,137</b>
Cattle and sheep (Lowland)	4,559	486	112	73	<b>5,230</b>
Mixed	253	83	47	107	<b>490</b>
Others	49	1	0	0	<b>50</b>
<b>All types</b>	<b>20,329</b>	<b>2,765</b>	<b>1,167</b>	<b>1,635</b>	<b>25,896</b>

Source: June 2020 Agricultural Survey

**Table 13: Crop areas and livestock numbers, NI, 2000, 2010 and 2018 - 2020**

	2000	2010	2018	2019	2020
<b>Livestock ('000 head)</b>					
<b>Cattle</b>					
Dairy cows	284.4	281.0	310.7	313.5	313.3
Beef cows	318.0	257.6	255.9	247.0	244.7
Total cattle	1,676.5	1,604.4	1,629.1	1,611.8	1,611.5
<b>Sheep</b>					
Breeding ewes	1,332.6	875.9	956.5	938.5	946.1
Total sheep	2,740.6	1,847.7	2,006.0	1,986.9	1,990.9
<b>Pigs</b>					
Female Breeding pigs	41.8	38.5	49.6	47.5	45.9
Total pigs	413.5	424.6	633.6	674.4	681.5
<b>Poultry</b>					
Laying flock	2,300.0	2,099.4	4,331.9	4,998.7	4,936.6
Broilers	9,655.4	11,915.1	17,663.0	15,351.6	15,364.5
<b>Crops ('000 hectares)</b>					
Cereals	40.7	37.8	29.7	29.8	29.5
Potatoes	6.8	4.9	3.6	3.8	3.7
Horticultural crops	3.3	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.7

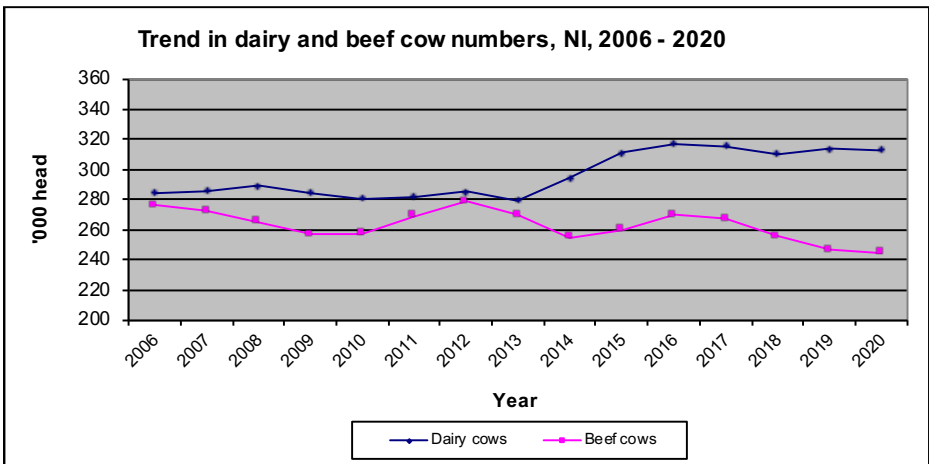
Source: June Agricultural Survey

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, 2006 - 2020**



**Table 14: Average size of enterprise, NI, 2000, 2010 and 2018 - 2020**

	2000	2010	2018	2019	2020
<b>Average livestock numbers (per herd/flock)</b>					
Dairy cows	54	77	94	95	96
Beef cows	19	17	18	17	17
Total cattle	67	79	81	81	79
Ewes	124	105	98	97	97
Total sheep	253	216	201	200	200
Sows	61	92	180	174	169
Total pigs	512	757	2,037	1,843	1,721
Total poultry (farms with 500 or more birds)	22,778	29,157	33,846	32,388	32,679
<b>Average cropping areas (ha)</b>					
Cereals	10	13	15	15	15
Potatoes	6	7	8	9	10

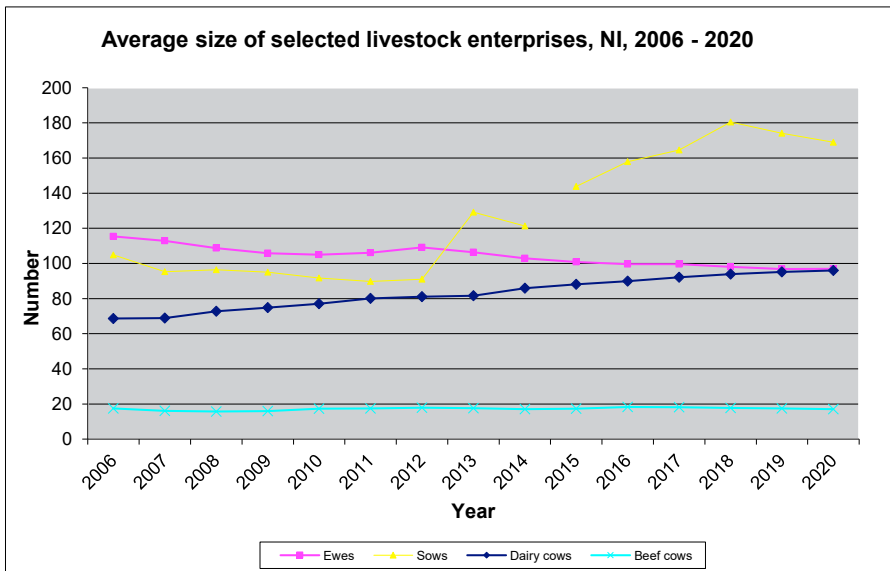
Source: June Agricultural Survey

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, 2006 - 2020**



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

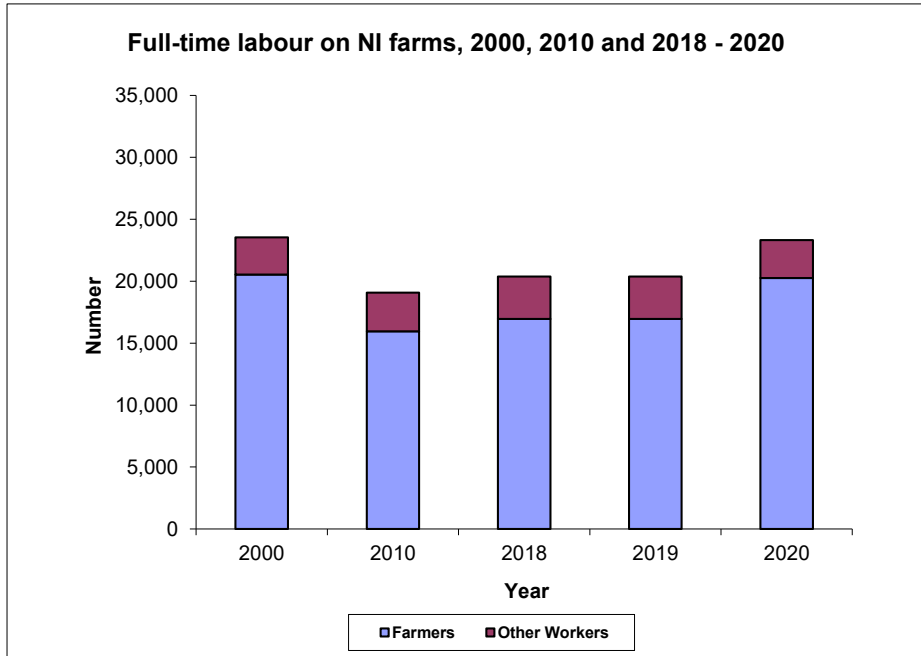
**Table 15: Number of farmers and workers, NI, 2000, 2010 and 2018 - 2020**

	2000	2010	2018	2019	2020
<b>Farmers, partners &amp; directors:</b>					
Full-time	20,534	15,965	16,964	16,954	20,253
Part-time	15,386	13,596	13,721	13,859	19,065
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,920</b>	<b>29,561</b>	<b>30,685</b>	<b>30,813</b>	<b>39,318</b>
<b>Spouses</b>	<b>7,034</b>	<b>6,206</b>	<b>6,542</b>	<b>6,700</b>	<b>N/A<sup>1</sup></b>
<b>Other workers</b>					
Full-time	3,005	3,106	3,411	3,430	3,058
Part-time	2,793	3,220	4,340	4,453	3,829
Casual/Seasonal	8,785	5,217	4,270	4,027	5,096
<b>Total other workers</b>	<b>14,583</b>	<b>11,543</b>	<b>12,021</b>	<b>11,910</b>	<b>11,983</b>
<b>Total agricultural labour force</b>	<b>57,537</b>	<b>47,310</b>	<b>49,248</b>	<b>49,423</b>	<b>51,301</b>

Source: June Agricultural Survey

1. In 2020 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, 2000, 2010 and 2018 - 2020**

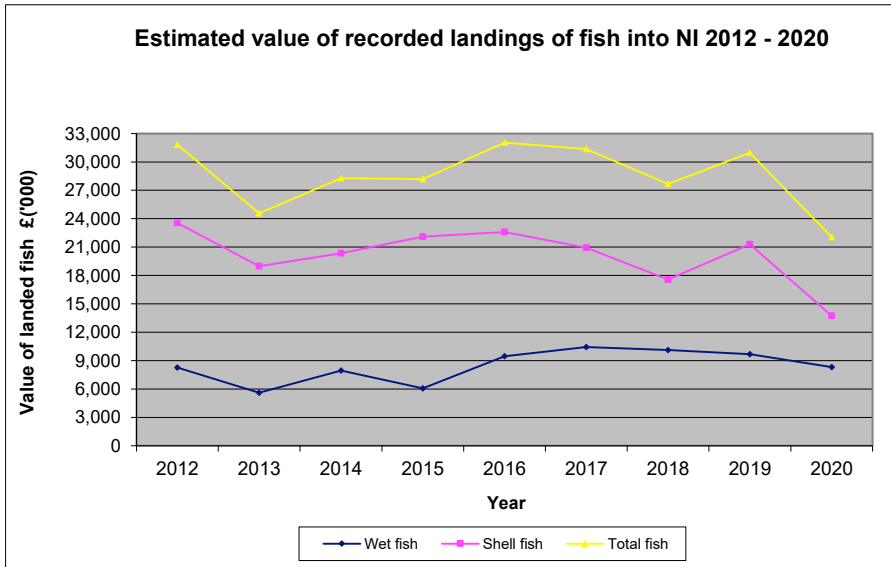


**Table 16: Liveweight and estimated value of recorded landings of fish into NI, 2017 - 2020**

	2017		2018		2019		2020	
	Tonnes	£ ('000)	Tonnes	£ ('000)	Tonnes	£ ('000)	Tonnes	£ ('000)
<b>Total wet fish</b>	11,791	10,433	13,965	10,113	11,414	9,683	11,896	8,309
<b>Total shell fish</b>	9,596	20,925	8,452	17,553	8,841	21,289	7,272	13,740
<b>Total fish</b>	21,387	31,358	22,417	27,666	20,255	30,972	19,168	22,048

Source: Marine and Fisheries Division, DAERA

**Figure 9 - Estimated value of recorded landings of fish into NI, 2012 - 2020**



**Table 17: Employment in NI fishing industry, 2017 - 2020**

	2017		2018		2019		2020	
	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time
<b>Catching</b>	686	152	686	168	654	168	633	176
<b>Processing and marketing</b>	530	242	618	263	470	250	583	257
<b>Others</b>	126	56	118	58	111	56	91	49
<b>Total</b>	1,342	450	1,422	489	1,235	474	1,337	482

Source: Marine and Fisheries Division, DAERA

**Table 18: Area of woodland throughout the UK by forest type, 2020**

	Conifers ('000 HA)	Broadleaves ('000 HA)	Total ('000 HA)	% of Total Land Area in Forestry
<b>United Kingdom</b>	1,635	1,571	3,206	13.2%
<b>England</b>	340	971	1,311	10.1%
<b>Scotland</b>	1,079	388	1,467	18.8%
<b>Wales</b>	152	158	309	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. 2020 publication

Statistical Review of N.I. Agriculture 2020 publication

Northern Ireland Food and Drinks Processing Report 2019 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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