

Revision published 16 September 2009

## **ORGANIC STATISTICS 2008 UNITED KINGDOM**

This version of the Organics Statistical release has been published to revise figures for in-conversion land that were omitted from the original publication. This omission of 42,000 ha. arose due to a coding error and affected mainly permanent pasture land in Wales with a very small amount in the West Midlands. The tables affected are the land area tables (1 to 5).

The original National Statistics produced by Defra on the organic farming sector were released on 20 August 2009, according to the arrangements approved by the UK Statistics Authority. This release shows information gathered during 2008 for organic crops and livestock produced in the United Kingdom, and the numbers of organic producers / processors who are registered with Organic Certification Bodies in the UK.

The key results are:

### **Land areas (Tables 1 to 5)**

At a UK level the total organic land area has increased by 9% between 2007 and 2008. The main changes are in the cereals area which has increased by 11% to 57,200 ha. and vegetables area (including potatoes) which has increased by 17% over the year. During 2008 some of the certifying bodies have made refinements to their data recording systems to bring them into line with EU requirements. This has resulted in some changes of classification between land area categories, and an improvement in the crop area figures.

### **Livestock numbers (Tables 6 to 9)**

Generally, numbers have continued to increase for UK organic livestock with the numbers of cattle, sheep and pigs all showing increases over the previous year. The pig sector showed the largest increase of 41% to 71 thousand. Organic poultry numbers showed a slight decrease of 2%. Cattle numbers for the UK have increased by 28% to 320 thousand, mainly due to a rise in the number of suckler cows. Sheep numbers have increased by 37%, mainly due to the number of breeding females. These increases in livestock numbers are partly due to rising numbers of holdings being registered as organic in Scotland and Wales.

### **Producer / processor numbers (Tables 10 to 12)**

The number of organic producer / processors has shown a slight increase (4%) to almost 7900 at the end of 2008. This increase is mainly due to increases in the number of organic producers in Wales and Scotland as mentioned above. In Wales, the large increase in the number of organic producers results from farmers taking advantage of grants offered by the Welsh Assembly Government.

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## Detailed results

Figure 1 shows organic crop areas over time from 2003 to 2008. The graph shows that of the crop types shown, cereal area has increased steadily since 2004. Vegetables have shown a more gradual increase in area over time, with the remaining crop types showing fluctuating areas of coverage over the time period indicated.

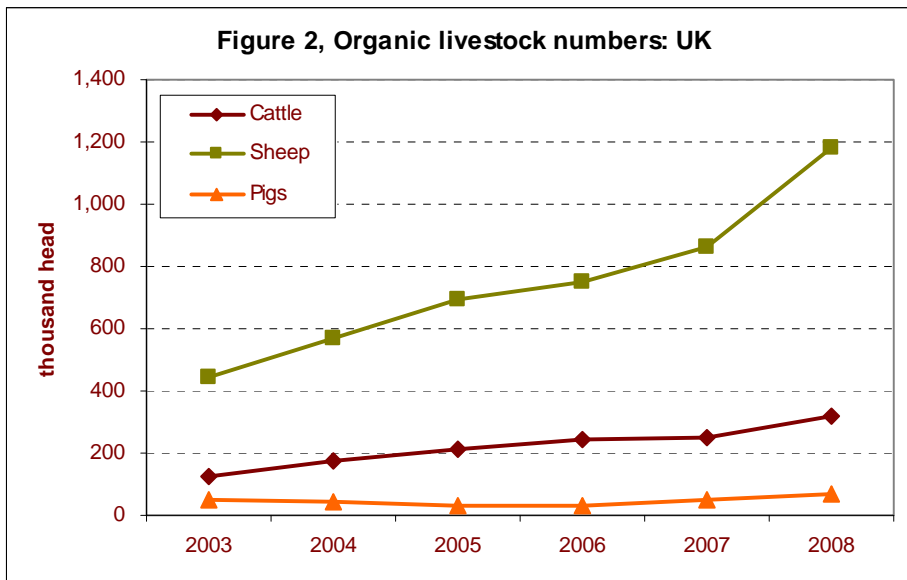
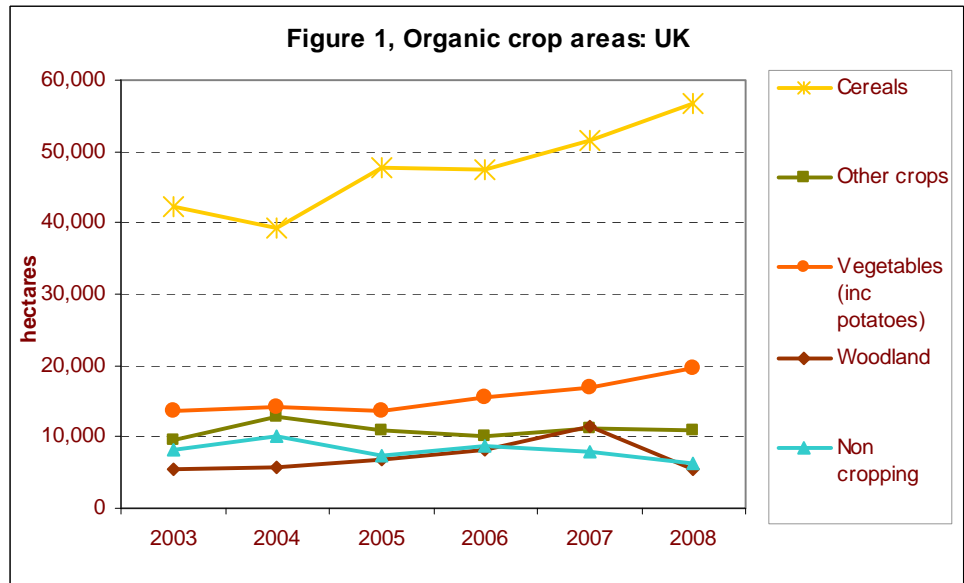
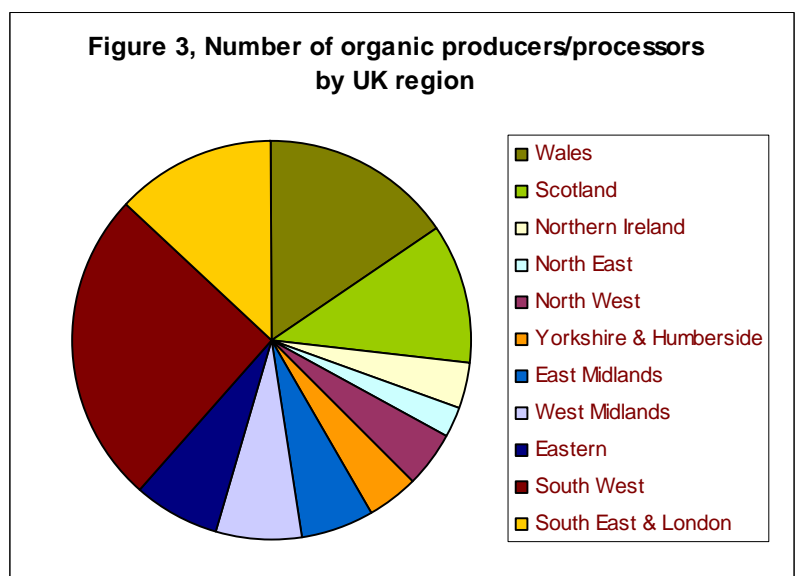


Figure 2 shows numbers of organic cattle, sheep and pigs over time from 2003 to 2008. The graph shows that for all these livestock types the general trend has been for numbers (of head) to increase. Pigs show a very slight increase with sheep showing a more dramatic increase.

Figure 3 shows the regional distribution of organic producers / processors in the UK. The region with the greatest number of organic producers / processors is the South West with a quarter of the UK total. Wales has the next largest number of producers / processors with 16 per cent, closely followed by the South East & London with 13 per cent and Scotland with 11 per cent of the UK total. The UK region with the smallest number of organic producers / processors is the North East which has just two per cent of the UK total.



## **Organic statistics methodology**

This statistical release contains data compiled from the UK Organic Certification Bodies. Each year, certifier bodies visit their registered farms to carry out annual inspections. During these inspections, certifiers record the crop areas and numbers of livestock present on the organic holding on that day.

The data collected during these inspections is sent to Defra each January, to form the annual return required under Eurostat Commission Regulation No. 889/2008 of 5 September 2008. The data also feeds into the 'Action plan to develop organic food and farming in England' which can be found at the following link:  
<http://defraweb/farm/organic/policy/actionplan/>

The data collated by Defra for these returns is presented in this statistical release. Due to the nature of the inspections, the data is collected at varying times through the year. Therefore, the data presented here does not give an exact snapshot of organic farming at any specific time of year so should be treated with caution.

### **Note**

In this statistical release, unless specified otherwise, all data includes both in-conversion and fully organic holdings.

## **Organics overview**

Only food that has been produced in accordance with organic standards by farmers/producers registered with an approved inspection body may be legally sold as 'organic' within the EU. The inputs and practices used in organic farming are strictly regulated in accordance with EU Regulation (please see <http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/organic/standards/index.htm> for more details on organic standards and current legislation).

### **Key elements of organic farming systems**

The main components of an organic farming system are the avoidance of artificial fertilisers and pesticides and the use of crop rotations and other forms of husbandry to maintain soil fertility and control weeds, pests and diseases. Livestock also form an integral part of the majority of organic farms, although there are some successful stockless systems. Organic standards do not allow intensively housed stock or systems where a large amount of total feed has to be bought in. Pigs and poultry must be managed extensively under an organic system, with extensive outdoor access.

### **Conversion**

In most cases land must be managed organically for a minimum of two years (three years for top fruit orchards) before it is granted approved 'organic' status and is eligible for organic certification. Producers can then sell their produce as 'organic' and organic livestock breeding can commence.

For further information about organic farming, please see <http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/organic/systems/index.htm>

## **Other relevant data sources**

Data on national crop areas and livestock numbers are collected through the annual June Survey of Agriculture. Results from this survey can be accessed at: <https://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/Juneengns.htm>

The next update from the June Survey of Agriculture will be the provisional results from the 2009 survey which are published on 17 September 2009.

This Statistical release will be updated in July 2010.

**Table 1 Organic land areas time series (UK)**

	<i>hectares</i>						
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	% change 2008 / 2007
Cereals	42,375	39,291	47,694	47,456	51,544	57,239	11.0%
Other crops	9,464	12,929	10,788	10,201	11,272	11,161	-1.0%
Fresh vegetables (inc potatoes)	13,671	14,093	13,718	15,544	16,878	19,756	17.1%
Fruit & nuts	1,613	1,659	1,691	1,794	2,025	1,884	-6.9%
Herbaceous & ornamentals (a)	234	255	812	693	612	5,508	800.0%
Temporary pasture	90,021	90,728	97,907	102,662	125,113	129,855	3.8%
Permanent pasture (inc. rough grazing) (b)	519,423	495,026	428,330	422,607	452,021	494,316	9.4%
Woodland	5,502	5,844	6,856	8,159	11,484	5,885	-48.8%
Other	12,675	14,681	12,056	10,665	11,248	17,911	59.2%
<b>Total organic land area</b>	<b>694,979</b>	<b>674,506</b>	<b>619,852</b>	<b>619,783</b>	<b>682,196</b>	<b>743,516</b>	<b>9.0%</b>

(a) The large increase in the area of 'herbaceous & ornamental' plants in 2008 is due to improvements in the data recording systems.

(b) The majority of the omitted land (39,000 ha) appears in permanent pasture

**Table 2 Organic land areas time series (England)**

	<i>hectares</i>						
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	% change 2008 / 2007
Cereals	34,477	30,531	39,349	37,114	40,084	43,954	9.7%
Other crops	7,697	11,258	9,208	8,200	8,884	7,628	-14.1%
Fresh vegetables (inc potatoes)	10,882	11,070	11,297	12,410	13,481	15,185	12.6%
Fruit & nuts	1,543	1,580	1,593	1,683	1,865	1,844	-1.1%
Herbaceous & ornamentals (a)	185	230	780	682	545	4,185	667.4%
Temporary pasture	71,028	71,016	77,613	81,963	101,467	106,300	4.8%
Permanent pasture (inc. rough grazing) (b)	120,154	122,790	140,170	142,133	164,884	184,903	12.1%
Woodland	2,169	2,323	5,063	5,805	9,082	4,310	-52.5%
Other	8,848	7,662	6,505	6,395	7,489	6,758	-9.8%
<b>Total organic land area</b>	<b>256,984</b>	<b>258,458</b>	<b>291,578</b>	<b>296,386</b>	<b>347,781</b>	<b>375,067</b>	<b>7.8%</b>

(a) The large increase in the area of 'herbaceous & ornamental' plants in 2008 is due to improvements in the data recording systems.

(b) The majority of the omitted land (210 ha) appears in permanent pasture.

**Table 3 Detailed organic land type 2008 (UK)**

				<i>hectares</i>	
	In conversion	Fully organic	Total	Total crop area at June 2008 (b)	Organic area as % of total crop type
<b>Total cereals</b>	<b>9,923</b>	<b>47,316</b>	<b>57,239</b>	3,272,075	1.7%
Wheat	4,512	17,812	22,324	2,080,463	1.1%
Barley	3,135	12,410	15,545	1,031,960	1.5%
Oats	1,092	11,525	12,617	134,664	9.4%
Other cereals	1,184	5,569	6,753	24,989	27.0%
<b>Other crops</b>	<b>2,486</b>	<b>8,675</b>	<b>11,161</b>	991,894	1.1%
Sugar beet	35	152	188	119,654	0.2%
Fodder, silage and other crops	1,810	6,174	7,984	73,183	10.9%
Other crops	641	2,349	2,990	799,058	0.4%
Fresh vegetables	1,835	14,651	16,486	271,566	6.1%
Potatoes	205	3,065	3,270	143,317	2.3%
Fruit & nuts	374	1,510	1,884	32,912	5.7%
Herbaceous & ornamentals (a)	586	4,922	5,508	12,866	42.8%
Temporary pasture	31,048	98,808	129,855	2,058,362	6.3%
Permanent pasture (inc. rough grazing) (c)	96,022	398,294	494,316	8,897,334	5.6%
Woodland	2,709	3,176	5,885	716,163	0.8%
Other	3,916	13,995	17,911	n/a	n/a
<b>Total organic land area</b>	<b>149,103</b>	<b>594,413</b>	<b>743,516</b>		

(a) The large increase in the area of 'herbaceous & ornamental' plants in 2008 is due to improvements in the data recording systems.

(b) Source: Defra June Survey of Agriculture

(c) The majority of the omitted land (39,000) appears in permanent pasture

**Table 4 Detailed organic land type 2008 (England)**

				<i>hectares</i>	
	In conversion	Fully organic	Total	Total crop area at June 2008 (b)	Organic area as % of total crop type
<b>Total cereals</b>	<b>8,420</b>	<b>35,534</b>	<b>43,954</b>	2,729,606	1.6%
Wheat	4,273	15,811	20,085	1,934,708	1.0%
Barley	2,376	7,255	9,630	664,856	1.4%
Oats	859	7,819	8,678	106,576	8.1%
Other cereals	912	4,650	5,561	23,467	23.7%
<b>Other crops</b>	<b>1,969</b>	<b>5,659</b>	<b>7,628</b>	901,320	0.8%
Sugar beet	28	139	168	119,654	0.1%
Fodder, silage and other crops	1,428	3,603	5,031	34,644	14.5%
Other crops	513	1,917	2,430	747,023	0.3%
Fresh vegetables	1,554	11,673	13,227	252,330	5.2%
Potatoes	185	1,773	1,958	106,457	1.8%
Fruit & nuts	367	1,477	1,844	29,505	6.3%
Herbaceous & ornamentals (a)	475	3,710	4,185	11,772	35.5%
Temporary pasture	27,751	78,549	106,300	635,956	16.7%
Permanent pasture (inc. rough grazing) (c)	45,951	138,952	184,903	3,428,942	5.4%
Woodland	2,196	2,115	4,310	318,833	1.4%
Other	2,208	4,550	6,758	n/a	n/a
<b>Total organic land area</b>	<b>91,074</b>	<b>283,993</b>	<b>375,067</b>		

(a) The large increase in the area of 'herbaceous & ornamental' plants in 2008 is due to improvements in the data recording systems.

(b) Source: Defra June Survey of Agriculture

(c) The majority of the land omitted (210 ha) appears in permanent pasture.

**Table 5 Organic land areas by UK region 2008**

	<i>hectares</i>				
	In conversion	Fully organic	Total (ha)	Total agricultural area at June 2008 (a & b)	Organic area as % of total agricultural area
<b>UK</b>	<b>149,103</b>	<b>594,413</b>	<b>743,516</b>	<b>17,449,891</b>	<b>4.3%</b>
England	91,074	283,993	375,067	9,339,040	4.0%
Wales	49,475	75,143	124,617	1,455,000	8.6%
Scotland	6,204	225,137	231,341	5,638,470	4.1%
Northern Ireland	2,350	10,141	12,490	1,017,381	1.2%
North East	9,780	25,642	35,422	597,238	5.9%
North West	3,786	21,180	24,966	932,113	2.7%
Yorkshire & Humberside	3,841	10,899	14,740	1,106,375	1.3%
East Midlands	3,732	12,234	15,966	1,223,834	1.3%
West Midlands	8,194	29,671	37,865	964,993	3.9%
Eastern	4,797	13,219	18,016	1,428,191	1.3%
South West	46,549	123,939	170,488	1,885,692	9.0%
South East (Inc London)	10,395	47,209	57,605	1,200,603	4.8%

(a) excludes common grazing land

(b) Source: Defra June Survey of Agriculture

**Table 6 Organic livestock numbers time series (UK)**

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	<i>no. head</i> % change 2008 / 2007
Cattle	126,813	174,751	214,276	244,752	250,376	319,587	27.6%
Sheep	440,674	571,615	691,000	747,299	863,122	1,178,306	36.5%
Pigs	48,803	43,733	29,995	32,926	50,435	71,229	41.2%
Poultry	2,166,152	2,431,555	3,439,548	4,421,326	4,440,698	4,362,939	-1.8%
Goats	699	513	544	585	539	409	-24.1%
Other livestock	1,015	1,183	1,486	4,318	3,415	4,372	28.0%

**Table 7 Organic livestock numbers time series (England)**

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	<i>no. head</i> % change 2008 / 2007
Cattle	94,800	127,822	152,198	177,057	176,029	214,148	21.7%
Sheep	147,263	222,368	269,738	283,148	308,972	370,095	19.8%
Pigs	18,528	21,496	27,091	32,282	49,008	57,115	16.5%
Poultry	1,348,171	1,654,681	2,240,680	2,820,207	2,674,220	2,293,879	-14.2%
Goats	670	488	506	532	505	376	-25.5%
Other livestock	636	743	1,129	3,078	1,685	2,308	37.0%

**Table 8 Organic livestock numbers 2008 (UK)**

					<i>no. head</i>
	In conversion	Fully organic	Total	Total livestock at June 2008 (a)	Organic as % of total livestock
Cattle	20,693	298,894	319,587	10,104,108	3.2%
Sheep	46,032	1,132,274	1,178,306	33,121,998	3.6%
Pigs	913	70,316	71,229	4,713,522	1.5%
Poultry	32,176	4,330,763	4,362,939	166,199,313	2.6%
Goats	33	376	409	93,112	0.4%
Other Livestock	524	3,848	4,372	n/a	n/a

(a) Source: Defra June Survey of Agriculture

**Table 9 Organic livestock numbers 2008 (England)**

					<i>no. head</i>
	In conversion	Fully organic	Total	Total livestock at June 2008 (a)	Organic as % of total livestock
Cattle	16,573	197,575	214,148	5,486,477	3.9%
Sheep	33,764	336,331	370,095	15,535,215	2.4%
Pigs	882	56,233	57,115	3,854,388	1.5%
Poultry	5,645	2,288,234	2,293,879	128,083,143	1.8%
Goats	30	346	376	81,952	0.5%
Other Livestock	524	1,784	2,308	n/a	n/a

(a) Source: Defra June Survey of Agriculture

**Table 10 Number of organic producers and/or processors time series**

	<i>numbers</i>						
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	% change 2008 / 2007
<b>UK</b>	<b>5,958</b>	<b>6,038</b>	<b>6,413</b>	<b>7,043</b>	<b>7,631</b>	<b>7,896</b>	<b>3.5%</b>
England	4,200	4,257	4,554	5,005	5,516	5,474	-0.8%
Wales	719	755	800	835	953	1,230	29.1%
Scotland	856	809	792	911	860	889	3.4%
Northern Ireland	183	217	267	292	302	303	0.3%
North East	103	104	129	161	173	179	3.5%
North West	289	289	311	332	367	367	0.0%
Yorkshire & Humberside	254	271	279	319	356	330	-7.3%
East Midlands	406	401	416	446	487	449	-7.8%
West Midlands	455	452	478	520	556	555	-0.2%
Eastern	483	485	508	556	574	551	-4.0%
South West	1,354	1,378	1,532	1,732	1,961	2,002	2.1%
South East (Inc London)	856	877	901	939	1,042	1,041	-0.1%

**Table 11 Numbers of organic producers and processors by UK region 2008**

	<i>numbers</i>				
	Number of producers only	Number of producer / processors	Number of processors only	Total	
<b>UK</b>	<b>5,177</b>		<b>206</b>	<b>2,513</b>	<b>7,896</b>
England	3,194		172	2,108	5,474
Wales	1,079		20	131	1,230
Scotland	658		13	218	889
Northern Ireland	246		1	56	303
North East	127		6	46	179
North West	175		10	182	367
Yorkshire & Humberside	150		10	170	330
East Midlands	218		11	220	449
West Midlands	361		13	181	555
Eastern	251		14	286	551
South West	1472		74	456	2,002
South East (Inc London)	440		34	567	1,041

**Table 12 Numbers of crop / livestock organic producers and processors 2008 (a)**

	<i>numbers</i>			
	No. crop producers	No. crop producers and processors	No. livestock producers	No. livestock producers and processors
<b>UK</b>	<b>4,793</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>2,987</b>	<b>157</b>
England	2,986	169	1,640	137
Wales	1,033	20	788	12
Scotland	557	13	367	8
Northern Ireland	217	1	192	0
North East	116	6	73	4
North West	167	10	99	8
Yorkshire & Humberside	139	10	81	7
East Midlands	202	11	126	8
West Midlands	344	12	185	11
Eastern	226	14	80	9
South West	1376	73	810	64
South East (Inc London)	416	33	186	26

(a) Mixed organic holdings will be recorded under both the crop and livestock headings shown above so the above numbers cannot be added together to get total producers / processors by region as this will lead to double counting. For totals please see Table 11.