



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs



14 March 2013

Joint Announcement by the Agricultural Departments of the United Kingdom

## Farming Statistics - Livestock Populations at 1 December 2012, UK and England

This release shows livestock numbers on agricultural holdings in the United Kingdom and England. These results are from the December Surveys of Agriculture carried out by each of the UK's Agriculture Departments on 1 December 2012. They also include data from various administrative sources. Full details are provided in the methodological notes on page 9.

### Key points:

#### **Cattle** ([Tables 1 & 2](#))

Between December 2011 and December 2012, the total number of cattle and calves in the UK increased by 0.5% to 9.7 million. Cattle numbers in England followed the UK's trend, increasing by 0.6% to 5.3 million.

#### **Pigs** ([Tables 3 & 4](#))

The total number of pigs in the UK has decreased by 2.4% since December 2011 to just over 4.2 million, which is the smallest pig herd as at the 1 December since 2000.

#### **Sheep** ([Tables 5 & 6](#))

The total number of sheep and lambs in the UK increased by 4.4% between December 2011 and December 2012 to 22.9 million. The UK's female breeding flock increased from 14.2 million in 2011 to just under 14.3 million in 2012. In England, the sheep flock increased by 5.2% and the female breeding flock rose by 1.7% during 2012.

#### **Crops and hay and silage**

The England crops and hay and silage areas for December 2012 have been gathered by the AHDB's HGCA in a planting survey run on 1 December. The results from this survey have been published on their website at:

<http://www.hgca.com/content.output/100/100/Markets/Markets/Survey%20Results.msp>. The remaining UK countries continue to produce their own estimates for these figures which can be found in their individual publications (links to these are provided in the methodology section on page 9).

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Further details relating to the individual countries' results can be found in their respective publications (see page 9 for details). **Enquiries on this publication** to Sarah Harriss, Farming Statistics, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Tel: 01904 455332, email: [farming-statistics@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:farming-statistics@defra.gsi.gov.uk).

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## Detailed results

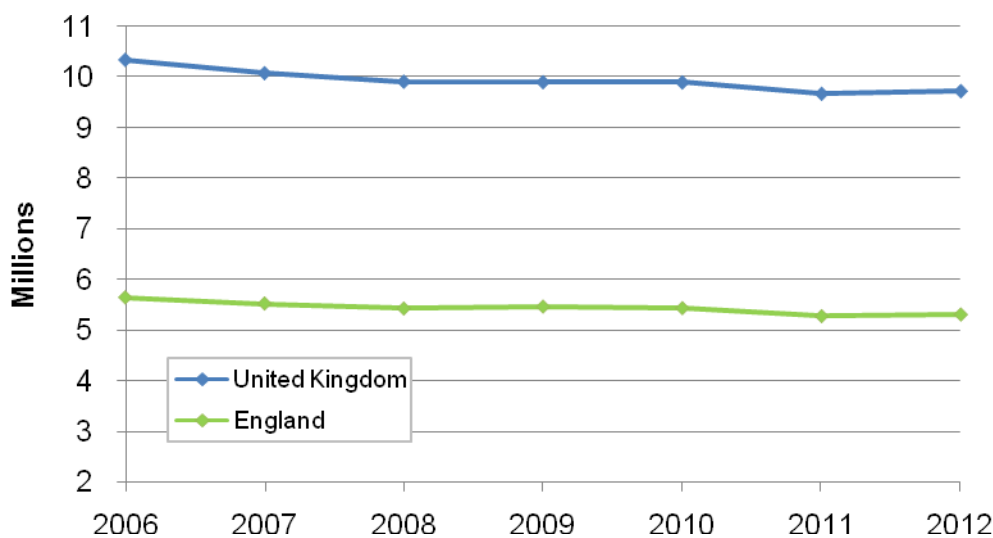
### Cattle

The total number of cattle and calves in the UK increased by 0.5% to just over 9.7 million between December 2011 and December 2012. This reversed the trend of declining cattle numbers since 2005 at this time of year. The UK's dairy herd remained static at 1.8 million and the UK's beef herd continues to shrink, falling by 0.8% to 1.6 million,.

Cattle numbers in England followed the UK's trend, increasing by 0.6% to 5.3 million in December 2012. England's beef herd also fell during 2012 by 1.6% to 718 thousand, and England's dairy herd also stabilised at 1.1 million as it was in December 2011.

Despite this increase in cattle numbers, cattle producers continue to have concerns over high production costs, especially of feedstuffs, against a general backdrop of the UK's continuing economic downturn.

**Figure 1: Total cattle in the UK and England, December 2006 - 2012**



**Table 1: Cattle and calves on agricultural holdings on 1 December in the United Kingdom <sup>(a)</sup>**

	thousands					% change
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2012 / 2011
<b>Total cattle and calves</b>	<b>9 911</b>	<b>9 901</b>	<b>9 896</b>	<b>9 675</b>	<b>9 726</b>	<b>0.5</b>
<b>All female cattle</b>	<b>7 220</b>	<b>7 155</b>	<b>7 191</b>	<b>7 061</b>	<b>7 065</b>	<b>0.1</b>
<b>Aged 2 years or more</b>	<b>4 314</b>	<b>4 291</b>	<b>4 310</b>	<b>4 174</b>	<b>4 144</b>	<b>-0.7</b>
Total breeding herd	3 524	3 487	3 507	3 442	3 432	-0.3
Beef herd	1 621	1 622	1 660	1 642	1 629	-0.8
Dairy herd	1 903	1 864	1 847	1 800	1 802	0.1
Other female cattle	790	804	804	732	712	-2.7
Beef	380	398	393	329	332	0.7
Dairy	410	406	411	402	381	-5.4
<b>Aged between 1 and 2 years</b>	<b>1 394</b>	<b>1 395</b>	<b>1 374</b>	<b>1 366</b>	<b>1 396</b>	<b>2.2</b>
Beef	909	880	833	818	834	2.0
Dairy	486	514	541	548	562	2.6
<b>Less than 1 year</b>	<b>1 511</b>	<b>1 470</b>	<b>1 507</b>	<b>1 521</b>	<b>1 525</b>	<b>0.3</b>
<b>All male cattle</b>	<b>2 692</b>	<b>2 745</b>	<b>2 704</b>	<b>2 614</b>	<b>2 661</b>	<b>1.8</b>
Aged 2 years or more	333	364	342	299	299	-0.1
Aged between 1 and 2 years	1 030	1 039	1 009	979	996	1.8
Less than 1 year	1 328	1 343	1 354	1 336	1 366	2.2

(a) These figures have been sourced from the Cattle Tracing System (CTS) in England and Wales, the equivalent APHIS system in Northern Ireland and from survey data in Scotland.

**Table 2: Cattle and calves on agricultural holdings on 1 December in England <sup>(a)</sup>**

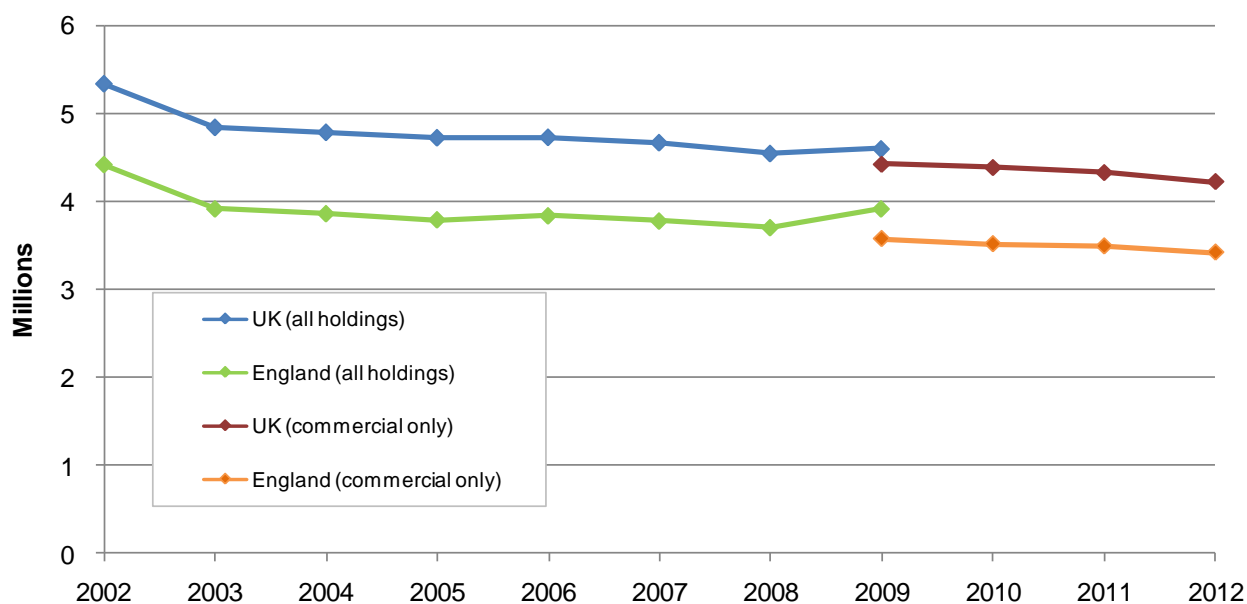
	thousands					% change
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2012 / 2011
<b>Total cattle and calves</b>	<b>5 426</b>	<b>5 465</b>	<b>5 434</b>	<b>5 275</b>	<b>5 308</b>	<b>0.6</b>
<b>All female cattle</b>	<b>3 972</b>	<b>3 955</b>	<b>3 946</b>	<b>3 849</b>	<b>3 843</b>	<b>-0.2</b>
<b>Aged 2 years or more</b>	<b>2 390</b>	<b>2 390</b>	<b>2 380</b>	<b>2 276</b>	<b>2 254</b>	<b>-1.0</b>
Total breeding herd	1 921	1 911	1 909	1 851	1 841	-0.6
Beef herd	723	731	745	730	718	-1.6
Dairy herd	1 198	1 181	1 164	1 122	1 123	0.1
Other female cattle	470	478	471	425	413	-2.9
Beef	206	215	206	169	171	1.2
Dairy	264	263	265	256	242	-5.6
<b>Aged between 1 and 2 years</b>	<b>758</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>761</b>	<b>2.6</b>
Beef	471	456	422	419	434	3.5
Dairy	288	303	318	323	328	1.4
<b>Less than 1 year</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>825</b>	<b>830</b>	<b>828</b>	<b>-0.3</b>
Beef	511	478	491	494	488	-1.1
Dairy	313	328	335	337	339	0.8
<b>All male cattle</b>	<b>1 454</b>	<b>1 510</b>	<b>1 488</b>	<b>1 427</b>	<b>1 466</b>	<b>2.7</b>
Aged 2 years or more	194	215	202	175	176	0.8
Aged between 1 and 2 years	552	564	550	532	544	2.3
Less than 1 year	708	731	737	720	746	3.5

(a) These figures have been sourced from the Cattle Tracing System (CTS). The data include returns from all holdings with cattle so are not subject to survey error.

## Pigs

The total number of pigs in the UK decreased by 2.4% since December 2011 to just over 4.2 million, which is the smallest pig herd as at the 1<sup>st</sup> of December since 2000 (the first year for which figures are easily available). The English pig herd fell by 2.1% to 3.4 million over the same period. The total number of breeding pigs in the UK increased by 2.0% to just over 500 thousand animals in December 2012. The number of breeding pigs in England increased by 3.5% in 2012 to 429 thousand animals.

**Figure 2: Total pig numbers in the UK and England, December 2002 – 2012**



The total number of fattening pigs in the UK decreased by 115 thousand animals to 3.7 million pigs in December 2012. This decrease was largely as a result of the 2.8% decrease in the number of fattening pigs in England which account for 80% of the UK's total. Producers faced rapidly rising costs in feedstuffs in 2012 which may have offset last year's rise in pig prices. This may explain the decrease in pig figures.

**Table 3: Pigs on commercial agricultural holdings on 1 December in the United Kingdom**

	thousands				% change
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2012 / 2011
<b>Total pigs</b>	<b>4 423</b>	<b>4 385</b>	<b>4 326</b>	<b>4 221</b>	<b>-2.4</b>
<b>Breeding pigs</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>507</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<b>Female breeding herd</b>	<b>418</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>-2.1</b>
Sows in pig	292	276	264	269	2.0
Gilts in pig	57	68	66	68	2.7
Other sows	69	78	79	63	-19.7
<b>Other breeding pigs</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>20.7</b>
Boars being used for service	16	16	15	15	1.6
Gilts intended for first time breeding	63	69	75	93	24.6
<b>Fattening pigs (incl. barren sows)</b>	<b>3 926</b>	<b>3 878</b>	<b>3 827</b>	<b>3 711</b>	<b>-3.0</b>

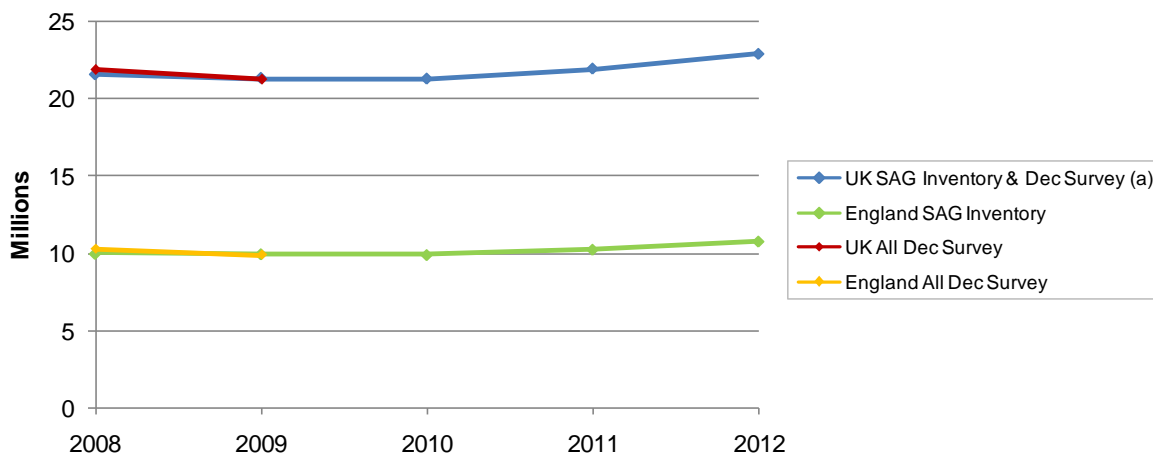
**Table 4: Pigs on commercial agricultural holdings on 1 December in England**

	thousands				% change
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2012 / 2011
<b>Total pigs</b>	<b>3 575</b>	<b>3 514</b>	<b>3 489</b>	<b>3 417</b>	<b>-2.1</b>
<b>Breeding pigs</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>Female breeding herd</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>-1.3</b>
Sows in pig	241	223	218	227	4.3
Gilts in pig	50	57	56	57	2.6
Other sows	55	63	63	48	-24.1
<b>Other breeding pigs</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>24.3</b>
Boars being used for service	14	14	13	13	2.9
Gilts intended for first time breeding	55	59	65	84	28.5
<b>Fattening pigs (incl. barren sows)</b>	<b>3 160</b>	<b>3 100</b>	<b>3 074</b>	<b>2 988</b>	<b>-2.8</b>

## Sheep

The total number of sheep and lambs in the UK increased by 4.4% between December 2011 and December 2012 to just under 23.0 million. The UK's female breeding flock increased by 0.4% to 14.3 million over the same period. In England, the total sheep flock increased by 5.2% to 10.8 million and the female breeding flock increased by 1.7% to 6.5 million. Larger increases were seen in other sheep and lambs for the UK and England, rising 11.7% and 11.0% respectively.

**Figure 3: Total sheep and lambs in the UK and England, December 2008 – 2012**



(a) These figures consist of English SAG data plus December Survey data from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The increase in the UK's breeding flock of 0.4% during 2012 was below that predicted by the industry back in autumn 2012. This may reflect the challenging conditions faced by the sheep sector in the second half of 2012. Falling lamb prices towards the end of 2012 and the impacts of poor weather, increased production costs, stronger competition from overseas than in 2011 (particularly from New Zealand), and a rise in the number of sheep farms infected by the Schmallenberg Virus to about 1,000 during 2012 all combined to reduce the confidence of sheep producers in the UK.

**Table 5: Sheep and lambs on agricultural holdings on 1 December in the United Kingdom <sup>(a)</sup>**

							thousands	% change
		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2012 / 2011	
Source								
<b>Total sheep and lambs</b>	Dec + SAG Inv <sup>(b)</sup>	21 574	21 343	21 295	21 951	22 913	4.4	
	All Dec Survey	21 873	21 272	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
<b>Female breeding sheep</b>	Dec + SAG Inv <sup>(b)</sup>	13 844	13 842	13 860	14 208	14 265	0.4	
	All Dec Survey	14 028	13 841	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
<b>Other sheep and lambs</b>	Dec + SAG Inv <sup>(b)</sup>	7 731	7 501	7 435	7 743	8 648	11.7	
	All Dec Survey	7 846	7 431	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	

n/a = Not available, as not collected after the 2009 December Survey in England.

(a) Please follow this hyperlink for details of the switch to the Sheep and Goat (SAG) Inventory as the source of source of sheep data in 2010:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/foodfarm/landuselivestock/farmstats/aboutfarmstats/>

Results from both series are shown here for comparison.

(b) These figures consist of English SAG data plus December Survey data from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

**Table 6: Sheep and lambs on agricultural holdings on 1 December in England <sup>(a)</sup>**

							thousands	% change
		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2012 / 2011	
Source								
<b>Total sheep and lambs</b>	SAG Inv	9 969	9 944	9 892	10 242	10 777	5.2	
	All Dec Survey	10 268	9 873	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
<b>Female breeding sheep</b>	SAG Inv	6 155	6 203	6 227	6 384	6 493	1.7	
	All Dec Survey	6 339	6 202	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
<b>Other sheep and lambs</b>	SAG Inv	3 814	3 741	3 665	3 858	4 283	11.0	
	All Dec Survey	3 929	3 672	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	

n/a = Not available, as not collected after the 2009 December Survey in England.

(a) Please follow this hyperlink for details of the switch to the Sheep and Goat (SAG) Inventory as the source of source of sheep data in 2010:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/foodfarm/landuselivestock/farmstats/aboutfarmstats/>

Results from both series are shown here for comparison.



## **Methodological notes**

For the second time, figures for livestock populations in England and the UK are presented together in the same publication. Please note that all percentage changes in this release's tables are based on unrounded figures. Therefore, totals may not necessarily agree with the sum of their components due to rounding.

### **England**

Data for the 2012 December livestock publication came from a number of different sources this year: cattle data came from the Cattle Tracing System (CTS) and sheep data came from the annual Sheep and Goat Inventory for the third time. Pigs data were gathered by using a mixture of paper forms and electronic survey methods, achieving a response rate of 61% (out of 400 forms). Therefore, the results for pigs are subject to a degree of sampling error.

In CTS, the breed of the cattle is used to identify a breed purpose. Around 2% of all female cattle do not have an assigned breed purpose or are of dual breed. In all above cattle results, these cattle have been allocated to either dairy or beef at holding level based on the other cattle on the holding. Where there are no other cattle on the holding, they are allocated on the basis of the national split between dairy and beef in that age band.

### **Wales**

The December Survey of Agriculture is an annual sample survey of around 4,800 of the 41,000 registered farm holdings in Wales. The purpose of the December Survey is to provide estimates at a mid-point between June Surveys. At this time of year, there is a greater degree of stability in that crops and grassland have been harvested and that the movement of livestock is a lot less than in the summer.

As the sample size is smaller than that used for June Surveys, the December Survey is only used to produce estimates for Wales as a whole. Data on the numbers of cattle have been sourced from the Cattle Tracing System since the December 2007 Survey. It is hoped that other administrative sources will soon be made available, enabling us to reduce the burden of paperwork on farmers even further.

The estimates in this Release are based on a stratified sample drawn from the population of 41,000 farms. The overall sample size taken was 4,800 farms. The response rate to this survey was 62%. As with all sample surveys, the estimates published in this Release are approximations and so are subject to various types of error. The details of the sampling technique are covered in the Methodology section at Annex A of the Welsh December 2012 Release, which is available on the internet at:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/headlines/agriculture2012/?lang=en>

### **Scotland**

The December agricultural survey is based on a sample of main holdings. From a population of around 24,400 main holdings, 14,800 holdings were sampled and 10,400 responses received, giving a response rate of 70 per cent.

Final results for Scotland were published on 14 March 2013 by the Scottish Government, Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services, Q Spur, Saughton House, Broomhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3XD (e-mail [agric.stats@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:agric.stats@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)) and are available on the internet at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Agriculture-Fisheries/PubFinalResulsDecCensus>

### **Northern Ireland**

The 2012 December Survey conducted in Northern Ireland was a sample survey targeted at 4,899 farms, 4,178 forms were returned, an 85% response rate. This survey covered pigs, crops and heifer

numbers. All other information relating to cattle was taken from the APHIS (Animal and Public Health Information System) database, while data on sheep was taken from the Annual Sheep and Goat Inventory, each of these being a census of animal numbers.

Final results for Northern Ireland were published on 28 February 2013 by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland, Dundonald House, Belfast, BT4 3SB (telephone: Belfast (02890) 525450) and are available online at: [http://www.dardni.gov.uk/agricultural\\_survey\\_december\\_2012.pdf](http://www.dardni.gov.uk/agricultural_survey_december_2012.pdf)