

The Agricultural Census in Northern Ireland

Results for June 2023



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

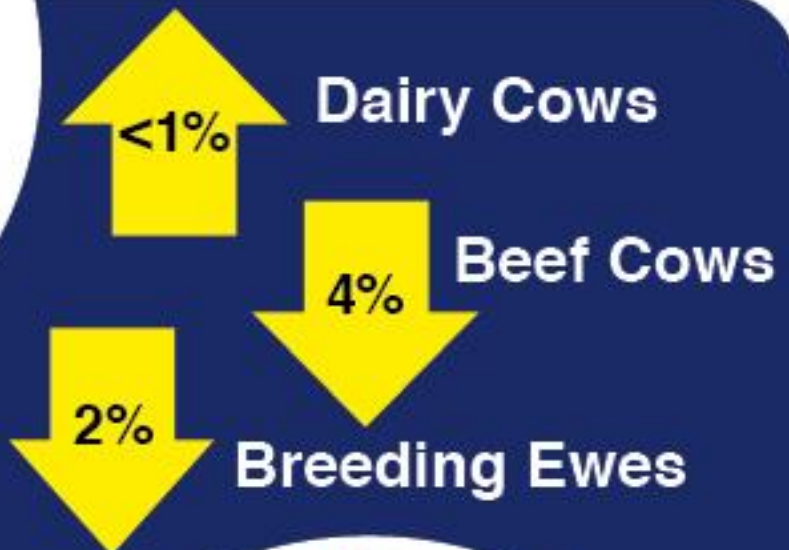
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Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
Policy, Economics and Statistics Division

THE AGRICULTURAL CENSUS
IN
NORTHERN IRELAND
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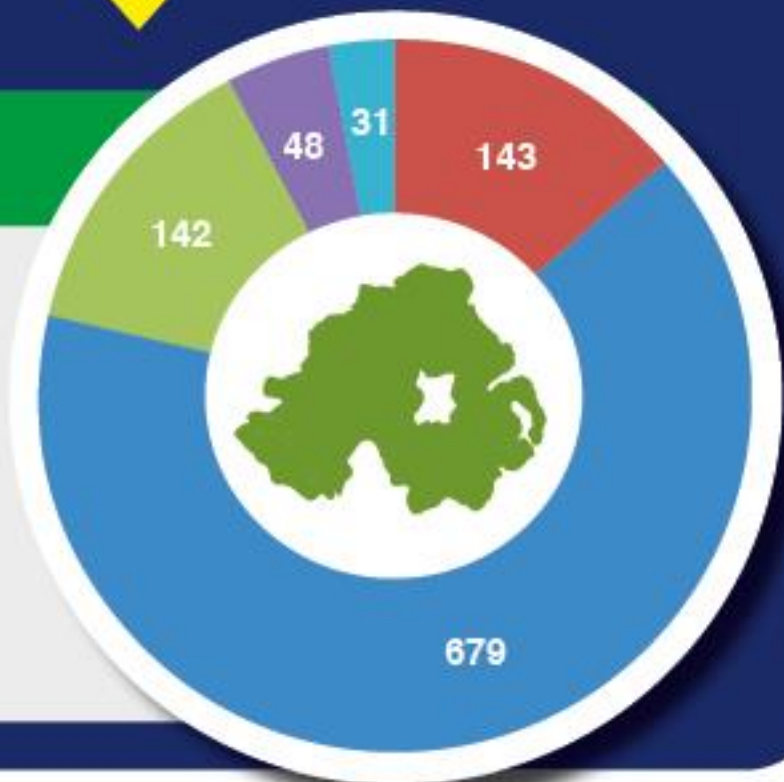
Results of the NI Agricultural Census, June 2023



Total Area Farmed
1,042,318 Hectares

- Grass over 5 yrs old
- Grass under 5 yrs old
- Rough Grazing excl. Common Grazing
- Total Crops
- Other Land

Figures per '000 (thousand)



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THE AGRICULTURAL CENSUS IN NORTHERN IRELAND – RESULTS FOR JUNE 2023

Key Points

The main changes between June 2022 and June 2023 are:

Farms: In June 2023 there were 26,131 farms in Northern Ireland with approximately one million hectares (1,042,318 hectares) of land farmed.

Farm Structure: Over three quarters of farms in Northern Ireland are very small (20,603 in 2023). 78 per cent of farms in Northern Ireland have some cattle, 38 per cent have some sheep and 4 per cent have some poultry.

Farmers and workers: In June 2023 there were a total of 52,676 farm workers, of which 77 per cent were farmers, directors, partners or spouses.

Cattle: Total cattle numbers have decreased by less than 1 per cent to 1,673,345. The number of dairy cows remained relatively consistent at 319,346, while the number of beef cows fell by 4% to 236,082.

Sheep: There was a decrease of 2 per cent in breeding ewes compared to 2022, with numbers falling to 973,718. Overall, the total number of sheep recorded was approximately 2 million, which was a 3 per cent fall from June 2022.

Poultry: Total poultry numbers on farms at June 2023 increased by 24 per cent from 2022 levels with 25.6 million birds recorded. An alteration in animal health factors, which positively affected production, drove the change in the sector. Total number of laying birds saw an increase of 11 per cent whilst broiler numbers increased by over 31 per cent and other poultry by almost 294 per cent compared to June 2022.

Pigs: Total pig numbers recorded in June 2023 decreased by 8 per cent to 682,339 compared to June 2022.

Crop areas: The total area of crops grown in Northern Ireland in 2023 was approximately 47,777 hectares, a decrease of less than 1 per cent from 2022.

Cereals: The total area of cereals (31,803 hectares) grown in 2023 decreased by 3 per cent from 2022. Wheat crops decreased by 4 per cent to 8,309 hectares, Winter and Spring Barley decreased by just over 3 per cent and 2 per cent respectively, while Oats decreased by 3 per cent from 2022, at 1,922 hectares.

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1 Introduction

The data in this statistical publication are sourced from the Agricultural Census which is conducted in June each year. Data is collected on crop areas, livestock numbers and farm labour. Outputs include time series data and frequency distributions. Results are presented at Northern Ireland and sub-regional level.

The statistics are compiled from a survey of farm businesses augmented by administrative data (Animal Public Health Information System, APHIS, cattle tracing system). In response to COVID-19, the data collection for the Farm Census moved entirely online since 2020. In 2023 the survey remained online with minor changes due to feedback. A large response was achieved from the online-only collection and focussed telephone follow-up. This has enabled detailed farm census statistics to be produced.

Since June 2020 new methodologies have been adopted to create the Agricultural Census in Northern Ireland sample using Departmental Administrative Data and to improve the quality of estimates for farms that did not respond. For some statistics within this publication this has created a break in the series of data and for these variables data should not be compared to published figures in previous years, these have been highlighted where applicable. Full explanation of these changes along with an analysis on data comparability is available in a standalone paper – available at: [Methodology Changes 2020](#)

– and within the background information on quality and methodology of the Agricultural Census available at: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/agricultural-census-northern-ireland>

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 2023.

The population of farms to which these statistics refer includes all active farm businesses having one or more hectare of farmed land, whether owned, leased or taken in conacre, and those with under one hectare having any cattle, sheep or pigs or with significant poultry or horticultural activity.

Farm numbers in 2023 remained largely stable with an increase of less than 1% to 26,131.

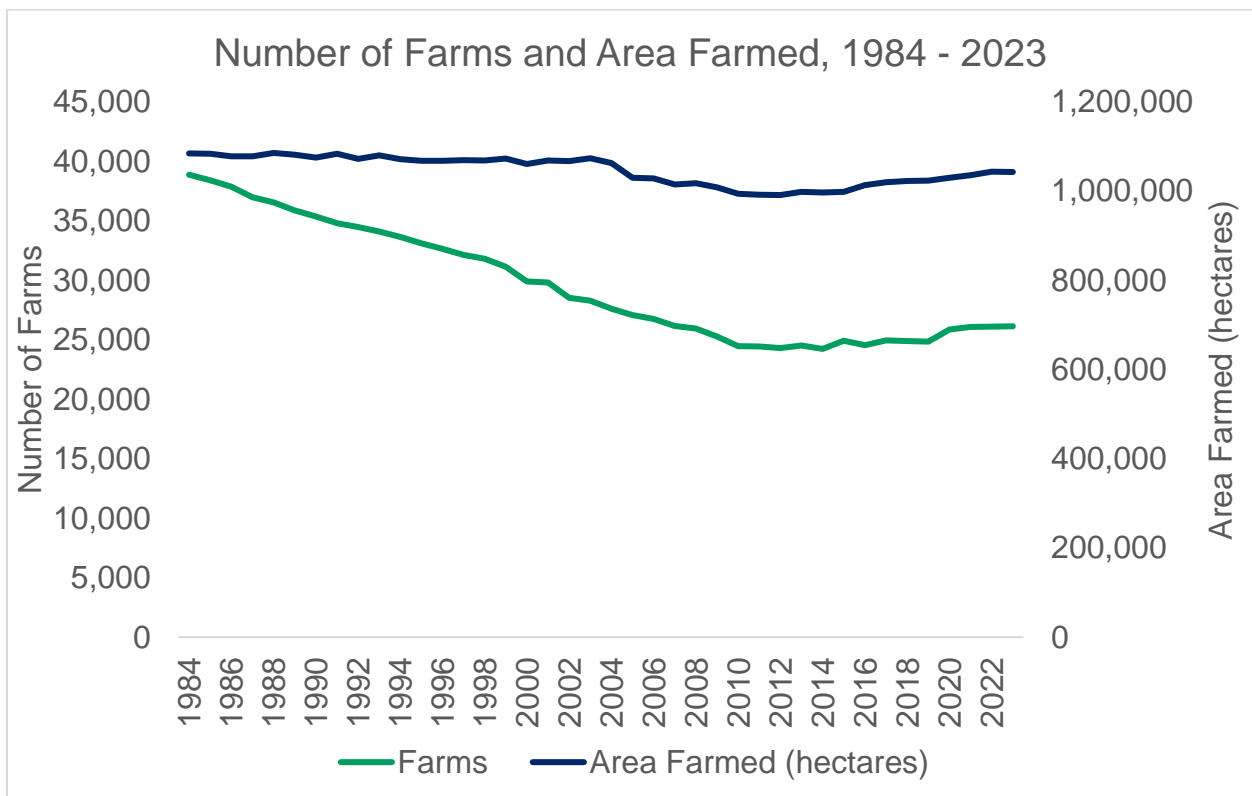
Table 1.1 Number of farms Northern Ireland 2019-2023

Year	No. Farms
2019	24,827
2020	25,896
2021	26,077
2022	26,089
2023	26,131

2 Executive Summary

Farms: In June 2023 there were 26,131 farms in Northern Ireland with approximately one million hectares (1,042,318 hectares) of land farmed.

Figure 2.1 Number of farms and area farmed, Northern Ireland, 1984-2023¹



The area farmed (excluding common land) has remained relatively steady since 1984.

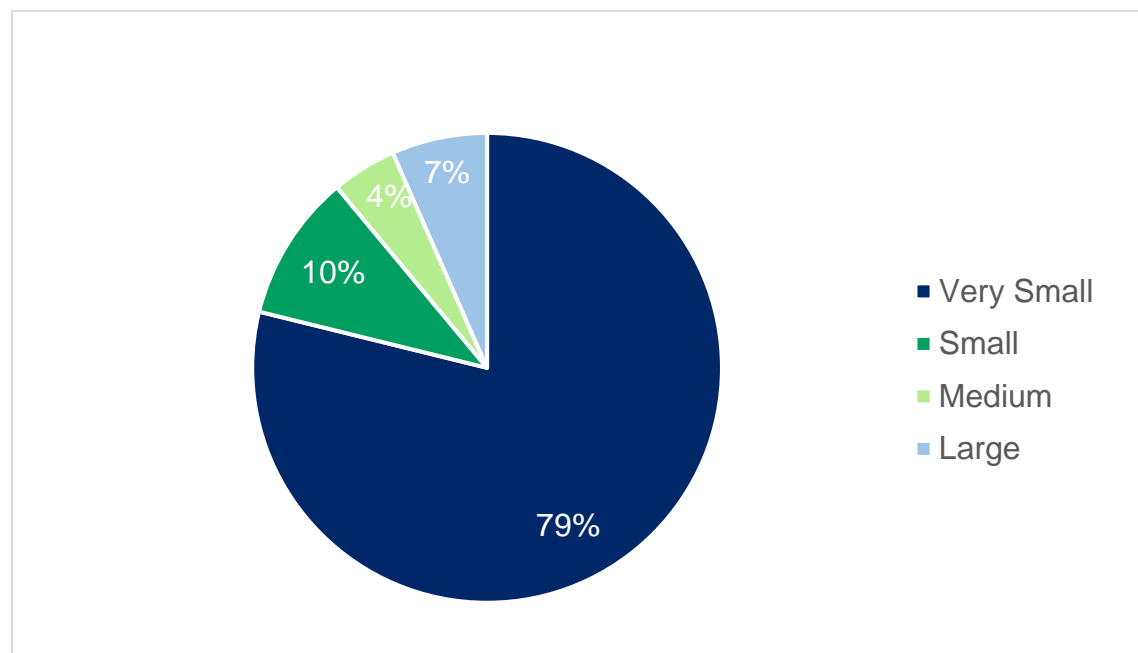
¹ Pre-1997 figures are estimates (based on combining overlapping series)

Table 2.1: Agricultural Land Area Northern Ireland 2019-2023

Year	Total Area Farmed Farm Census (ha)	Annual % Change
2019	1,023,163	0.1%
2020	1,029,822	0.7%
2021	1,035,642	0.6%
2022	1,043,270	0.7%
2023	1,042,318	-0.1%

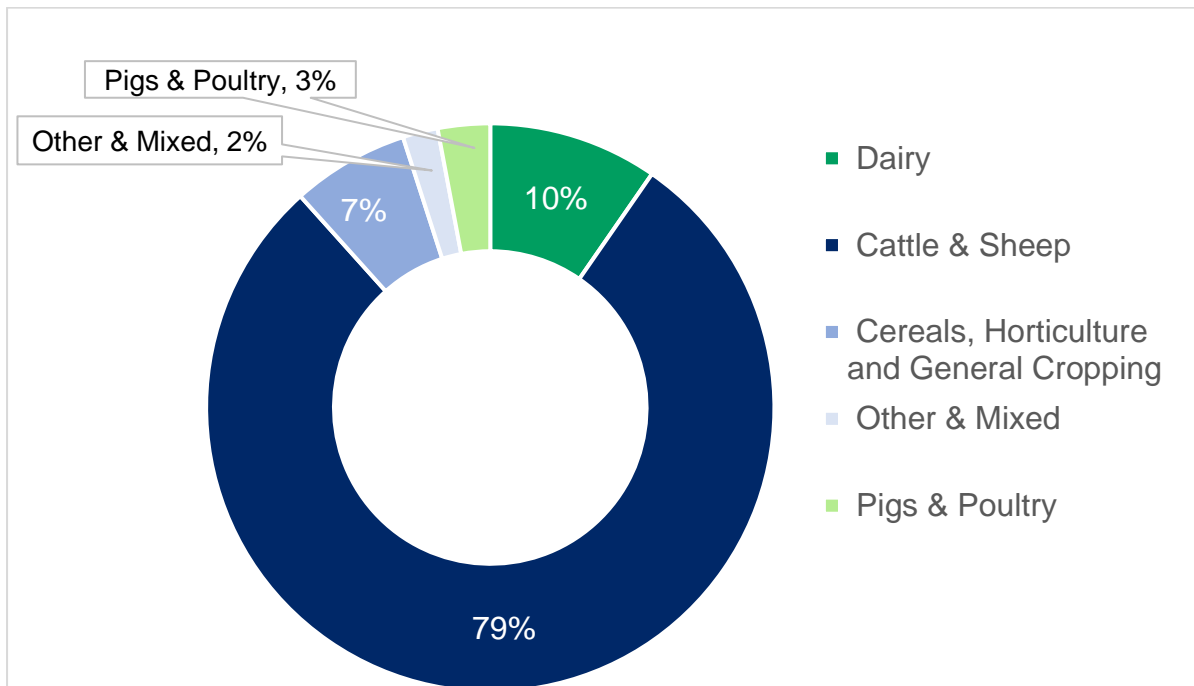
Farm Structure: Over three quarters of farms in Northern Ireland are very small (20,603 in 2023).

Figure 2.2 Farm Size, 2023



The predominant activity on Northern Ireland farms is cattle & sheep. 78 per cent of farms in Northern Ireland have some cattle, 38 per cent have some sheep, 4 per cent have some poultry and 1.4 per cent have some pigs. This remains relatively consistent with the results in 2022, 2021 and 2020.

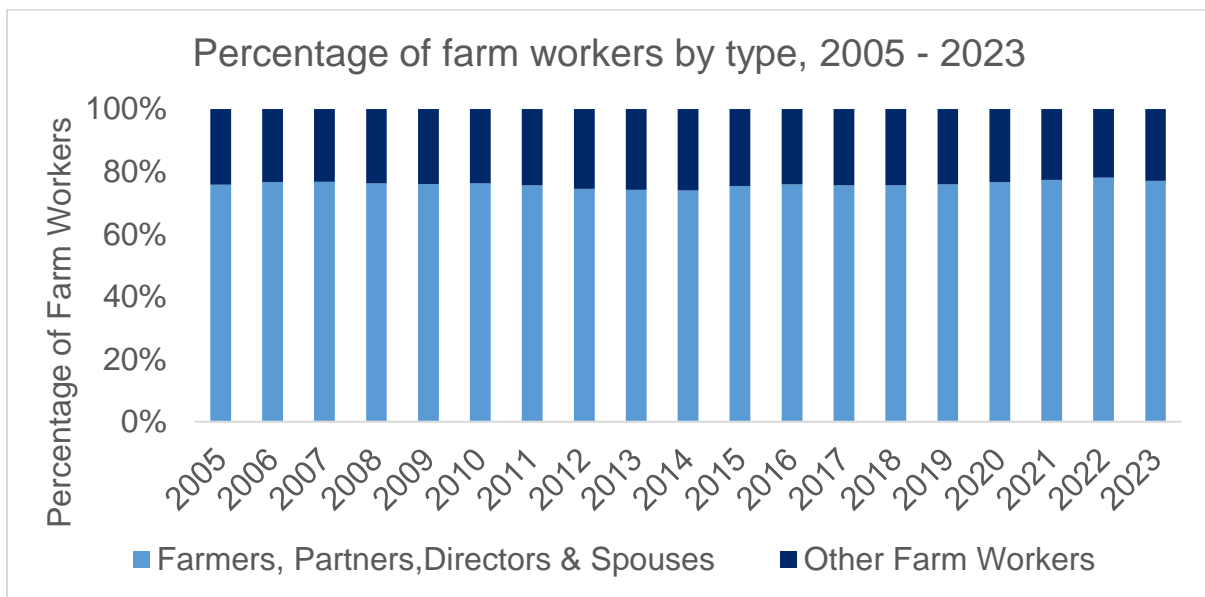
Figure 2.3 Number of farms by farm type, 2023²



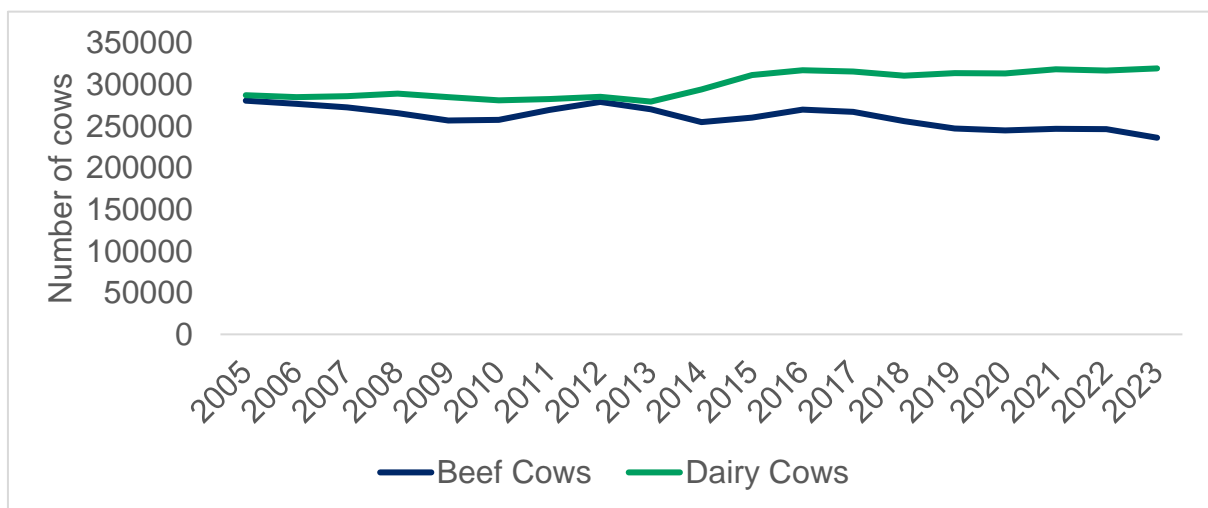
Farmers and workers: The total number of farm workers increased by 1.8 per cent to 52,676 in 2023 from 51,760 in 2022. Figure 2.4 shows the breakdown of total farm workers between farmers, directors, partners or spouses (77 per cent) and all other farm workers (23 per cent) has remained relatively stable since 2004.

² Please note percentages provided do not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 2.4 Percentage of farm workers by type, Northern Ireland 2005-2023

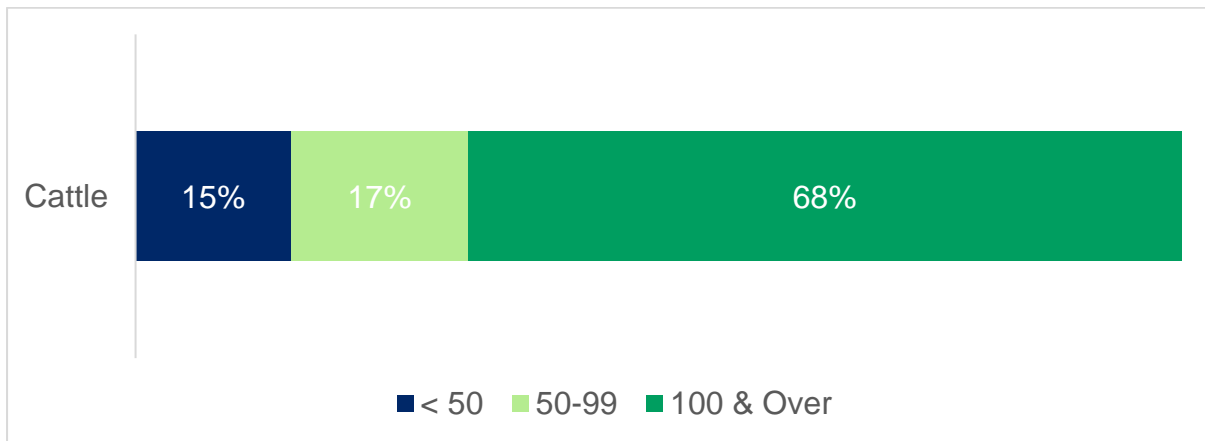


Cattle: Total cattle numbers have decreased by less than 1 per cent to 1,673,345 between 2022 and 2023. The number of beef cows decreased by just over 4 per cent to 236,082 and the number of dairy cows increased by less than 1 per cent to 319,346.



Over two thirds of cattle are in herds of 100 or more.

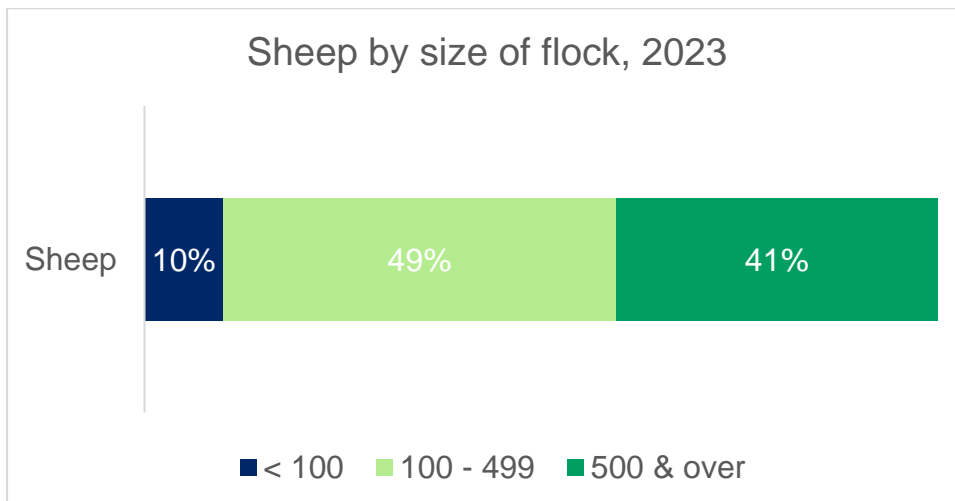
Figure 2.6 Number of cattle on farm by size of herd, 2023



Sheep: The total number of sheep decreased by 3 per cent in 2023 to just over 2 million. There was a 2 per cent decrease in the number of breeding ewes compared with 2022 with numbers falling to 973,718.

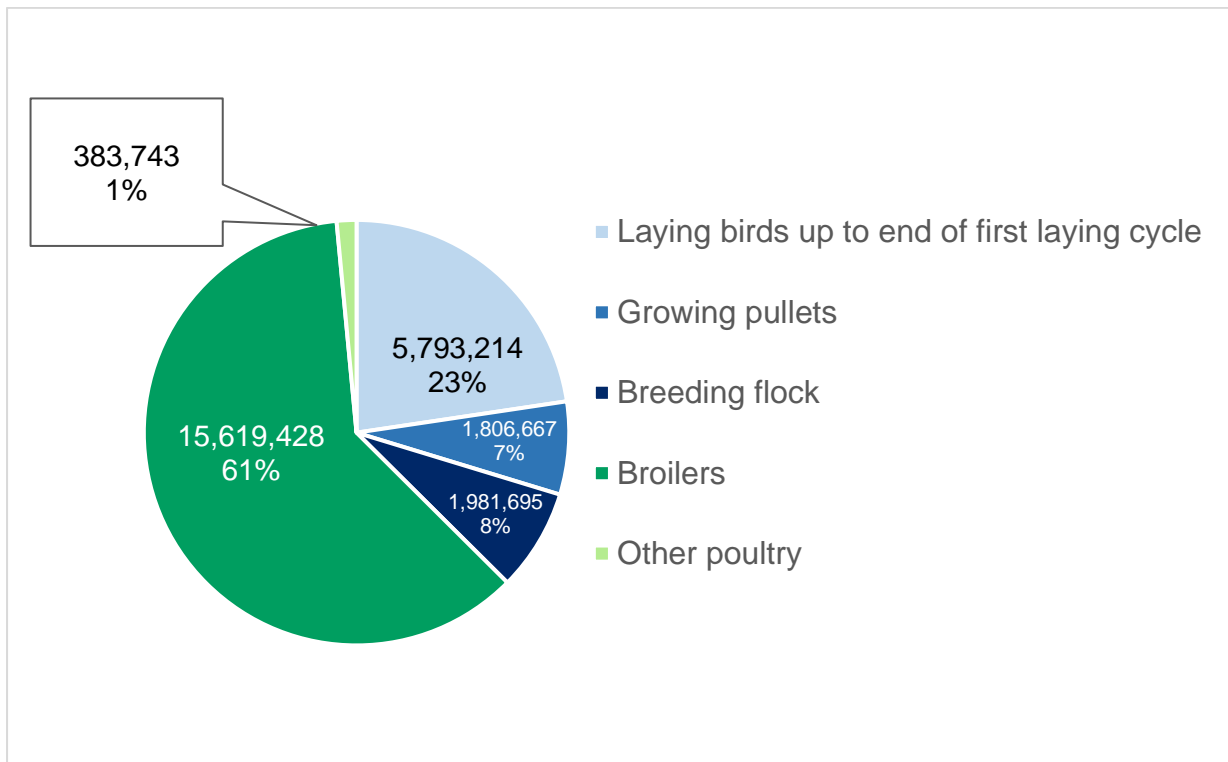
Farms with more than 500 sheep on 1st June 2023 account for 41 per cent of the total sheep population.

Figure 2.7 Number of sheep on farm by size of flock, 2023



Poultry: Total poultry numbers on farms at June 2023 increased by 24 per cent from 2022 levels with 25.6 million birds recorded. An alteration in animal health factors, which positively affected production, drove the change in the sector. Total number of laying birds saw an increase of 11 per cent whilst broiler numbers increased by over 31 per cent and other poultry by almost 294 per cent compared to June 2022.

Figure 2.8 Number of Poultry, 2023³

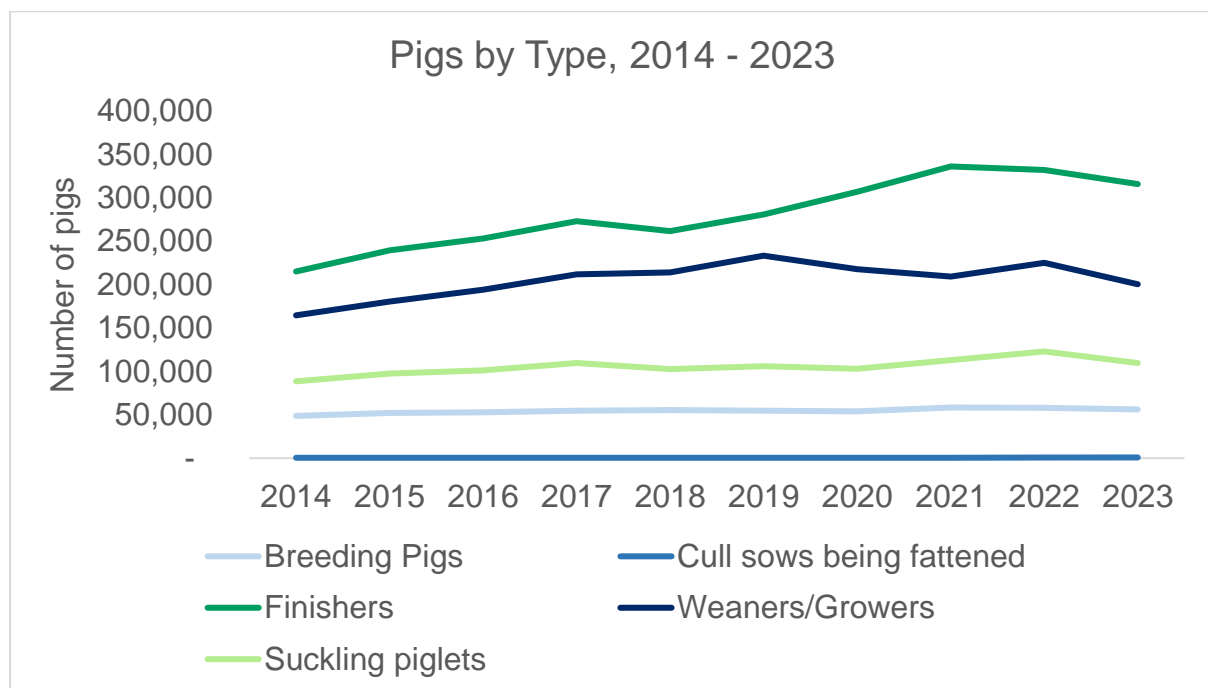


³ Please note percentages provided do not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Pigs: There has been a decrease in total pig numbers recorded on the farm census in June 2023 of 8 per cent to 682,339. The decrease in pig numbers was primarily due to a reduced number of weaners, growers and suckling piglets.

In comparison to 2022, the total breeding herd fell to 56,274 (58,130 in 2022). The number of Weaners and Growers fell by almost 11 per cent to 200,309 and suckling piglets fell by almost 11 per cent to 109,527.

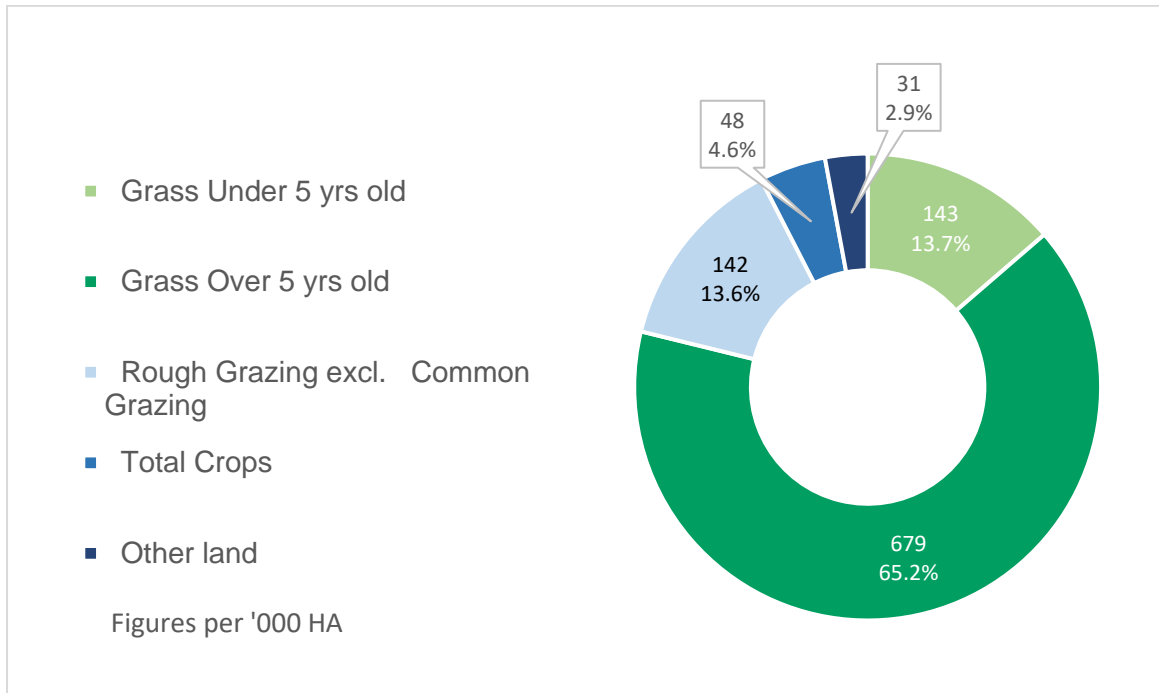
Figure 2.9 Type of Pigs, 2014 – 2023



Most pigs are concentrated in relatively few farms, with units of more than 200 sows on 1st June accounting for 12 per cent of herds but 79 per cent of total breeding sows.

Crop areas: The area of crops decreased by less than 1 per cent between June 2022 and June 2023 to 47,777 hectares. Grass accounted for 79 per cent of all area farmed.

Figure 2.10 Land use by agricultural production type, 2023



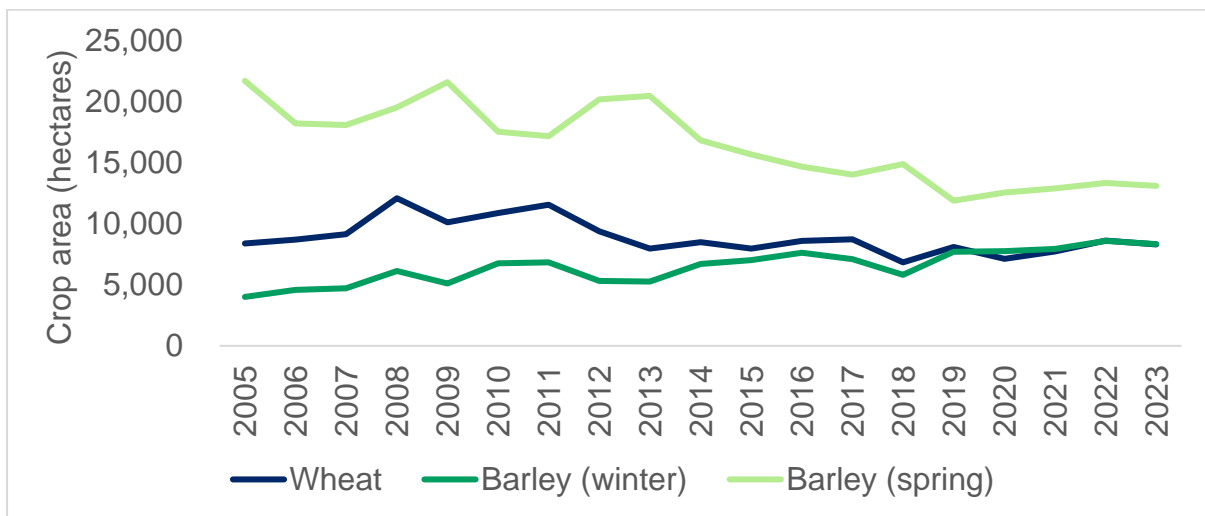
Cereals: The total area of cereals grown in 2023 decreased by 3 per cent from 2022 to 31,803 hectares with wheat, winter and spring barley, oat and mixed corn crops all decreasing over the same period.

The area of spring barley grown in June 2023 decreased by 2 per cent from 2022 to 13,113 hectares but remains the most popular crop grown in Northern Ireland.

The area grown of wheat decreased by 4 per cent to 8,309 hectares in the same period, less than the area of winter barley grown (8,340 hectares).

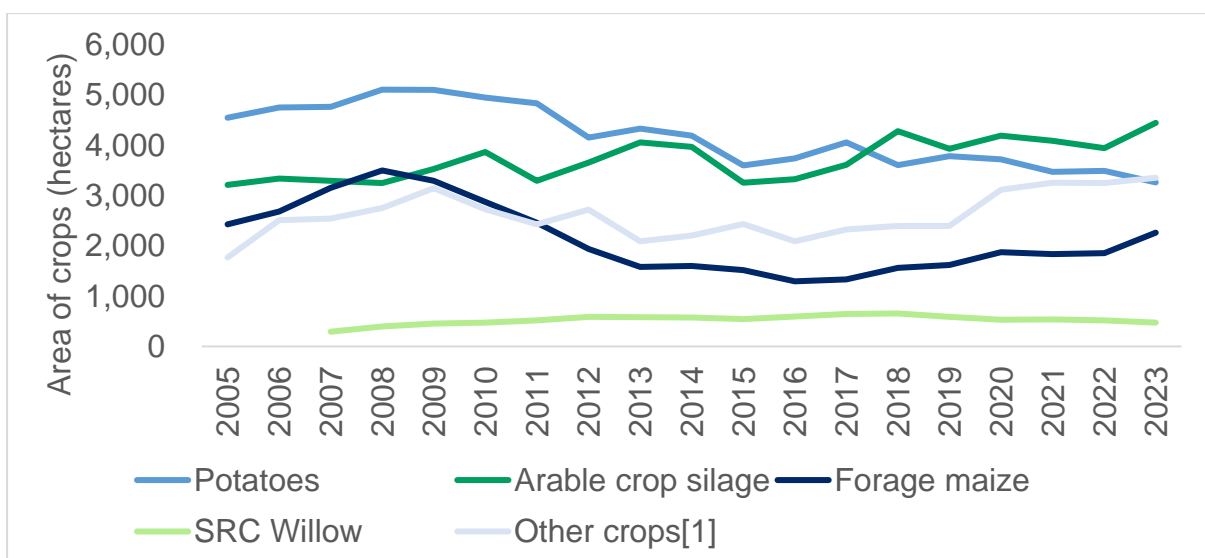
Oat crops decreased by 3 per cent from 2022, at 1,922 hectares. Area of mixed corn remains relatively small in 2023 and has decreased by almost 4 per cent from 126 hectares in 2022 to 121 hectares in June 2023.

Figure 2.11 Wheat and Barley grown, 2005 – 2023



Other crops: The total area of other field crops increased by 6 per cent between 2022 and 2023. The area of forage maize increased by 22 per cent to 2,262 hectares and arable crop silage increased by almost 13 per cent to 4,440 hectares. There was a decrease of 7 per cent in the area of potatoes to 3,258 hectares. The area of other crops increased by 3 per cent to 3,350.

Figure 2.12 Area of other field crops, 2005 – 2023⁴



[1] Other Crops - Oilseed rape, Turnip/beet, Kale/Cabbage, other stock feed crops, Triticale, Linseed, Flax, other glasshouse crops, Hemp and WBC.

⁴ Figures for willow crops are only available from 2007 onwards.

3 Northern Ireland Totals

The tables in this section show the crop areas, livestock numbers and numbers of farmers and other workers for the 5 year period 2019 to 2023 at 1st June each year.

Table 3.1 Crop areas in Northern Ireland 2019-2023 (hectares)

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Grass					
Under 5 years old	148,818	141,424	137,772	139,764	142,559
Over 5 years old	659,927	674,833	680,496	682,420	679,365
Total grass	808,745	816,257	818,269	822,184	821,924
Total Hill or rough land	143,609	140,581	141,272	141,565	142,007
Cereals					
Oats	1,868	1,879	1,874	1,973	1,922
Wheat	8,104	7,132	7,734	8,625	8,309
Barley (winter)	7,739	7,772	7,944	8,604	8,340
Barley (spring)	11,948	12,564	12,898	13,353	13,113
Mixed corn	161	113	57	126	121
Total cereals	29,820	29,460	30,507	32,681	31,803
Other field crops					
Potatoes	3,777	3,715	3,468	3,486	3,258
Arable crop silage	3,924	4,187	4,082	3,936	4,440
Forage maize	1,618	1,874	1,836	1,850	2,262
SRC Willow	586	533	536	521	475
Other crops ⁵	2,392	3,114	3,251	3,247	3,350
Total other field crops	12,296	13,422	13,172	13,040	13,785
Horticultural crops					
Fruit	1,441	1,330	1,266	1,268	1,260
Vegetables	1,163	1,178	1,357	998	822
Ornamentals	179	172	159	152	108
Total horticultural crops	2,782	2,680	2,782	2,418	2,189
Total crops	44,898	45,562	46,461	48,139	47,777
Other land					
Woods and plantations	15,669	17,276	18,761	18,987	19,346
Other land ⁶	10,243	10,145	10,878	12,395	11,264
Total other land	25,912	27,421	29,639	31,382	30,610
Total Area Farmed	1,023,163	1,029,822	1,035,642	1,043,270	1,042,318

⁵ Other Crops - Oilseed rape, Turnip/beet, Kale/Cabbage, other stock feed crops, Triticale, Linseed, Flax, other glasshouse crops, Hemp and WBC.

⁶ Other land - fallow land, roads, buildings, bogs, wasteland, gardens etc.

Table 3.2 Cattle and calves in Northern Ireland 2019-2023⁷

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Dairy cows	313,549	313,283	318,372	316,775	319,346
Other Dairy Females					
2 years old	45,987	41,530	40,353	41,391	44,649
1-2 years	85,913	88,212	95,949	103,519	108,863
Total	131,900	129,742	136,302	144,910	153,512
Beef cows	247,009	244,702	246,956	246,240	236,082
Other Beef Females					
2 years old	67,312	62,569	67,166	66,978	64,388
1-2 years	150,551	146,524	157,195	156,827	158,149
Total	217,863	209,093	224,361	223,805	222,537
Breeding bulls					
2 years old and over	12,985	12,264	11,902	11,452	10,749
1-2 years	3,473	7,729	8,307	8,453	7,614
Total	16,458	19,993	20,209	19,905	18,363
Other Males					
2 years old	51,595	47,606	50,015	49,115	52,384
1-2 years	164,285	160,204	172,958	173,239	169,781
Total	215,880	207,810	222,973	222,354	222,165
6-12 months					
Male	84,268	88,557	92,929	92,974	91,477
Female	106,223	113,664	122,777	129,623	135,602
Total	190,491	202,221	215,706	222,597	227,079
Under 6 months					
Male	132,012	134,373	140,717	132,792	124,529
Female	146,614	150,250	156,395	157,621	149,732
Total	278,626	284,623	297,112	290,413	274,261
Total Cattle	1,611,776	1,611,467	1,681,991	1,686,999	1,673,345

⁷ Data derived from the Animal and Public Health Information System, (APHIS).

Table 3.3 Sheep in Northern Ireland 2019-2023

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Ewes					
Ewes which lambed	813,964	800,656	812,864	840,000	822,140
Others for breeding	124,493	145,398	155,436	157,227	151,578
Total	938,457	946,054	968,300	997,227	973,718
Other sheep					
Rams for service	28,334	28,526	28,105	29,100	28,998
Not for breeding	17,716	17,021	10,327	11,127	13,857
Total	46,050	45,547	38,432	40,227	42,855
Lambs < 1 year old					
Total	1,002,425	999,337	1,028,054	1,063,432	1,030,261
Total Sheep	1,986,932	1,990,938	2,034,786	2,100,886	2,046,834

Table 3.4 Horses and Ponies in Northern Ireland 2019-2023

	2019	2020	2021 ⁸	2022	2023
Horses/Ponies owned by occupier	7,000	5,558	4,816	4,841	5,039
Horses/Ponies not owned by occupier	1,707	1,430	1,361	1,436	1,298
Total Horses & Ponies	8,707	6,988	6,177	6,277	6,337

⁸ Methodology changes in 2020 have created a break in time series and data should not be compared to previous years. This is explained in further detail in the Farm Census Methodology Changes 2020 report.

Table 3.5 Goats in Northern Ireland 2019-2023

	2019	2020	2021 ⁸	2022	2023
Female goats which have kidded	1,676	1,347	1,072	1,119	1,165
All other goats and kids	1,741	1,642	1,802	1,700	1,607
Total Goats	3,417	2,989	2,819	2,874	2,772

Table 3.6 Pigs in Northern Ireland 2019-2023⁹

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Female breeding herd					
Sows in pig	34,447	37,319	37,178	33,624	31,611
Gilts in pig	7,535	8,577	7,476	7,278	10,929
Others sows for breeding	5,547	N/A ¹⁰	5,432	5,755	5,303
Other breeding pigs					
Boars being used for service	753	730	676	473	594
Maiden gilts	6,184	7,259	7,608	11,000	7,837
Total breeding pigs	54,466	53,885	58,370	58,130	56,274
Other pigs					
Cull sows being fattened	534	540	650	759	684
Finishers	280,631	306,563	335,795	331,717	315,407
Weaners/Growers	233,082	217,511	208,944	224,971	200,309
Suckling piglets	105,715	102,894	112,937	122,842	109,527
Pet Pigs ¹⁰	N/A	74	102	121	138
Total Other pigs	619,962	627,582	658,428	680,410	626,065
Total Pigs	674,428	681,467	716,798	738,540	682,339

⁹ Data derived from the Northern Ireland Annual Inventory of Pigs and the farm census.

¹⁰ Prior to 2020 pet pig responses were included with Finishers.

Table 3.7 Poultry in Northern Ireland 2019-2023¹¹

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Laying Birds					
Laying birds up to end of first laying cycle	4,998,723	4,936,640	4,313,223	5,289,959	5,793,214
Growing pullets	1,481,216	1,495,748	1,745,260	1,484,295	1,806,667
Breeding flock	2,558,685	2,214,349	2,090,221	1,870,737	1,981,695
Table birds					
Broilers	15,351,573	15,364,473	15,946,721	11,900,591	15,619,428
Other poultry	390,184	341,000	367,377	97,491	383,743
Total Poultry	24,780,381	24,352,210	24,462,802	20,643,073	25,584,747

Table 3.8 Farmers and other workers in Northern Ireland 2019-2023

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Farmers, partners & directors:¹²					
Full-time	16,954	20,253	20,294	19,740	19,730
Part-time	13,859	19,065	20,073	20,651	20,855
Total farmers	30,813	39,318	40,367	40,391	40,585
Total Farmers, Partners, Directors & Spouses	37,513	39,318	40,367	40,391	40,585
Other workers:					
Full-time	3,430	3,058	2,902	2,696	2,973
Part-time	4,453	3,829	4,018	3,953	4,339
Casual/Seasonal	4,027	5,096	4,908	4,720	4,779
Total other workers	11,910	11,983	11,828	11,369	12,091
Total agricultural labour force	49,423	51,301	52,195	51,760	52,676

¹¹ Data derived from the Northern Ireland Bird Register Update and the farm Census.

¹² From 2020 onwards, spouses are included in the Farmers, Partners and Directors category. In previous years, data on spouses was collected as a separate question.

4 Farm Structure

The tables in this section focus on the farm business type. Farms are classified according to the type of farming found on the holding. In 2020 the business type classification was updated from 2010 Standard Output (SO) co-efficient to the more current 2013 SO values to align with other publications produced by the Department and across the UK. It is therefore worth noting that any comparison done on farm type data between 2020 and preceding years is not directly comparable. Further information on these classifications are available in our methodology and quality report which is available at: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/agricultural-census-northern-ireland>

Table 4.1 Number and area of farms by crop & grass area farmed in Northern Ireland, June 2023

Crops & grass farmed (hectares)	No. Farms	Area Farmed
Under 10	6,769	35,855
10 - 19.9	5,969	86,064
20.0 - 29.9	3,987	96,861
30.0 - 49.9	4,305	165,400
50.0 - 99.9	3,558	244,284
100 & over	1,543	241,238
Total	26,131	869,701

Table 4.2 Number and area of farms by total area farmed in Northern Ireland, June 2023

Total area farmed (hectares)	No. Farms	Area Farmed
Under 10	5,943	32,364
10 - 19.9	5,593	80,732
20.0 - 29.9	3,948	96,166
30.0 - 49.9	4,453	171,933
50.0 - 99.9	4,061	280,850
100 & over	2,133	380,273
Total	26,131	1,042,318

Table 4.3 Number of farms by farm business size and by percentage of area farmed which is owner-occupied, June 2023

	Farm Business Size				Total
	Very Small	Small	Medium	Large	
Owner-occupied land (% area farmed)					
All	12,295	778	264	226	13,563
50-99%	4,655	1,226	599	935	7,415
1-49%	2,507	571	277	541	3,896
None	1,146	66	28	17	1,257
Total	20,603	2,641	1,168	1,719	26,131
Average % Owner Occupied	79	70	70	61	72

Table 4.4 Number of farmers and workers by farm business size in Northern Ireland, June 2023

	Farm Business Size				Total
	Very Small	Small	Medium	Large	
Farmers, Partners, Directors & Spouses¹³:					
Full-time	11,950	3,061	1,659	3,060	19,730
Part-time	17,654	1,711	597	893	20,855
Total	29,604	4,772	2,256	3,953	40,585
Other workers:					
Full-time	616	296	261	1,800	2,973
Part-time	2,429	647	365	898	4,339
Casual/Seasonal	2,542	726	426	1,085	4,779
Total other workers	5,587	1,669	1,052	3,783	12,091
Total agricultural labour force	35,191	6,441	3,308	7,736	52,676

¹³ From 2020 onwards, spouses are included in the Farmers, Partners and Directors category. In previous years, data on spouses was collected as a separate question.

Table 4.5 Number of farms by (a) type of farm; (b) crops and grass area and (c) total area by farm business size in Northern Ireland, June 2023

	Farm Business Size				
	Very Small	Small	Medium	Large	Total
(a) Farm Type					
Cereals	220	42	8	5	275
General cropping	1,205	31	14	33	1,283
Horticulture	64	34	22	68	188
Pigs	44	20	20	60	144
Poultry	136	233	137	127	633
Dairy	204	655	570	1,090	2,519
Cattle & sheep: LFA ¹⁴	13,813	1,078	243	133	15,267
Cattle & sheep: lowland	4,620	471	111	98	5,300
Mixed and Other type	297	77	43	105	522
(b) Area of crops & grass farmed (hectares)					
Under 10	6,565	105	43	56	6,769
10 - 19.9	5,715	172	42	40	5,969
20.0 - 29.9	3,657	231	58	41	3,987
30.0 - 49.9	3,250	771	198	86	4,305
50.0 - 99.9	1,292	1,051	591	624	3,558
100 & over	124	311	236	872	1,543
(c) Total area farmed (hectares)					
Under 10	5,767	87	37	52	5,943
10 - 19.9	5,381	142	38	32	5,593
20.0 - 29.9	3,677	186	48	37	3,948
30.0 - 49.9	3,544	647	170	92	4,453
50.0 - 99.9	1,879	1,028	572	582	4,061
100 & over	355	551	303	924	2,133
Total	20,603	2,641	1,168	1,719	26,131

¹⁴ LFA = Less Favoured Area

5 Farm Activities

The tables in this section refer to all farming activities conducted on a holding, regardless of the farm business type classification in the previous chapter.

Table 5.1 Distribution of farms and cereals by area of cereals in Northern Ireland, June 2023

Area of cereals on farms (hectares)	No. Farms	Area Farmed
Under 5	757	2,188
5 - 9.9	520	3,682
10 - 19.9	414	5,773
20 - 29.9	162	3,860
30-49.9	130	4,985
50 & over	126	11,316
Total	2,109	31,803

Table 5.2 Distribution of farms and crops by area of barley in Northern Ireland, June 2023

Area of barley on farms (hectares)	No. Farms	Area Farmed
Under 5	660	1,932
5 - 9.9	454	3,190
10 - 19.9	338	4,718
20 - 29.9	135	3,188
50 & over	159	8,425
Total	1,746	21,453

Table 5.3 Distribution of farms and crops by area in Northern Ireland, June 2023

Area of crop on farms (hectares)	Winter Barley		Spring Barley		Oats		Wheat	
	Farms	Area	Farms	Area	Farms	Area	Farms	Area
under 5	258	789	605	1,721	163	383	198	609
5 - 9.9	210	1,493	367	2,576	63	436	162	1,137
10 - 19.9	168	2,276	244	3,340	43	565	145	2,002
20 - 29.9	56	1,322	90	2,116	13	301	56	1,296
30 - 39.9	28	938	32	1,104	*	64	26	889
40 and over	28	1,521	36	2,256	*	173	36	2,376
Total	748	8,340	1,374	13,113	288	1,922	623	8,309

*Figures suppressed due to data confidentiality constraints.

Table 5.4 Distribution of farms and potatoes by area of potatoes in Northern Ireland, June 2023

Area of potatoes on farms (hectares)	Farms	Area
under 1	75	38
1 - 2.9	86	146
3 - 4.9	61	234
5 - 9.9	49	350
10 - 14.9	25	301
15 and over	60	2189
Total	356	3,258

Table 5.5 Distribution of farms and dairy/beef cows by number of dairy/beef cows in Northern Ireland, June 2023

Number of cows on farm	Dairy cows		Beef cows	
	Farms	Cows	Farms	Cows
< 10	169	1,101	6,196	26,639
10 - 14	84	1,016	2,045	24,381
15 - 19	43	727	1,547	26,097
20 - 29	164	4,013	1,840	44,037
30 - 39	194	6,666	871	29,682
40 - 49	228	10,172	509	22,428
50 - 59	238	12,972	274	14,844
60 - 69	248	15,934	165	10,581
70 - 99	561	46,594	237	19,628
100 & over	1,221	220,151	126	17,765
Total	3,150	319,346	13,810	236,082

Table 5.6 Distribution of farms and total cattle by number of cattle in Northern Ireland, June 2023

Number of cattle on farm	Farms	Cattle
< 10	2,686	14,409
10 - 19	3,069	43,683
20 - 29	2,472	60,053
30 - 39	1,961	67,313
40 - 49	1,441	63,727
50 - 69	2,128	125,156
70 - 99	1,896	157,706
100 - 149	1,664	202,479
150 - 199	991	171,051
200 & over	2,033	767,768
Total	20,341	1,673,345

Table 5.7 Distribution of farms and ewes/total sheep by number of ewes/total sheep in Northern Ireland, June 2023

Number of ewes/sheep on farm	Ewes		Total sheep	
	Farms	Ewes	Farms	Sheep
1 - 24	2,297	29,874	1,270	16,992
25 - 49	1,957	69,957	1,243	45,290
50 - 99	2,264	159,014	1,971	141,481
100 - 199	1,923	264,419	2,202	312,566
200 - 299	638	154,742	1,268	311,970
300 - 399	277	94,392	662	229,188
400 - 499	132	58,116	356	158,919
500 - 999	151	100,544	738	496,686
1,000 & over	30	42,660	211	333,742
Total	9,669	973,718	9,921	2,046,834

Table 5.8 Distribution of farms and sows by number of sows in Northern Ireland, June 2023

Number of sows on farm	Farms	Sows
1 - 9	96	284
10 - 49	43	1,229
50 - 99	25	1,789
100 - 199	47	6,587
200 & over	45	37,954
Total	256	47,843

Table 5.9 Distribution of farms and finisher/weaner and total pigs by number of pigs in Northern Ireland, June 2023

Number of pigs on farm	Finisher/weaner pigs		Total pigs	
	Farms	Pigs	Farms	Pigs
1 - 9	57	219	144	459
10 - 49	33	847	42	1,011
50 - 99	16	1,145	16	1,088
100 - 399	31	7,980	32	7,397
400 - 999	37	25,436	40	26,985
1,000 - 1,999	32	44,409	35	51,375
2,000 & over	48	436,364	60	594,024
Total	254	516,400	369	682,339

Table 5.10 Distribution of farms by size of poultry flock in Northern Ireland, June 2023

Size of flock on farm	Farms	Total Poultry
under 1,000 ¹⁵	323	13,500
1,000 - 4,999	20	67,505
5,000 - 9,999	92	681,528
10,000 - 19,999	257	3,926,876
20,000 - 29,999	110	2,733,345
30,000 - 49,999	123	4,447,312
50,000 and over	138	13,714,681
Total	1,063	25,584,747

¹⁵ From 2020 includes farms with less than 250 birds

6 County & District Council Area

The tables in this section show data for Northern Ireland counties and for local district council area. Farms are allocated based on the Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN) of the farmer's main dwelling (i.e. where he/she resides). Where the UPRN is not available the postcode is used for allocation. Where the farmer has deceased the farm may be allocated a temporary location based on a relative's address or a solicitor's office if the estate is subject to probate at the time of the survey.

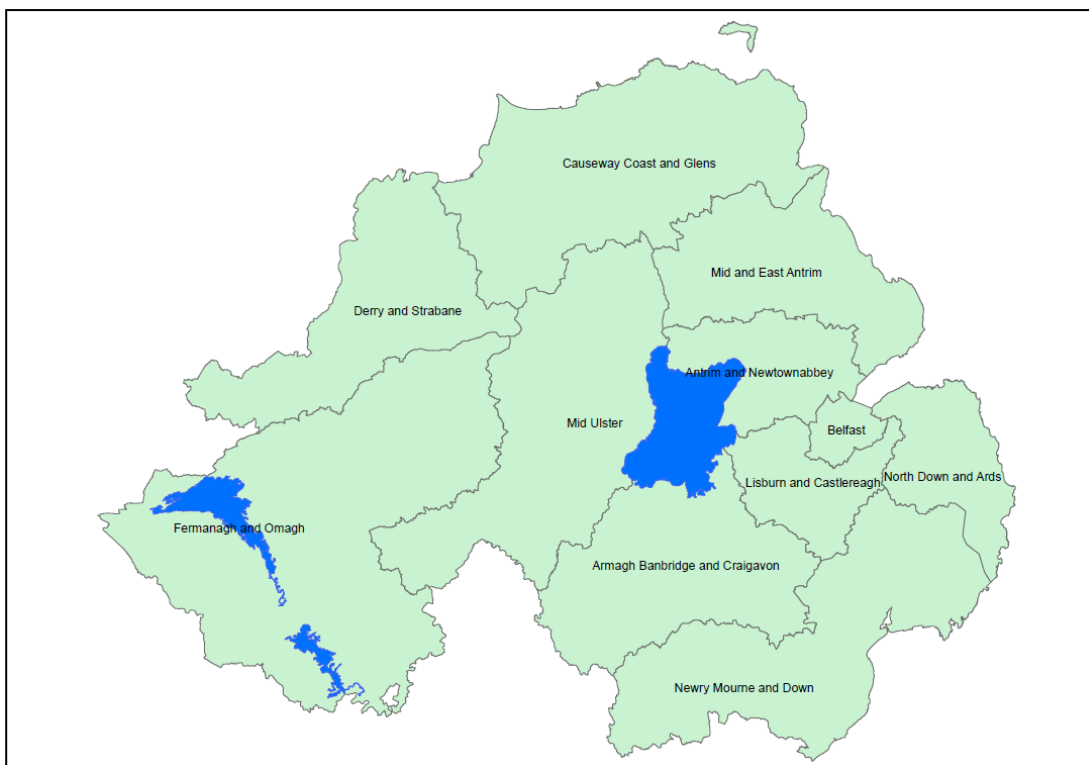


Table 6.1 Number of farms by crops & grass area by County & District Council in Northern Ireland, June 2023

	Number of farms					Ave hectare /farm
	0-9.9 ha	10-19.9 ha	20-29.9 ha	30+ ha	Total	
County						
Antrim ¹⁶	1,184	906	663	1,861	4,614	38
Armagh	1,171	950	553	962	3,636	26
Down	1,614	1,175	735	1,700	5,224	31
Fermanagh	548	697	546	1,217	3,008	36
Londonderry	833	765	495	1,371	3,464	36
Tyrone	1,419	1,476	995	2,295	6,185	33
District Council						
Antrim and Newtownabbey	226	155	140	391	912	43
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	1,066	840	483	1,093	3,482	30
Belfast ¹	41	30	13	29	113	33
Causeway Coast and Glens	584	508	342	1,197	2,631	42
Derry City and Strabane	337	364	283	790	1,774	40
Fermanagh and Omagh	972	1,244	922	2,056	5,194	35
Lisburn and Castlereagh	261	185	123	332	901	36
Mid and East Antrim	510	383	278	689	1,860	35
Mid Ulster	1,201	1,070	668	1,437	4,376	29
Newry, Mourne and Down	1,356	1,061	648	1,071	4,136	25
Ards and North Down	215	129	87	321	752	41
Total	6,769	5,969	3,987	9,406	26,131	33

¹⁶ May be a temporary address for the business/ or correspondence address

Table 6.2 Number of farms by farm business size by County & District Council in Northern Ireland, June 2023

	Number of farms				
	Very Small	Small	Medium	Large	Total
County					
Antrim ¹⁷	3,338	596	258	422	4,614
Armagh	2,969	308	133	226	3,636
Down	4,151	474	199	400	5,224
Fermanagh	2,557	258	109	84	3,008
Londonderry	2,698	394	153	219	3,464
Tyrone	4,890	611	316	368	6,185
District Council					
Antrim and Newtownabbey	667	100	52	93	912
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	2,697	349	143	293	3,482
Belfast ¹⁷	103	5	*	*	113
Causeway Coast and Glens	1,856	374	134	267	2,631
Derry City and Strabane	1,354	196	96	128	1,774
Fermanagh and Omagh	4,327	467	202	198	5,194
Lisburn and Castlereagh	693	81	41	86	901
Mid and East Antrim	1,363	239	112	146	1,860
Mid Ulster	3,486	436	218	236	4,376
Newry, Mourne and Down	3,530	316	129	161	4,136
Ards and North Down	527	78	*	*	752
Total	20,603	2,641	1,168	1,719	26,131

*Figures suppressed due to data confidentiality constraints.

¹⁷ May be a temporary address for the business/ or correspondence address.

Table 6.3 Number of farms by farm type by County & District Council in Northern Ireland, June 2023

	Cereal	General cropping	Horticulture	Pigs	Poultry	Dairy	Cattle/ Sheep LFA	Cattle/ Sheep lowland	Mixed & Other	Total
County										
Antrim ¹⁸	29	229	20	23	167	528	2,559	960	99	4,614
Armagh	*	178	112	*	88	288	2,059	798	65	3,636
Down	138	358	32	35	49	503	1,994	1,923	192	5,224
Fermanagh	*	94	5	*	43	246	2,596	15	5	3,008
Londonderry	57	196	7	25	31	320	1,944	790	94	3,464
Tyrone	21	228	12	39	255	634	4,115	814	67	6,185
District Council										
Antrim and Newtownabbey	8	62	5	7	28	105	382	295	20	912
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	64	201	114	20	90	345	1,175	1,355	118	3,482
Belfast ¹⁸	*	21	*	*	*	*	73	16	*	113
Causeway Coast and Glens	34	108	5	9	65	317	1,417	600	76	2,631
Derry City and Strabane	16	68	*	11	*	185	1,245	206	28	1,774
Fermanagh and Omagh	*	165	8	15	102	484	4,316	86	*	5,194
Lisburn and Castlereagh	28	77	14	8	14	99	253	378	30	901
Mid and East Antrim	*	79	*	8	78	206	1,172	277	31	1,860
Mid Ulster	32	220	9	37	202	401	2,412	981	82	4,376
Newry, Mourne and Down	48	206	13	25	36	256	2,761	711	80	4,136
Ards and North Down	40	76	11	*	*	*	61	395	40	752
Total	275	1,283	188	144	633	2,519	15,267	5,300	522	26,131

*Figures suppressed due to data confidentiality constraints.

¹⁸ May be a temporary address for the business/ or correspondence address.

Table 6.4 Number of farms by LFA designation by County & District Council in Northern Ireland, June 2023

	Mainly SDA	Mainly DA	Mainly LFA ¹⁹	Mainly non-LFA	Total
County					
Antrim ²⁰	1,413	1,741	3,154	1,460	4,614
Armagh	652	1,830	2,482	1,154	3,636
Down	1,002	1,317	2,319	2,905	5,224
Fermanagh	2,845	143	2,988	20	3,008
Londonderry	1,359	868	2,227	1,237	3,464
Tyrone	2,737	2,287	5,024	1,161	6,185
District Council					
Antrim and Newtownabbey	145	352	497	415	912
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	306	1,190	1,496	1,986	3,482
Belfast ¹	66	17	83	30	113
Causeway Coast and Glens	1,018	637	1,655	976	2,631
Derry City and Strabane	1,026	408	1,434	340	1,774
Fermanagh and Omagh	4,212	854	5,066	128	5,194
Lisburn and Castlereagh	79	243	322	579	901
Mid and East Antrim	679	759	1,438	422	1,860
Mid Ulster	1,142	1,833	2,975	1,401	4,376
Newry, Mourne and Down	1,328	1,818	3,146	990	4,136
Ards and North Down	7	75	82	670	752
Total	10,008	8,186	18,194	7,937	26,131

¹⁹ Mainly LFA farms are made up of those designated Mainly SDA and Mainly DA

²⁰ May be a temporary address for the business/ or correspondence address

Table 6.5 Crop and grass areas by County & District Council in Northern Ireland, June 2023 (hectares)

	Cereals	Pota- toes	Other farm crops*	Horticul- ture crops**	Total crops	Grass	Rough grazing	Other land***	Total area farmed
County									
Antrim ²¹	5,409	533	1,615	148	7,704	169,235	39,570	3,524	220,032
Armagh	2,963	107	1,384	1,423	5,876	89,155	2,826	1,600	99,458
Down	13,943	1,645	3,702	507	19,797	143,748	15,846	13,345	192,736
Fermanagh	53	5	351	8	416	107,542	11,240	2,820	122,018
Londonderry	6,847	805	1,999	29	9,681	113,826	34,280	2,382	160,168
Tyrone	2,589	164	1,475	75	4,303	198,418	38,246	6,938	247,905
District Council									
Antrim and Newtownabbey	1,428	21	293	15	1,757	37,622	2,759	919	43,058
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	5,581	266	2,393	1,450	9,690	94,847	4,442	1,774	110,753
Belfast ¹	79	28	35	56	198	3,575	1,113	872	5,758
Causeway Coast and Glens	6,207	724	1,550	20	8,501	101,644	31,935	2,314	144,394
Derry City and Strabane	2,252	306	1,255	33	3,845	66,374	23,801	3,178	97,198
Fermanagh and Omagh	335	7	749	17	1,107	179,464	25,642	4,966	211,179
Lisburn and Castlereagh	2,862	268	630	119	3,879	28,730	1,679	1,623	35,911
Mid and East Antrim	845	104	610	20	1,579	62,857	18,929	1,150	84,516
Mid Ulster	2,723	279	803	51	3,856	124,505	18,522	2,899	149,783
Newry, Mourne and Down	5,101	780	1,390	25	7,296	97,887	13,055	9,173	127,412
Ards and North Down	4,390	476	818	384	6,068	24,419	128	1,740	32,356
Total	31,803	3,258	10,527	2,189	47,777	821,924	142,007	30,610	1,042,318

* Other Farm Crops include Oilseed rape, Turnip/beet, Kale/Cabbage, other stock feed crops, Triticale, Linseed, Flax, Other glasshouse crops, Hemp and WBC plus Arable silage, Forage and Willow.

** Horticultural Crops include Fruit, Vegetables and Ornamentals.

*** Other land includes Woodland, Mushrooms, Fallow land, roads, buildings, bogs, wasteland, gardens etc.

²¹ May be a temporary address for the business/ or correspondence address.

Table 6.6 Livestock numbers by County & District Council in Northern Ireland, June 2023

	Dairy cows	Beef cows	Total cattle	Breeding ewes	Total sheep	Sows & gilts	Total pigs	Total poultry
County								
Antrim ²²	71,506	46,564	341,533	285,849	603,451	3,546	53,228	7,054,660
Armagh	37,672	26,862	231,200	48,355	103,300	17,032	247,693	3,693,975
Down	71,116	40,047	336,133	176,608	358,138	5,944	71,280	2,301,155
Fermanagh	22,331	39,155	158,889	59,306	126,971	372	5,166	947,744
Londonderry	41,398	28,760	212,620	194,677	408,969	4,822	51,746	1,545,240
Tyrone	75,323	54,694	392,970	208,923	446,005	16,127	253,226	10,041,973
District Council								
Antrim and Newtownabbey	15,822	12,384	81,617	38,332	83,335	1,333	17,541	1,273,755
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	46,855	23,007	249,446	58,526	126,024	17,184	245,134	3,911,901
Belfast ²²	323	986	3,721	2,032	4,274	110	1,227	286
Causeway Coast and Glens	44,325	22,035	195,578	197,694	415,590	1,009	16,512	2,796,869
Derry City and Strabane	27,158	13,330	112,457	133,861	280,569	2,401	31,961	415,256
Fermanagh and Omagh	49,035	59,144	288,220	129,682	279,805	3,603	45,838	2,784,604
Lisburn and Castlereagh	15,627	7,140	67,931	17,741	38,033	1,142	15,247	738,022
Mid and East Antrim	26,070	17,979	124,694	127,183	270,132	1,373	17,715	3,479,116
Mid Ulster	44,198	39,026	273,753	112,723	236,067	14,558	226,276	8,552,174
Newry, Mourne and Down	29,506	35,732	211,069	137,374	272,634	4,051	52,547	1,469,478
Ards and North Down	20,427	5,319	64,859	18,570	40,371	1,079	12,341	163,286
Total	319,346	236,082	1,673,345	973,718	2,046,834	47,843	682,339	25,584,747

²² May be a temporary address for the business/ or correspondence address

Table 6.7 Labour force by County & District Council in Northern Ireland, June 2023

	Farmers, partners, directors & spouses ²³		Other workers			Total
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Casual	
County						
Antrim ²⁴	3,829	3,552	523	884	953	9,741
Armagh	2,514	2,957	629	553	912	7,565
Down	3,919	4,501	765	1,010	1,004	11,199
Fermanagh	2,194	2,315	162	376	326	5,373
Londonderry	2,595	2,787	297	595	605	6,879
Tyrone	4,679	4,743	597	921	979	11,919
District Council						
Antrim and Newtownabbey	769	687	160	217	152	1,985
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	2,648	2,824	654	666	985	7,777
Belfast ²	65	93	35	24	37	254
Causeway Coast and Glens	2,273	1,945	253	451	538	5,460
Derry City and Strabane	1,437	1,343	200	286	359	3,625
Fermanagh and Omagh	3,835	3,957	359	705	706	9,562
Lisburn and Castlereagh	693	803	131	205	200	2,032
Mid and East Antrim	1,503	1,492	189	355	402	3,941
Mid Ulster	3,114	3,534	353	662	611	8,274
Newry, Mourne and Down	2,755	3,524	439	596	617	7,931
Ards and North Down	638	653	200	172	172	1,835
Total	19,730	20,855	2,973	4,339	4,779	52,676

²³ From 2020 onwards spouses were included in the Farmers, Partners and Directors category.

²⁴ May be a temporary address for the business/ or correspondence address.

7 Less Favoured Area

The tables in this section show the numbers of farms, crop areas, livestock numbers and persons working on farms which are wholly or mainly in areas classed as Severely Disadvantaged (SDA), Disadvantaged (DA) or Lowland.

Less Favoured Areas (LFA) is used to describe those parts of the country which, because of their relatively poor agricultural conditions, have been so designated under EU legislation. The LFA consists of Severely Disadvantaged Area (SDA) which is the original LFA as designated in 1975 and the Disadvantaged Area (DA) which was designated following reviews in 1984 and 1990.

Table 7.1 Numbers of farms by type of farm and farm business size by LFA category in Northern Ireland, June 2023

	Mainly SDA	Mainly DA	Mainly LFA ²⁵	Mainly non-LFA	LFA % of total	Northern Ireland Total
Farm Type						
Cereals	8	38	46	229	16.7	275
General cropping	291	398	689	594	53.7	1,283
Horticulture	14	59	73	115	38.8	188
Pigs	31	58	89	55	61.8	144
Poultry	182	244	426	207	67.3	633
Dairy	514	914	1,428	1,091	56.7	2,519
Cattle & Sheep	8,925	6,342	15,267	0	100.0	15,267
Mixed	43	133	176	346	33.7	522
Farm business size						
Very small	8,457	6,467	14,924	5,679	72.4	20,603
Small	931	827	1,758	883	66.6	2,641
Medium	340	360	700	468	59.9	1,168
Large	280	532	812	907	47.2	1,719
Total	10,008	8,186	18,194	7,937	69.6	26,131

²⁵ Mainly LFA farms are made up of those designated Mainly SDA and Mainly DA

Table 7.2 Areas of crops, grass, rough grazing & other land by LFA category in Northern Ireland, June 2023 (hectares)

	Mainly SDA	Mainly DA	Mainly LFA ²⁶	Mainly non-LFA	LFA % of total	Northern Ireland Total
Cereal Crops						
Oats	115	359	474	1,447	24.7	1,922
Wheat	236	1,255	1,491	6,818	17.9	8,309
Winter barley	244	1,251	1,495	6,845	17.9	8,340
Spring barley	546	2,122	2,668	10,445	20.3	13,113
Mixed corn	32	18	50	71	41.4	121
Total cereals	1,173	5,004	6,178	25,626	19.4	31,803
Other Crops						
Potatoes	183	573	756	2,502	23.2	3,258
Other crops**	1,127	1,980	3,107	7,420	29.5	10,527
Total other crops	1,311	2,552	3,863	9,922	28.0	13,785
Fruit, vegetables & flowers:						
Fruit	5	252	256	1,003	20.4	1,260
Vegetables	18	55	72	749	8.8	822
Ornamentals	20	38	58	50	53.5	108
Total fruit, veg & flowers	42	344	386	1,803	17.7	2,189
Total crops	2,526	7,901	10,427	37,351	21.8	47,777
Grass						
Grass < 5 years	41,704	42,152	83,856	58,703	58.8	142,559
Grass 5 years +	272,889	201,177	474,066	205,299	69.8	679,365
Total grass	314,593	243,329	557,923	264,001	67.9	821,924
Total crops and grass						
Rough grazing	124,254	9,325	133,580	8,427	94.1	142,007
Woods & plantations	9,473	5,081	14,554	4,792	75.2	19,346
Other land***	6,569	2,243	8,811	2,452	78.2	11,264
Total	457,416	267,879	725,295	317,023	69.6	1,042,318

*Figures suppressed due to data confidentiality constraints.

** Other Farm Crops include Oilseed rape, Turnip/beet, Kale/Cabbage, other stock feed crops, Triticale, Linseed, Flax, Other glasshouse crops, Hemp and WBC plus Arable silage, Forage and Willow.

*** Other land includes Woodland, Mushrooms, Fallow land, roads, buildings, bogs, wasteland, gardens etc.

²⁶ Mainly LFA farms are made up of those designated Mainly SDA and Mainly DA

Table 7.3 Numbers of cattle by LFA category, June 2023

	Mainly SDA	Mainly DA	Mainly LFA ²⁷	Mainly non-LFA	LFA % of total	Northern Ireland Total
Dairy cows Total	50,456	107,012	157,468	161,878	49.3	319,346
Other Dairy						
Female						
2 years old	7,857	15,303	23,160	21,489	51.9	44,649
1-2 years	16,155	35,708	51,863	57,000	47.6	108,863
Total	24,012	51,011	75,023	78,489	48.9	153,512
Beef cows Total	107,467	70,662	178,129	57,953	75.5	236,082
Other Beef						
Female						
2 years old	20,487	21,490	41,977	22,411	65.2	64,388
1-2 years	46,737	52,502	99,239	58,910	62.8	158,149
Total	67,224	73,992	141,216	81,321	63.5	222,537
Breeding bulls						
2 years old and over	3,974	3,335	7,309	3,440	68.0	10,749
1-2 years	1,727	2,455	4,182	3,432	54.9	7,614
Total	5,701	5,790	11,491	6,872	62.6	18,363
Other Male						
2 years old and over	9,086	17,666	26,752	25,632	51.1	52,384
1-2 years	36,144	58,894	95,038	74,743	56.0	169,781
Total	45,230	76,560	121,790	100,375	54.8	222,165
6-12 months						
Male	25,276	31,334	56,610	34,867	61.9	91,477
Female	33,113	44,109	77,222	58,380	56.9	135,602
Total	58,389	75,443	133,832	93,247	58.9	227,079
Under 6 months						
Male	40,149	39,664	79,813	44,716	64.1	124,529
Female	43,336	47,979	91,315	58,417	61.0	149,732
Total	83,485	87,643	171,128	103,133	62.4	274,261
Total Cattle	441,964	548,113	990,077	683,268	59.2	1,673,345

²⁷ Mainly LFA farms are made up of those designated Mainly SDA and Mainly DA

Table 7.4 Numbers of sheep, horses & goats by LFA category, June 2023

	Mainly SDA	Mainly DA	Mainly LFA ²⁸	Mainly non-LFA	LFA % of total	Northern Ireland Total
Ewes						
Ewes which lambed	460,832	186,327	647,159	174,981	78.7	822,140
Others for breeding	92,068	32,851	124,919	26,659	82.4	151,578
Total	552,900	219,178	772,078	201,640	79.3	973,718
Other sheep						
Rams for service	15,829	6,855	22,684	6,314	78.2	28,998
Lambs 1 year old +	5,283	3,858	9,141	4,716	66.0	13,857
Lambs Under 1 year	562,738	245,580	808,318	221,943	78.5	1,030,261
Total Sheep	1,136,750	475,471	1,612,221	434,613	78.8	2,046,834

Table 7.5 Numbers of horses by LFA category, June 2023

	Mainly SDA	Mainly DA	Mainly LFA ³⁰	Mainly non-LFA	LFA % of total	Northern Ireland Total
Horses/Ponies owned by occupier	998	1,532	2,530	2,509	50.2	5,039
Horses/Ponies not owned by occupier	180	417	597	701	46.0	1,298
Total Horses & Ponies	1,178	1,949	3,127	3,210	49.3	6,337

²⁸ Mainly LFA farms are made up of those designated Mainly SDA and Mainly DA

Table 7.6 Numbers of goats by LFA category, June 2023

	Mainly SDA	Mainly DA	Mainly LFA ²⁹	Mainly non-LFA	LFA % of total	Northern Ireland Total
Total Goats	1,162	889	2,051	721	74.0	2,772

Table 7.7 Numbers of pigs by LFA category, June 2023

	Mainly SDA	Mainly DA	Mainly LFA ³¹	Mainly non-LFA	LFA % of total	Northern Ireland Total
Female breeding herd						
Sows in pig	3,848	8,126	11,974	19,637	37.9	31,611
Gilts in pig	827	1,314	2,141	8,788	19.6	10,929
Other sows for breeding	472	2,013	2,485	2,818	46.9	5,303
Boars being used for service	56	183	239	355	40.2	594
Maiden gilts	763	978	1,741	6,096	22.2	7,837
Total breeding pigs	5,966	12,614	18,580	37,694	33.0	56,274
Other pigs						
Cull sows being fattened	70	156	226	458	33	684
Finishers	28,927	61,050	89,977	225,430	28.5	315,407
Weaners/Growers	28,420	47,990	76,410	123,899	38.1	200,309
Suckling piglets	11,424	24,185	35,609	73,918	32.5	109,527
Pet pigs	26	35	61	77	44.2	138
Total Other pigs	68,867	133,416	202,283	423,782	32.3	626,065
Total Pigs	74,833	146,030	220,863	461,476	32.4	682,339

²⁹ Mainly LFA farms are made up of those designated Mainly SDA and Mainly DA

Table 7.8 Numbers of poultry by LFA category, June 2023

	Mainly SDA	Mainly DA	Mainly LFA ³⁰	Mainly non-LFA	LFA % of total	Northern Ireland Total
Laying birds up to end of first laying cycle	1,785,295	2,160,505	3,945,800	1,847,414	68.1	5,793,214
Growing pullets	236,964	731,717	968,681	837,986	53.6	1,806,667
Breeding flock	819,328	602,379	1,421,707	559,988	71.7	1,981,695
Table birds						
Broilers	2,812,642	6,366,564	9,179,206	6,440,222	58.8	15,619,428
Other poultry	155,112	146,662	301,774	81,969	78.6	383,743
Total Poultry	5,809,341	10,007,827	15,817,168	9,767,579	61.8	25,584,747

Table 7.9 Farm labour force on farms by LFA category, June 2023

	Mainly SDA	Mainly DA	Mainly LFA ³²	Mainly non-LFA	LFA % of total	Northern Ireland Total
Farmers, partners, directors & spouses*:						
Full-time	6,981	6,084	13,065	6,665	66.2	19,730
Part-time	8,037	6,469	14,506	6,349	69.6	20,855
Total	15,018	12,553	27,571	13,014	67.9	40,585
Other Paid workers:						
Full-time	633	963	1,596	1,377	53.7	2,973
Part-time	1,376	1,330	2,706	1,633	62.4	4,339
Casual/Seasonal	1,418	1,430	2,848	1,931	59.6	4,779
Total other workers	3,427	3,723	7,150	4,941	59.1	12,091
Total agricultural labour force	18,445	16,276	34,721	17,955	65.9	52,676

*From 2020 onwards spouses were included in the Farmers, Partners and Directors category.

³⁰ Mainly LFA farms are made up of those designated Mainly SDA and Mainly DA

8 Crop Yields and Production

The tables in this section show yield and production estimates for the main cereal crops and potatoes for the year 2023. The estimates for cereal yields were obtained from a post-harvest survey of 233 growers, whilst potato estimates were derived from a survey involving pre-harvest digs covering potato crops on approximately 70 farms.

- There was a decrease in yield (tonnes per hectare) for winter barley, spring barley, wheat. Overall, production (tonnes) for cereals decreased in 2023.
- **Barley:** Total production of barley decreased in 2023 to approximately 111,000 tonnes, a decrease of 20 per cent compared to 2022. Spring barley production decreased by 27 per cent to 57,000 tonnes while winter barley production decreased by 10 per cent to 54,000 tonnes. The overall area grown decreased by 2 per cent from 2022 levels which accounts for the decrease in production. Yields for both winter (6 t/ha) and spring (4 t/ha) crops also decreased by 26 and 7 per cent respectively from 2022.
- **Wheat:** The total area of wheat grown decreased by 4 per cent with production of wheat decreasing to 57,000 tonnes, a decrease of 15 per cent from 2022. As with Barley, this decrease is a result of both a decrease in area grown and yields as yields also decreased by 12 per cent compared to 2022.
- **Oats:** Oat yields decreased by 10 per cent in 2023. The total area of oats planted decrease by 3 per cent in 2023. This decrease in both yield and area planted lead to an overall decrease in production of 12 per cent (11,000 tonnes).
- **Potatoes:** The pre-harvest production estimate of main crop ware and seed potatoes is 123,000 tonnes, a decrease of 11 per cent from 2022. In 2023, the area planted decreased by 7 percent to 3,258 and yields decreased by 5 per cent to 38 tonnes per hectare.

Table 8.1 Estimates of Crop Yields (Tonnes per Hectare)

	2022	2023		% Change 2022/23	2023 confidence limits (95%)
Cereals³³:					
Barley - Spring	5.9	4.4	(4.51)	-25.8	+/- 0.55
- Winter	7.0	6.5	(6.75)	-6.9	+/- 0.35
All Barley	6.3	5.2		-17.5	
Wheat	7.8	6.9	(7.16)	-12.3	+/- 0.39
Oats	6.2	5.6	(5.81)	-9.7	+/- 0.64
Potatoes:					
Maincrop ware & seed (marketable yield) ³⁴	40.3	38.4		-4.7	+/- 4.97

³³ Cereal yields and production at 15% moisture content. Yields unadjusted for moisture are shown in brackets.

³⁴ Marketable yield includes crop over 45 mm for ware crops and over 28mm for seed.

Table 8.2 Estimates of Crop Production ('000 Tonnes)

	2021	2022	2023	% Change 2021/22	% Change 2022/23	2023 confidence limits (95%)
Cereals:						
Barley - Spring	77.3	78.3	57.1	1.3	-27.1	+/- 7.2
- Winter	59.9	60.1	54.2	0.3	-9.8	+/- 2.9
All Barley	137.2	138.4	111.3	0.9	-19.6	
Wheat	63.6	67.5	57.1	6.1	-15.4	+/- 3.2
Oats	10.9	12.3	10.8	12.8	-12.2	+/- 1.2
Potatoes:						
Maincrop ware & seed (marketable yield) ³⁵	117.6	138.6	123.3	17.9	-11.1	N/A

³⁵ Maincrop yield only

Table 8.3 Area Grown (hectares)

	2021	2022	2023	% Change 2021/22	% Change 2022/23
Cereals:					
Barley - Spring	12,898	13,353	13,113	3.5	-1.8
- Winter	7,944	8,604	8,304	8.3	-3.5
All Barley	20,843	21,957	21,417	5.3	-2.5
Wheat	7,734	8,625	8,309	11.5	-3.7
Oats	1,874	1,973	1,922	5.3	-2.6
Potatoes:					
Maincrop ware & seed	3,468	3,486	3,258	0.5	-6.5

9 Notes for Readers

1. The survey results were prepared by statisticians from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) working within DAERA. Further information about NISRA can be found: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/>
2. There were key methodological changes in 2020 both in how the Agricultural Census data was collected and processed. These included
 - The creation of a revised farm census sample using departmental administrative data sources.
 - Due to COVID-19, a letter inviting farms to take part was issued to all farms and data collected online only for the first time.
 - Some questions were simplified or removed to streamline the online collection experience and reduce the burden on farms.
 - Data for the cattle section was extracted from the APHIS cattle tracing database as in previous years.
 - Telephone support was provided for farmers who could not complete online and a focussed telephone follow-up of non-responding farms was carried out.
 - New estimation and imputation methods were used to create statistics for those who did not provide a return.
3. Full details on the methodology, coverage of the census and terms are available in the Agricultural Census Methodology and Quality report which can be found: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/agricultural-census-northern-ireland>
4. Results are based on 15,704 completed questionnaires augmented with data from the APHIS cattle tracing system, Northern Ireland Bird Register and Northern Ireland Annual Inventory of Pigs.
5. These statistics are released according to the Statement of Compliance with the Pre-release access to Official Statistics Order (NI) 2009.

6. Enquiries about this Agricultural Census publication should be addressed to:

Farm Census Team
Statistics and Analytical Services Branch,
Policy, Economics and Statistics Division of the
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs,
Clare House,
303 Airport Road West,
Belfast,
BT3 9ED
Email: farmsurvey.ped@daera-ni.gov.uk
Tel: 02890 525 432

All media queries should be made to DAERA Press Office on 028 90524619

7. All recent DAERA statistical releases can be found at:
www.daera-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/statistics

8. The UK Statistics Authority has confirmed these statistics as accredited official statistics. Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007. Accreditation signifies production is in accordance with this act and that these statistics comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

This accreditation means that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods; and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been accredited it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall be observed regarding them.

Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

These accredited official statistics were independently reviewed by OSR in March 2019. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics and should be labelled 'National Statistics'. National Statistics are accredited official statistics. A copy of the compliance check letter can be found here:

<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/compliance-check-of-statistics-from-the-northern-ireland-june-agricultural-census/>

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