



Police Service
of Northern Ireland



Agriculture and Rural Crime in Northern Ireland

Update to 31st March 2023

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Agricultural crime has shown an overall downwards trend since the start of the data series in 2010/11.

In the 12 months from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023:

- There were 237 agricultural crimes recorded in Northern Ireland, an increase of 41 on the previous 12 months. Despite this increase, this was the second lowest financial year figure for agricultural crimes since the data series began in 2010/11.
- 98 per cent of agricultural crime was identified as occurring in rural settlement areas.
- Agricultural crime represented less than one per cent of all burglary, robbery and theft offences.
- Five policing districts experienced an increase in levels of agriculture crime.

Contents

Contents.....	2
1. Things you need to know about this release	3
2. What is happening to levels of agricultural crime over the longer term?.....	4
3. What has been happening to levels of agricultural crime more recently?.....	5
4. What is happening to levels of urban and rural crime over the longer term?.....	7
5. What has been happening to levels of urban and rural crime more recently?	8
6. Background notes.....	9

We welcome comment and feedback on these statistics. If you would like to forward your views, receive notification of new publications or be kept informed of developments relating to PSNI statistics, please email your contact details using the email address provided on the cover page.

1. Things you need to know about this release

Coverage

This release is produced in accordance with the pillars and principles set out in the Code of Practice for Statistics.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) publishes figures on the levels and trends in agricultural and rural crime in Northern Ireland. These figures are based on police recorded crime data and details of the definitions and methodology used are provided below. The statistics are collated and produced by statisticians seconded to PSNI from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

This bulletin presents agricultural and urban/rural crime for the latest twelve months 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 (financial year 2022/23) and the previous 12 months 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022 (financial year 2021/22).

Figures were compiled on 3rd May 2023, using data extracted from the police administrative system on that date. All tables and charts in the bulletin, along with figures for financial years dating back to 2010/11 and for calendar years dating back to 2011 are available from the PSNI website in the [Agriculture and Rural Crime spreadsheet for March 2023 \(opens in a new window\)](#).

The next update covering the 12 months to 30th June 2023 will be published on 27th July 2023. A full publication schedule is available on the [PSNI website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Definitions

Agricultural Crime – the agricultural crime figures in this bulletin represent offences of burglary, robbery and theft where the victim is involved in an agricultural-based activity. Agricultural crime covers burglary, robbery and theft offences where the property or vehicles stolen have an agricultural link (e.g. farm equipment, agricultural vehicles, livestock) or where the location was agricultural (e.g. farm, farmhouse). This information is identified from both drop down pick lists and free text searches using key agricultural-related words.

Urban/Rural crime – this covers all burglary, robbery and theft offences, split into these two geographical areas based on an aggregation of settlement bands. Please note that not all agricultural crime will occur in a rural settlement.

The urban/rural crime split is based on classification boundaries that are available for Northern Ireland as defined by the Planning Service, these areas being defined from Settlement Development Limits. Further details are available from the [NISRA website \(opens in a new window\)](#). Crimes are allocated to urban or rural by linking the available postcode information for the crime location to the Central Postcode Directory.

Data Revisions

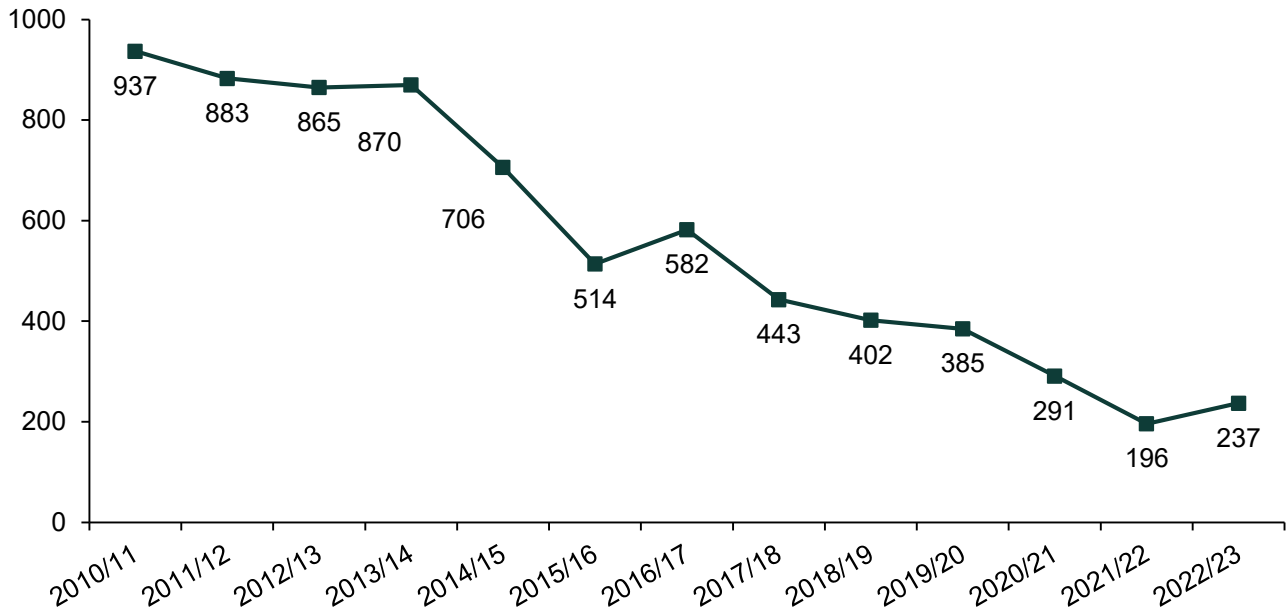
Agricultural crime tables: As the methodology used to identify agricultural crimes relies on data extracted from a live operational system, figures contained in the agricultural crime tables may be subject to revision. Further information is provided in the NOTES section on the last page of this bulletin.

Urban/Rural tables: Revisions to previously published data are applied on an annual basis to financial year crime figures from 2015/16 onwards, as a result of the introduction of the wider outcomes framework in April 2015. These revisions take account of crime cancellations and sanction outcomes identified since the previous annual publication. Revisions of this nature have been applied in this report and will next be applied in May 2024. Further guidance on crime cancellation can be found in the [Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime \(opens in a new window\)](#).

2. What is happening to levels of agricultural crime over the longer term?

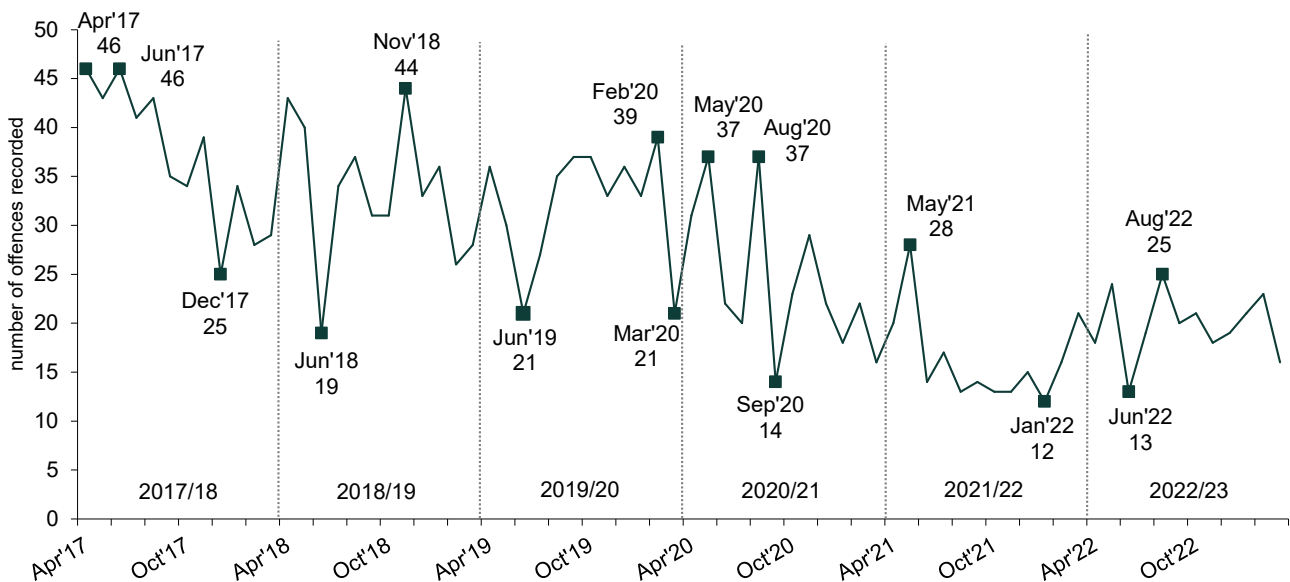
The number of burglary, robbery and theft offences relating to agricultural-based activity has shown an overall downwards trend. The highest level of 937 offences was recorded in 2010/11, with the lowest level of 196 recorded in 2021/22. The figures for 2022/23 show an increase of 41 when compared with 2021/22; despite this increase, the number of agricultural crimes in 2022/23 remains the second lowest in the data series. The level recorded in 2022/23 is a quarter of the 2010/11 figure. [Figure 1]

Figure 1 Trends in agricultural crime since 2010/11



The falling levels of agriculture crime since April 2017 are shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 Agricultural crime each month

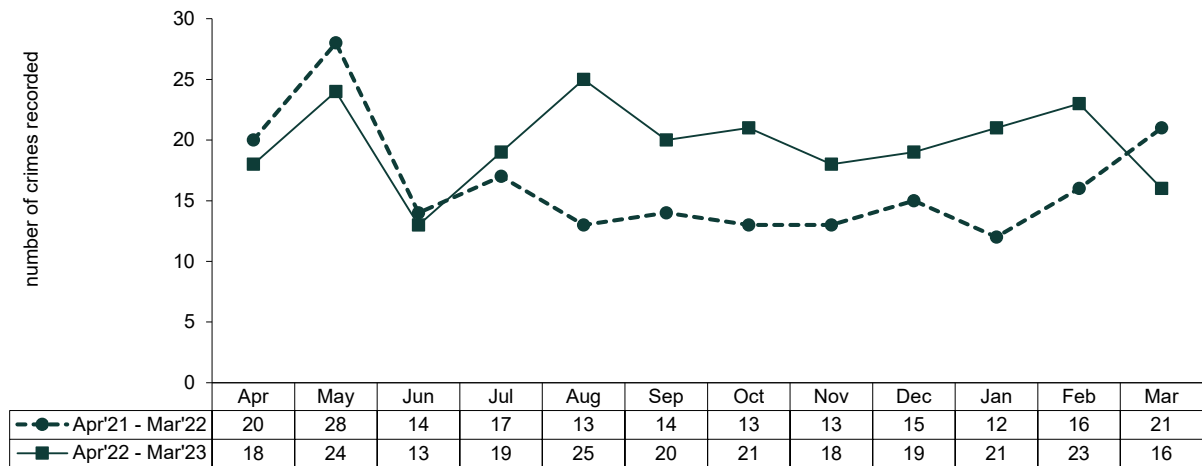


3. What has been happening to levels of agricultural crime more recently?

In the 12 months from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023:

- There were 237 agricultural crimes recorded in Northern Ireland, an increase of 41 on the previous 12 months. For more information, please see Section 5.
- Despite this increase, this was the second lowest financial year figure for agricultural crimes since the data series began in 2010/11. [Table 1 and Figure 1]
- 98 per cent of agriculture crime was identified as occurring in rural settlement areas. Since 2010/11 this proportion has ranged between 95 and 98 per cent¹. [Table 2, accompanying spreadsheet]
- Burglary and robbery represented 28 per cent of agricultural crime, while theft represented 72 per cent. Since 2010/11 burglary and robbery have represented between 27 and 36 per cent of agricultural crime while theft has represented between 64 and 73 per cent. [Table 3, accompanying spreadsheet]
- Agriculture crime represented 0.9 per cent of all burglary, robbery and theft offences, matching the proportion recorded during the previous 12 months. The highest proportion of 2.4 per cent was seen in 2010/11, 2012/13 and 2013/14. [Tables 1 and 5]
- The highest level of agriculture crime was seen in Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon (41), followed by Newry, Mourne & Down (39), Mid & East Antrim (31), Causeway Coast & Glens (30), Fermanagh & Omagh (26) and Mid Ulster (25). [Table 1]
- Five of the policing districts showed an increase in levels of agricultural crime. Antrim & Newtownabbey had the greatest increase (19) and Mid Ulster had the greatest decrease (-6). [Table 1]

Figure 3 Agricultural crime April 2021 to March 2023



¹ Urban/rural settlement figures are identified through matching the postcode of the occurrence with the Central Postcode Directory.

Table 1 Agriculture Crime (burglary, robbery and theft offences for agricultural-based activity) by Policing District

Policing district	Agricultural Crimes Apr'21-Mar'22	Agricultural Crimes Apr'22-Mar'23	Change
Belfast City	1	0	-1
Lisburn & Castlereagh City	8	9	1
Ards & North Down	4	3	-1
Newry, Mourne & Down	39	39	0
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	32	41	9
Mid Ulster	31	25	-6
Fermanagh & Omagh	27	26	-1
Derry City & Strabane	12	11	-1
Causeway Coast & Glens	23	30	7
Mid & East Antrim	16	31	15
Antrim & Newtownabbey	3	22	19
No district assigned	0	0	0
Northern Ireland	196	237	41

Table 2 Agriculture Crime (burglary, robbery and theft offences for agricultural-based activity) split by Urban/Rural settlements

	Agricultural Crimes Apr'21-Mar'22	Agricultural Crimes Apr'22-Mar'23	Change
Urban	3	5	2
Rural	193	232	39
Not known	0	0	0
Total	196	237	41

Table 3 Agriculture Crime (burglary, robbery and theft offences for agricultural-based activity) split by type of offence

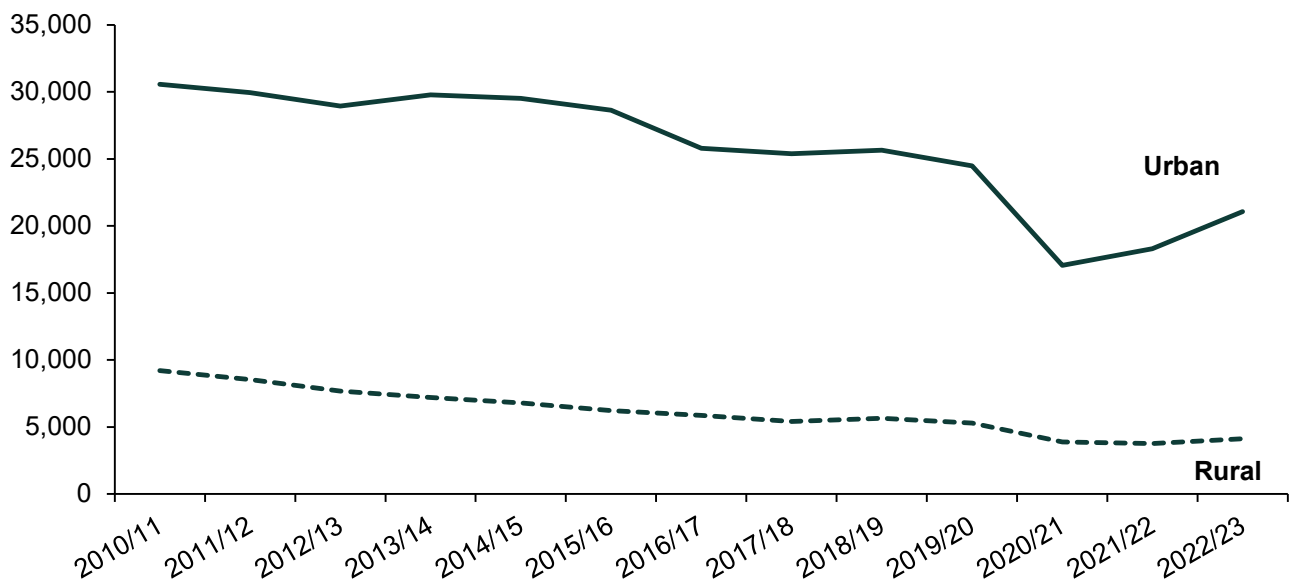
	Agricultural Crimes Apr'21-Mar'22	Agricultural Crimes Apr'22-Mar'23	Change
Burglary / Robbery	56	66	10
Theft	140	171	31
Total	196	237	41

4. What is happening to levels of urban and rural crime over the longer term?

Between 2010/11 and 2022/23:

- Looking at Northern Ireland as a whole, burglary, robbery and theft offences showed an overall downwards trend from 2010/11 to the lowest level recorded in 2020/21, a fall of 47.3 per cent over this time period. Levels have since increased in both 2021/22 and 2022/23, with 2022/23 showing an increase of 20.3 per cent when compared with the lowest recorded figure. [Table 5]
- The number of burglary, robbery and theft offences in **rural settlements** fell each year between 2010/11 and 2021/22 with the exception of 2018/19. Levels rose in 2022/23, to 4,130 offences, representing a 55.1 per cent reduction on the 9,211 offences recorded in 2010/11. [Table 6]
- Levels of burglary, robbery and theft offences in **urban settlements** showed an overall downwards trend between 2010/11 and 2020/21, a fall of 44.2 per cent over this time period. While the level of 21,080 recorded in 2022/23 shows an increase of 23.5 per cent when compared with the lowest level in 2020/21, it still represents a fall of 31.0 per cent when compared with 2010/11. [Table 5]
- The *proportion* of burglary, robbery and theft offences occurring in urban settlement areas has gradually increased from 77 per cent in 2010/11 to 84 per cent in 2022/23. Correspondingly, the *proportion* of these offences occurring in rural settlements has fallen from 23 per cent in 2010/11 to 16 per cent in 2022/23. [Table 5]

Figure 4 Trends in burglary, robbery and theft offences by urban and rural split since 2010/11



5. What has been happening to levels of urban and rural crime more recently?

In the 12 months from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023:

- In Northern Ireland as a whole, burglary, robbery and theft offences increased by 14.1 per cent (3,121 offences). [bulletin Table 4, spreadsheet Table 5]
- The number of burglary, robbery and theft offences in **rural settlements** increased by 9.3 per cent (352 offences). [bulletin Table 4, spreadsheet Table 5]
- Levels of burglary, robbery and theft offences in **urban settlements** increased by 15.1 per cent (2,769 offences). [bulletin Table 4, spreadsheet Table 5]
- The *proportion* of burglary, robbery and theft offences occurring in urban settlement areas was 84 per cent, with the *proportion* of these offences occurring in rural settlements sitting at 16 per cent. This compares with proportions of 83 per cent and 17 per cent recorded during the previous 12 months. [bulletin Table 4, spreadsheet Table 5]
- The percentage of burglary, robbery and theft offences occurring in rural settlement areas was 51 per cent in Mid Ulster, 45 per cent in Fermanagh & Omagh, 34 per cent in Newry, Mourne & Down, 27 per cent in Causeway Coast & Glens, 26 per cent in both Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon and Lisburn & Castlereagh City, 22 per cent in Mid & East Antrim, 21 per cent in Antrim & Newtownabbey, 16 per cent in Derry City & Strabane and 15 per cent in Ards & North Down. The figure was less than 1 per cent in Belfast City. [bulletin Table 4, spreadsheet Table 5]

Table 4 Urban/Rural Crime (burglary, robbery and theft offences based on geographical location) by Policing District, current and previous 12 months

Policing district	Urban Crimes Apr'21-Mar'22	Urban Crimes Apr'22-Mar'23	Rural Crimes Apr'21-Mar'22	Rural Crimes Apr'22-Mar'23	Total Crimes Apr'21-Mar'22	Total Crimes Apr'22-Mar'22
Belfast City	8,747	9,825	30	16	8,777	9,841
Lisburn & Castlereagh City	1,031	1,181	316	411	1,347	1,592
Ards & North Down	811	1,043	216	191	1,027	1,234
Newry, Mourne & Down	1,082	1,337	638	675	1,720	2,012
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	1,426	1,480	489	531	1,915	2,011
Mid Ulster	475	480	496	500	971	980
Fermanagh & Omagh	447	548	432	443	879	991
Derry City & Strabane	1,527	1,801	321	355	1,848	2,156
Causeway Coast & Glens	727	898	330	339	1,057	1,237
Mid & East Antrim	851	1,215	274	340	1,125	1,555
Antrim & Newtownabbey	1,187	1,272	236	329	1,423	1,601
Northern Ireland	18,311	21,080	3,778	4,130	22,089	25,210

6. Background notes

Like any administrative data, police recorded crime statistics are affected by the rules governing the recording of data, systems in place and operational decisions in respect of the allocation of resources. More proactive policing in a given area could lead to an increase in crimes recorded without any real change in underlying crime trends. These issues need to be taken into account when using these data.

Definitions

Agricultural crime covers burglary, robbery and theft offences where the property or vehicles stolen have an agricultural link (e.g. farm equipment, agricultural vehicles, livestock) or where the location was agricultural (e.g. farm, farmhouse). This information is identified from both drop down pick lists and free text searches using key agricultural-related words.

Urban/Rural crime covers all burglary, robbery and theft offences, split into these two geographical areas based on an aggregation of settlement bands.

Please note that not all agricultural crime will occur in a rural settlement.

Data Accuracy and Revisions

Agricultural crime figures are based on a range of information extracted from a live crime recording system and, as such, will always be subject to revision.

Within the current financial year revisions may occur because:

- There will be incidents identified as crimes but not processed on the crime recording system by the time the figures are extracted for presentation in these tables.
- Figures may change from month to month due to crimes being reclassified from one crime type to another during the financial year. This may be because quality checks have identified the crime as incorrectly classified, or further information may indicate that the circumstances surrounding the crime were not as initially recorded.
- The Home Office Counting Rules allow crimes initially recorded to be 'no crime'd' or removed from the crime figures.

Revisions to any records within the dataset may also occur as information in relation to property stolen, vehicles stolen and location may be updated on the live system. This may be through adding additional information or updating existing information based on more up-to-date details.

The urban/rural figures are identified through matching the available postcode to the Central Postcode Directory. Postcode accuracy and availability within the current financial year will not be of the same quality or completeness as a full financial year. This is because additional quality checks are completed at the end of each financial year to improve postcode quality and completeness. Further details are available in the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Annual Revisions: Revisions to previously published data are applied on an annual basis to financial year crime figures from 2015/16 onwards, as a result of the introduction of the wider outcomes framework in April 2015. These revisions take account of crime cancellations and sanction outcomes identified since the previous annual publication. Revisions of this nature have been applied in this report and will next be applied in May 2024. Further guidance on crime cancellation can be found in the Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime.

Web links to other information you may be interested in

[Trends in Police Recorded Crime in Northern Ireland 1998/99 to 2021/22 \(opens in a new window\)](#) was published on 2 December 2022 and provides detailed trend information covering this time period.

Further details on Police Recorded Crime statistics are available in the [User Guide to Police Recorded Crime Statistics in Northern Ireland \(opens in a new window\)](#), and in the [Police Recorded Crime Statistics Quality Report 293KB \(opens in a new window\)](#). These are reference guides with explanatory notes regarding the issues and classifications which are key to the production and presentation of police recorded crime statistics.

Copies of other PSNI publications are available from the [PSNI website \(opens in a new window\)](#)