

POLICY, ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS DIVISION  
Northern Ireland Agri-Food Sector  
*Key Statistics July 2020*



Agriculture, Fishing & Forestry



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IN PEOPLE**

Northern Ireland Agri-Food Sector  
Key Statistics  
July 2020

Key Facts on  
Agriculture,  
Fishing and Forestry

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Policy, Economics and Statistics Division  
DAERA

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**Table 1: General economic data**

	NI	Scotland	Wales	England	UK	EU 27
GVA per head (£, 2018)	22,428	26,134	20,738	29,356	28,729	23,847
Population ('000, 2018)	1,882	5,438	3,139	55,977	66,436	447,159
Area (sq. km)	13,588	77,911	20,736	130,310	242,545	4,131,663 <sup>1</sup>
Population Density (per sq. km, 2018)	138	70	151	430	274	108
Bank Base interest rate (% , June 2020)					0.10	
RPI (% change, April 2019 - April 2020)					1.5	
Unemployment rate (% , Quarter 1 2020)	2.4	4.1	3.2	4.0	3.9	6.8

Unemployment rates are not seasonally adjusted and taken from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). EU27 figure from Eurostat for February 2020.

GVA - Gross Value Added (at basic prices).

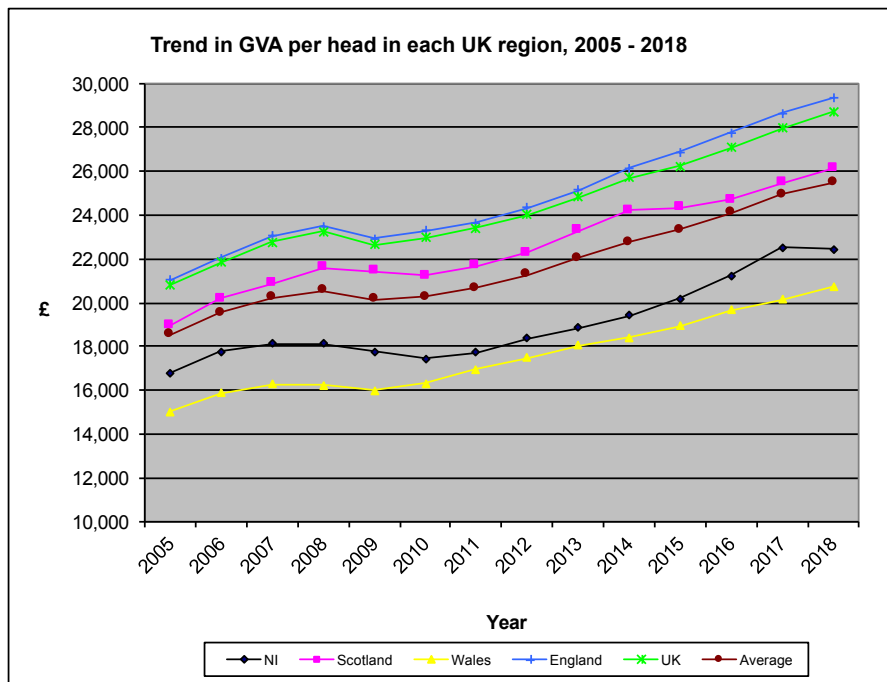
Note: For GVA figures of UK and individual countries the methodology has changed this year from income approach to balanced approach. Take care when comparing with previous publications.

RPI - Retail Price Index

1. 2015

Note: EU27 figures for this year do not include UK but do include Croatia. Take care when comparing with previous publications.

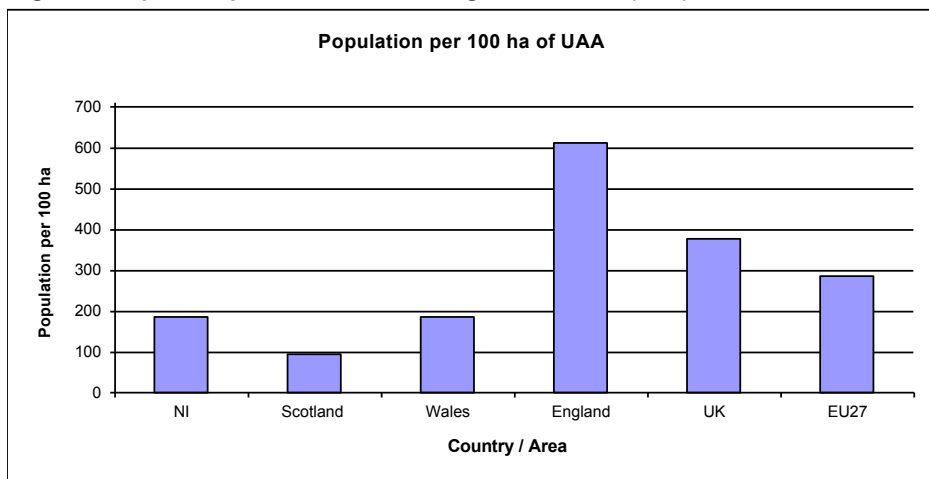
**Figure 1 - Trend in GVA per head in each UK region, 2005 - 2018**



Note: GVA is in current basic prices

Note: The GVA figures this year use the balanced approach. All years in this graph have been restated using this methodology.

**Figure 2 - Population per 100 ha of Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA), 2018**



**Table 2: Agriculture: general data, 2019**

	NI	Scot	Wales	Eng	UK	ROI	EU27
Share of total GVA (%)	1.3	0.8 <sup>1</sup>	0.9 <sup>1</sup>	0.5 <sup>1</sup>	0.5 <sup>1</sup>	1.0 <sup>1</sup>	1.4 <sup>1</sup>
No. employed in agriculture forestry & fishing ('000)	24	39	30	248	341	107 <sup>5</sup>	8,876
Share of employment (%)	2.8 <sup>4</sup>	1.4 <sup>4</sup>	2.0 <sup>4</sup>	0.9 <sup>4</sup>	1.0 <sup>4</sup>	4.5 <sup>5</sup>	3.8
Number of farms ('000)	25	51	36	106	219	138 <sup>2</sup>	10,283 <sup>2</sup>
Average farm size (Ha)	41	122	48	87	81	32 <sup>2</sup>	15 <sup>2</sup>
LFA (% Agricultural area)	70	86	80	18	50	75 <sup>3</sup>	-

1. 2018, 2. 2016, 3. 2007

4. % of total LFS employment (871,000 in NI, 2,664,000 in Scotland, 1,462,000 in Wales, 27,555,000 in England, 32,552,000 in UK at 2019)

5. CSO Labour Force Survey, 4th quarter, 2019

Due to National Accounting principles, GVA figures do not include Direct Subsidy Receipts

Source for UK employment data (SIC 2007, main job) - Labour force survey (2019)

Note: EU27 figures for this year do not include UK but do include Croatia. Take care when comparing with previous publications.

**Table 3: Agriculture in NI: structural adjustment, 1999, 2009 and 2017-2019**

	1999	2009	2017	2018	2019	
Number of farms	31,132	25,264	24,956	24,895	24,827	
Average farm size (Ha)		34.5	39.9	40.9	41.1	41.2
Total farmers and workers		59,251	48,031	48,704	49,248	49,423

**Table 4: Agri - food sector GVA and employment, 2019**

	NI		UK	
	£m	% of GVA	£m	% of GVA
<b>Gross value added<sup>1</sup></b>				
Agriculture	533	1.3	10,408 <sup>3</sup>	0.5 <sup>3</sup>
Food and drink processing	921 <sup>2</sup>	2.2 <sup>2</sup>	28,126 <sup>3</sup>	1.5 <sup>3</sup>
<b>Employment</b>	<b>'000 persons</b>	<b>% of total employment</b>	<b>'000 persons</b>	<b>% of total employment</b>
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	24	2.8 <sup>4</sup>	341	1.0 <sup>5</sup>
Food and drink processing <sup>7</sup>	16 <sup>6</sup>	1.8 <sup>4</sup>	377	1.2 <sup>5</sup>

1. GVA figures are at basic prices.

2. Northern Ireland Food and Drinks Processing Report 2018. This excludes the value added of those food and drinks processing businesses with a turnover of less than £250,000.

3. UK GVA agriculture are 2019 provisional figures. UK GVA food and drink processing are 2017 figures.

4. % of total LFS employment (871,000 in NI at 2019)

5. % of total LFS employment (32,552,000 in UK at 2019)

6. Please note that the 95% confidence interval for this figure ranges from 13,000 to 19,000

7. Includes SIC 2007 10.11 - 11.07

**Table 5: Distribution of farm outputs in NI and share of UK totals, 2019**

	% of NI total		NI output as % of UK output	
	Gross output	Gross Margin	On farm employment	
<b>Enterprise</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Dairy	30.5	48.5	20	14.8
Cattle	19.9	16.7	51	15.5
Sheep & wool	3.1	4.2	16	5.2
Pigs	8.3	5.3	} 4	13.6
Poultry & eggs	19.4	11.0		12.7
Cereals & other crops	2.2	3.6	} 9	0.9
Potatoes	1.1	1.7		3.0
Horticulture	4.7	8.2		2.7
Others	10.8	1.0		5.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>7.9</b>

Source: Aggregate Agricultural Account. Employment data from June 2019 Agricultural Survey.

**Table 6: NI food and drink processing sector - gross turnover, value added, employment by subsector, external and export sales, 2018**

Subsector	Gross turnover	Value added	Employees <sup>1</sup>	External <sup>2</sup> Sales	Export Sales <sup>3</sup>
	£m	£m		£m	£m
Animal by-products	47	10	115	*	*
Bakeries	376	123	4,057	197	108
Beef and sheepmeat	1,436	178	5,048	1,267	232
Drinks	415	117	1,399	221	184
Eggs	182	28	413	120	14
Fish	90	18	633	74	35
Fruit and vegetables	363	92	2,788	243	73
Milk and milk products	1,143	109	2,351	889	478
Pigmeat	365	58	1,652	251	106
Poultrymeat	745	189	5,171	*	*
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,162</b>	<b>921</b>	<b>23,625</b>	<b>3,988</b>	<b>1,369</b>

1. Full - time equivalents. This is an estimation of the total direct employment in the sector, as some workers are provided by employment agencies and not shown in these figures. The July 2020 edition of the Size and Performance publication presented an estimation of agency employment in 2018 at 2,824 full-time equivalents.

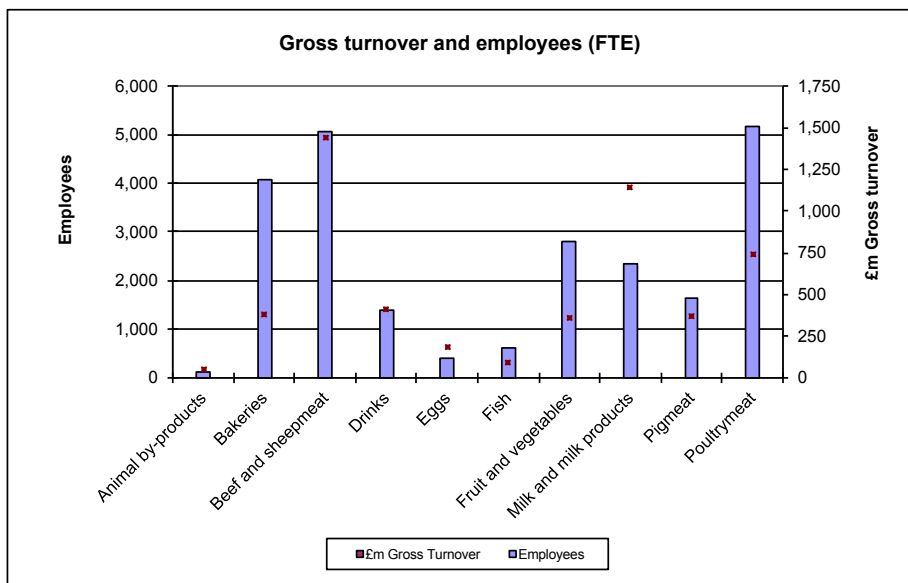
2. Sales outside NI

3. Sales outside UK

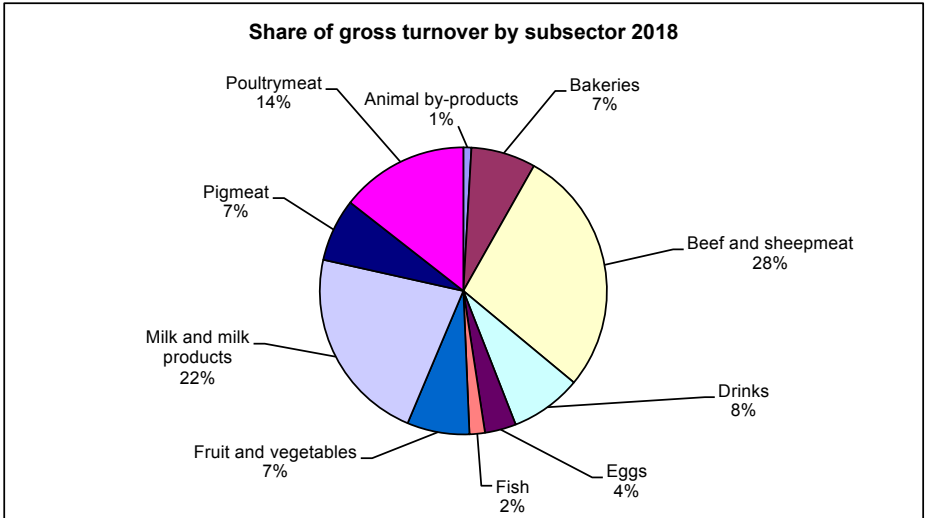
Source: Northern Ireland Food and Drinks Processing Report 2018.

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

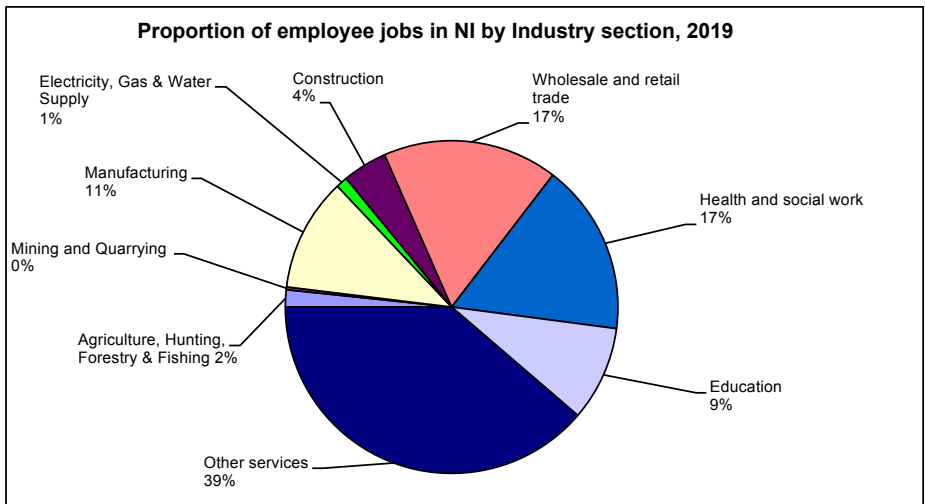
**Figure 3 - Gross turnover and full time equivalent (FTE) workforce by food processing subsector in NI, 2018**



**Figure 4 - Proportion of gross turnover by subsector in NI, 2018**



**Figure 5 - Proportion of employee jobs by Industry section, December 2019**





**Table 7: Total income from farming, NI and UK, 2019**

	NI	UK
Total income from farming (£)	£290m	£5,278
% change on previous year :		
Current prices	-25%	8%
Real terms	-26%	6%

Source: Aggregate Agricultural Account

Note: For an explanation of the change in TIFF in NI and UK see Chapter 1 of the Statistical Review of NI Agriculture 2019 and Chapter 3 of Agriculture in the UK 2019.

**Table 8: Average income<sup>1</sup> by type of farm, NI, 2017/18 and 2018/19**

Type of farm:	Net farm income <sup>2</sup>		Farm Business Income <sup>3</sup>		Cash income <sup>4</sup>	
	2017/18	2018/19	2017/18	2018/19	2017/18	2018/19
Cereals	28,807	55,130	38,292	64,088	73,470	104,730
Dairy	66,016	52,831	68,135	57,798	97,791	91,132
Cattle & sheep (LFA)	9,752	6,386	17,298	14,368	28,096	27,573
Cattle & sheep (Lowland)	8,628	3,476	16,757	12,274	28,439	25,941
Mixed	36,984	28,978	42,041	34,093	85,769	55,908

Source: Farm Business Survey in Northern Ireland 2017/18 and 2018/19

1. Based on information gathered from farms over 0.5 Standard Labour Requirements
2. The calculation of net farm income assumes that all farms are tenanted: net farm income therefore represents the return to the principal farmer and spouse for their manual and managerial labour and on the tenant-style capital of the business.
3. Farm Business income is the return to all unpaid labour and to their capital invested (inc land and buildings) in the business
4. Cash income is the difference between total receipts and total expenditure

**Table 9: Net farm Income, Farm Business Income and Cash Income for dairy, LFA cattle & sheep, and mixed farms throughout the UK, 2017/18 and 2018/19**

	Dairy		LFA Cattle & Sheep		Mixed	
	2017/18	2018/19	2017/18	2018/19	2017/18	2018/19
<b>Net farm income</b>						
England	101,000	64,600	17,200	5,900	25,800	30,300
Wales	69,057	31,632	15,474	8,043	10,543	6,890
Scotland	80,499	69,552	26,858	15,829	10,485	17,173
NI	66,016	52,831	9,752	6,386	36,984	28,978
<b>Farm Business Income</b>						
England	118,500	79,700	27,000	15,500	43,400	45,500
Wales	82,381	46,603	26,899	18,874	21,279	23,523
Scotland	76,545	65,994	34,327	24,795	29,419	33,355
NI	68,135	57,798	17,298	14,368	42,041	34,093
<b>Cash income</b>						
England	151,300	122,000	38,600	31,100	72,700	80,200
Wales	115,054	78,589	42,064	33,421	43,924	52,170
Scotland	115,011	95,651	49,120	51,282	48,678	62,303
NI	97,791	91,132	28,096	27,573	85,769	55,908

Source: Farm Business Survey in Northern Ireland 2017/18 and 2018/19

Note: All regions define farm types using Standard Output Methodology. All regions use 2013SO averages.

Note: England figures to nearest £100

Note: Scotland figures methodology has changed last year. Take care when comparing with previous years.

**Table 10: Number of farms in the UK by size & country, 2019**

	<b>Business size (SLR) <sup>1</sup></b>				<b>Total</b>
	<b>Very small</b>	<b>Small</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Large / Very Large</b>	
<b>Farms</b>					
NI	19,177	2,746	1,224	1,680	24,827
England <sup>2</sup>	68,953	14,149	7,827	15,171	106,100
Scotland	40,557	2,994	1,845	5,896	51,292
Wales <sup>3</sup>	27,917	3,274	1,866	3,435	36,492
<b>Total</b>	<b>156,604</b>	<b>23,163</b>	<b>12,762</b>	<b>26,182</b>	<b>218,711</b>

1. Standard Labour Requirements

2. Figures which relate to commercial holdings only as defined by EU regulation.

3. Excludes holdings with a SLR of zero

**Table 11: Percentage distribution of farms in the UK by size & country, 2019**

	<b>Business size (SLR)</b>				<b>Total</b>
	<b>Very small</b>	<b>Small</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Large / Very Large</b>	
<b>Farms (%)</b>					
NI	77	11	5	7	100
England	65	13	7	14	100
Scotland	79	6	4	11	100
Wales	77	9	5	9	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 12: Number of farms in NI by size and type, 2019**

<b>Business type</b>	<b>Business size (SLR)</b>					<b>All sizes</b>
	<b>Very small</b>	<b>Small</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Large</b>		
Cereals	198	38	10	7		<b>253</b>
General cropping	589	35	15	40		<b>679</b>
Horticulture	80	41	26	102		<b>249</b>
Pigs	49	20	27	65		<b>161</b>
Poultry	169	236	127	115		<b>647</b>
Dairy	265	695	609	1,017		<b>2,586</b>
Cattle and sheep (LFA)	13,152	1,100	216	148		<b>14,616</b>
Cattle and sheep (Lowland)	4,310	458	129	74		<b>4,971</b>
Mixed	256	97	49	97		<b>499</b>
Others	109	26	16	15		<b>166</b>
<b>All types</b>	<b>19,177</b>	<b>2,746</b>	<b>1,224</b>	<b>1,680</b>		<b>24,827</b>

Source: June 2019 Agricultural Survey

**Table 13: Crop areas and livestock numbers, NI, 1999, 2009 and 2017 - 2019**

	1999	2009	2017	2018	2019
<b>Livestock ('000 head)</b>					
<b>Cattle</b>					
Dairy cows	286.4	284.7	315.8	310.7	313.5
Beef cows	332.2	256.8	267.1	255.9	247.0
Total cattle	1,718.5	1,599.0	1,666.4	1,629.1	1,611.8
<b>Sheep</b>					
Breeding ewes	1,404.9	892.4	973.3	956.5	938.5
Total sheep	2,908.9	1,896.7	2,052.6	2,006.0	1,986.9
<b>Pigs</b>					
Female Breeding pigs	47.1	38.2	47.9	49.6	47.5
Total pigs	490.3	433.5	649.1	633.6	674.4
<b>Poultry</b>					
Laying flock	2,140.0	2,315.7	3,962.8	4,331.9	4,998.7
Broilers	9,342.0	11,418.3	16,766.6	17,663.0	15,351.6
<b>Crops ('000 hectares)</b>					
Cereals	41.9	39.2	32.3	29.7	29.8
Potatoes	7.5	5.1	4.1	3.6	3.8
Horticultural crops	3.4	3.0	3.0	2.8	2.8

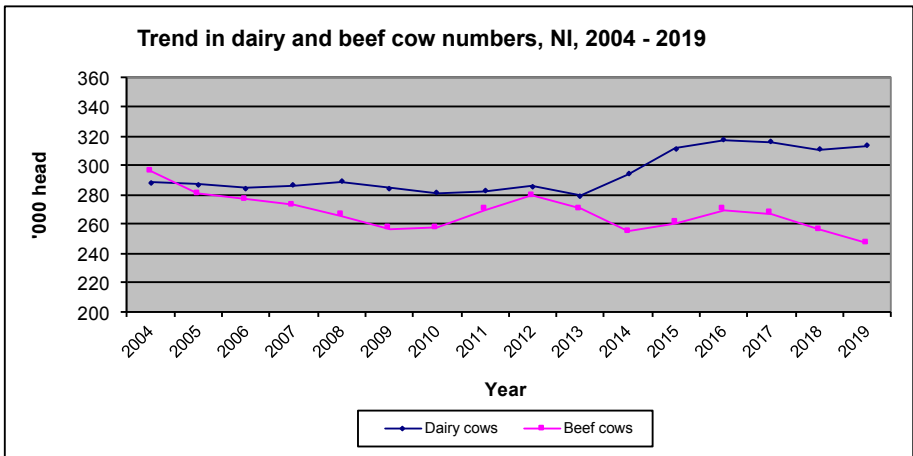
Source: June Agricultural Survey

Notes: From 2005 onwards, cattle figures were derived from APHIS

From 2007 onwards, poultry figures were taken from the Northern Ireland Bird Register Update

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

**Figure 6 - Trend in dairy and beef cow numbers, NI, 2004 - 2019**



**Table 14: Average size of enterprise, NI, 1999, 2009 and 2017 - 2019**

	1999	2009	2017	2018	2019
<b>Average livestock numbers (per herd/flock)</b>					
Dairy cows	52	75	92	94	95
Beef cows	19	16	18	18	17
Total cattle	65	75	82	81	81
Ewes	124	106	100	98	97
Total sheep	253	220	206	201	200
Sows	49	95	165	180	174
Total pigs	426	843	2,016	2,037	1,843
Total poultry (farms with 500 or more birds)	22,778	29,157	33,123	33,846	32,388
<b>Average cropping areas (ha)</b>					
Cereals	10	13	15	15	15
Potatoes	6	8	8	8	9

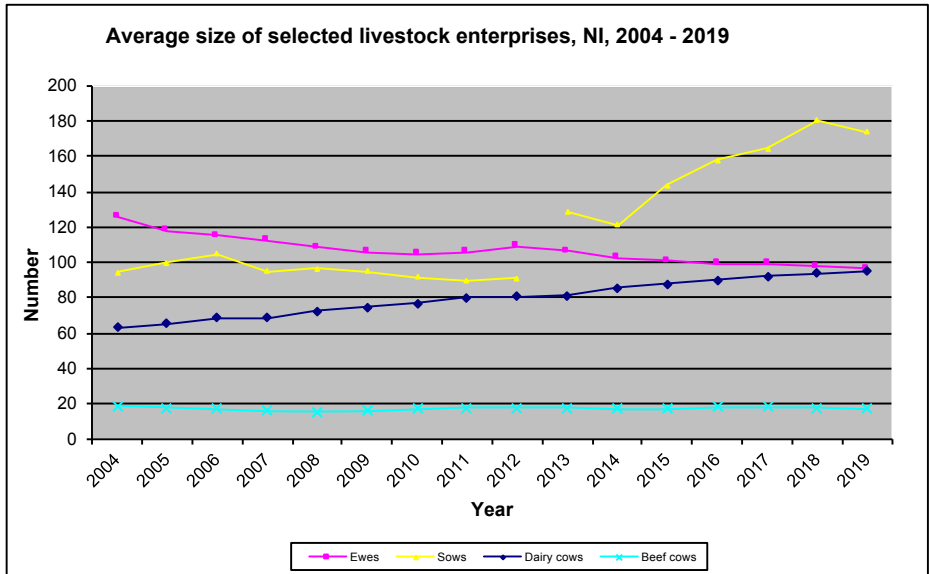
Source: June Agricultural Survey

Notes: From 2005 onwards, cattle figures were derived from APHIS

From 2007 onwards, poultry figures were taken from the Northern Ireland Bird Register Update

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

**Figure 7 - Average size of selected livestock enterprises, NI, 2004 - 2019**



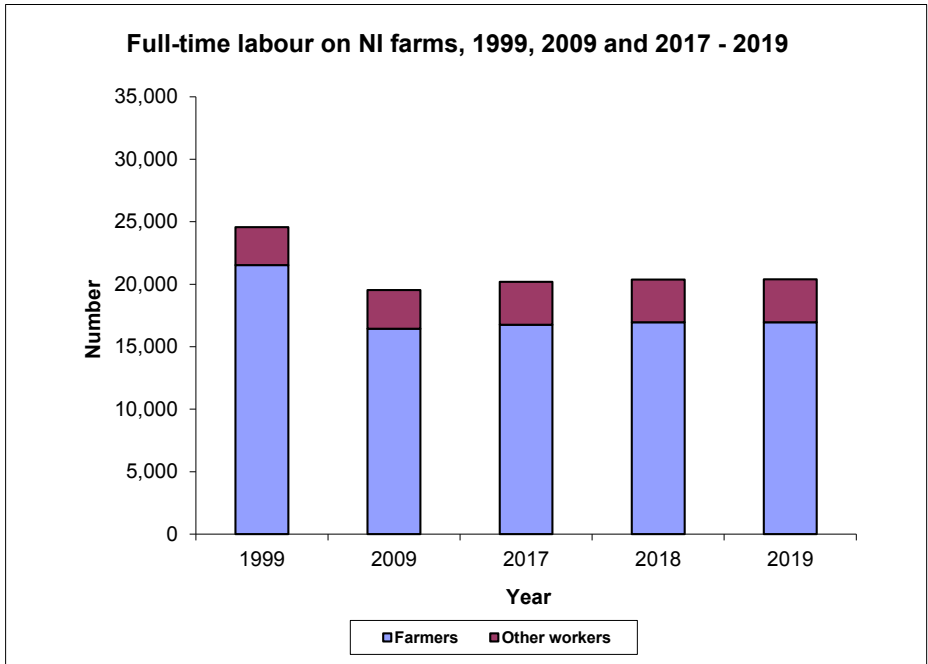
Note: From 2013 onwards, pig figures derived from the Northern Ireland Annual Inventory of Pigs

**Table 15: Number of farmers and workers, NI, 1999, 2009 and 2017 - 2019**

	1999	2009	2017	2018	2019
<b>Farmers, partners &amp; directors:</b>					
Full-time	21,536	16,437	16,760	16,964	16,954
Part-time	16,073	13,830	13,586	13,721	13,859
<b>Total</b>	<b>37,609</b>	<b>30,267</b>	<b>30,346</b>	<b>30,685</b>	<b>30,813</b>
<b>Spouses</b>	<b>7,034</b>	<b>6,221</b>	<b>6,449</b>	<b>6,542</b>	<b>6,700</b>
<b>Other workers</b>					
Full-time	3,030	3,106	3,441	3,411	3,430
Part-time	2,793	3,220	4,319	4,340	4,453
Casual/Seasonal	8,785	5,217	4,149	4,270	4,027
<b>Total other workers</b>	<b>14,608</b>	<b>11,543</b>	<b>11,909</b>	<b>12,021</b>	<b>11,910</b>
<b>Total agricultural labour force</b>	<b>59,251</b>	<b>48,031</b>	<b>48,704</b>	<b>49,248</b>	<b>49,423</b>

Source: June Agricultural Survey

**Figure 8 - Full-time labour on NI farms, 1999, 2009 and 2017 - 2019**

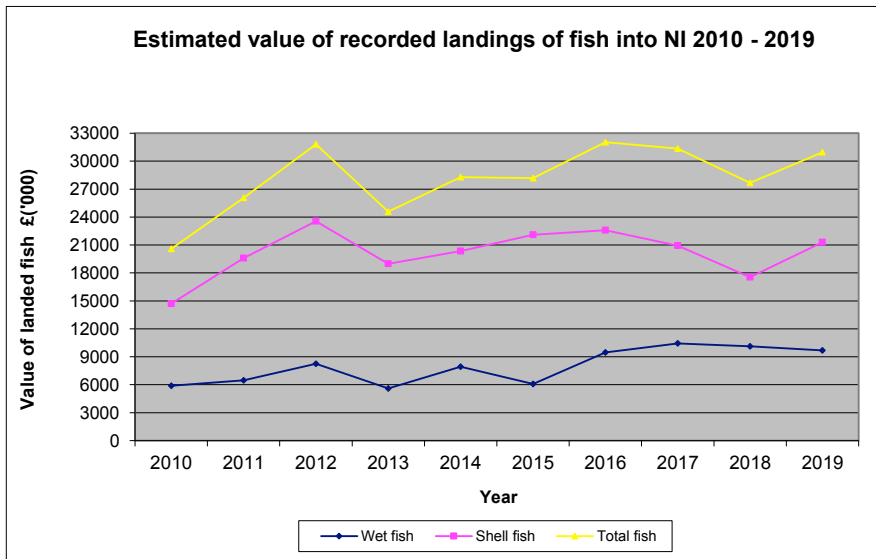


**Table 16: Liveweight and estimated value of recorded landings of fish into NI, 2016 - 2019**

	2016		2017		2018		2019	
	Tonnes	£ ('000)	Tonnes	£ ('000)	Tonnes	£ ('000)	Tonnes	£ ('000)
<b>Total wet fish</b>	13,606	9,459	11,791	10,433	13,965	10,113	11,414	9,683
<b>Total shell fish</b>	10,672	22,581	9,596	20,925	8,452	17,553	8,841	21,289
<b>Total fish</b>	24,279	32,040	21,387	31,358	22,417	27,666	20,255	30,972

Source: Marine and Fisheries Division, DAERA

**Figure 9 - Estimated value of recorded landings of fish into NI, 2010 - 2019**



**Table 17: Employment in NI fishing industry, 2016 - 2019**

	2016		2017		2018		2019	
	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time	Full Time	Part Time
<b>Catching</b>	700	175	686	152	686	168	654	168
<b>Processing and marketing</b>	516	241	530	242	618	263	470	250
<b>Others</b>	113	47	126	56	118	58	111	56
<b>Total</b>	1,329	463	1,342	450	1,422	489	1,235	474

Source: Marine and Fisheries Division, DAERA

**Table 18: Area of woodland throughout the UK by forest type, 2019**

	Conifers ('000 HA)	Broadleaves ('000 HA)	Total ('000 HA)	% of Total Land Area in Forestry
<b>United Kingdom</b>	1,631	1,557	3,187	13.1%
<b>England</b>	340	968	1,308	10.0%
<b>Scotland</b>	1,072	385	1,457	18.7%
<b>Wales</b>	152	158	309	14.9%
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	67	46	113	8.3%

Source: Forestry Commission

**Table 19: Number of farms using agricultural contractors in 2016**

	Very Small	Small	Med/Large	All
Hay/Silage Making	14,043	2,096	2,015	18,154
Crop Harvesting	990	307	518	1,815
Spreading slurry/fertilisers etc	7,559	1,399	1,639	10,597
Other field work	2,601	568	715	3,884
Milking	65	117	255	437
Sheep shearing	4,697	884	572	6,153
Other livestock work	1,253	218	208	1,679
Hedge cutting	11,891	2,030	1,890	15,811

Source: EU Farm Structure Survey 2016, NI

**Table 20: Percentage of farms using agricultural contractors by business size in 2016**

	Very Small	Small	Med/Large	All
Hay/Silage Making	75	71	69	74
Crop Harvesting	5	10	18	7
Spreading slurry/fertilisers etc	41	48	56	43
Other field work	14	19	24	16
Milking	0	4	9	2
Sheep shearing	25	30	19	25
Other livestock work	7	7	7	7
Hedge cutting	64	69	64	64

Source: EU Farm Structure Survey 2016, NI

**Table 21: Number of farms using agricultural contractors from 2007-2016**

	2007	2010	2013	2016
Hay/Silage Making	18,015	16,787	17,514	18,154
Crop Harvesting	1,979	1,932	2,023	1,815
Spreading slurry/fertilisers etc	10,500	10,257	10,520	10,597
Other field work	3,749	3,613	3,742	3,884
Milking	599	443	415	437
Sheep shearing	4,432	3,877	5,417	6,153
Other livestock work	1,474	1,178	1,363	1,679
Hedge cutting	14,705	13,905	15,007	15,811

Source: EU Farm Structure Survey 2016, NI



## Further information

### 1. Northern Ireland

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), [www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)  
[www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics)

Agricultural Census in N.I. 2019 publication

Statistical Review of N.I. Agriculture 2019 publication

Northern Ireland Food and Drinks Processing Report 2018 publication

EU Farm Structure Survey 2016 (ISBN no. 978-1-84807-798-0)

Farm Incomes in N.I. publication

Food consumption and expenditure information

Fisheries statistics

Forestry statistics

### 2. United Kingdom

Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), [www.gov.uk/defra](http://www.gov.uk/defra)  
[www.gov.uk/government/collections/agriculture-in-the-united-kingdom](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/agriculture-in-the-united-kingdom)

GOV.UK statistics release calendar  
[www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)

### 3. Republic of Ireland

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, [www.agriculture.gov.ie](http://www.agriculture.gov.ie)  
[www.agriculture.gov.ie/](http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/)

Central statistics office Ireland, [www.cso.ie](http://www.cso.ie)  
[www.cso.ie/en/statistics/agriculture/](http://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/agriculture/)

Ireland's Open Data Portal, <https://data.gov.ie/>  
<https://data.gov.ie/dataset?theme=Agriculture>

### 4. European Union

Eurostat, [www.ec.europa.eu/eurostat](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat)  
<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/agriculture/overview>

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