



## Organic farming statistics 2014

This release presents estimates of the land area farmed organically, crop areas, livestock numbers and numbers of organic producers and processors in the United Kingdom. These estimates are made from data compiled by approved organic certification bodies in the United Kingdom and include long-term trends and detailed results by geographical area.

This release was revised on 10 July 2015 to correct figures in Table 1. Text and charts derived from these numbers have been revised.

### Key findings

- In 2014, the United Kingdom had a total area of 548 thousand hectares of land farmed organically, down from 576 thousand hectares in 2013.
- The area in conversion expressed as a percentage of the total organic area continued to decline in 2014 though the decline has slowed in the last four years.
- There were 3,695 agricultural producers registered with the organic certification bodies in the United Kingdom, down from 3,918 in 2013.
- Both sheep and pigs numbers continued to decline in 2014 but cattle numbers increased by 7.4 per cent following three years of downturn.
- Cereals, vegetables and potatoes, and other arable crops have all declined since the late 2000s, mirroring the fall in the land area farmed organically since 2008.
- There were 2,481 certified organic processors (including agricultural producers who are also processors) in 2014, a 7.1 per cent increase compared to 2013.
- Aside from the manufacture of 'other food products', most processors in the United Kingdom were engaging in the processing and preserving of meat and production of meat products and the processing and preserving of fruit and vegetables.

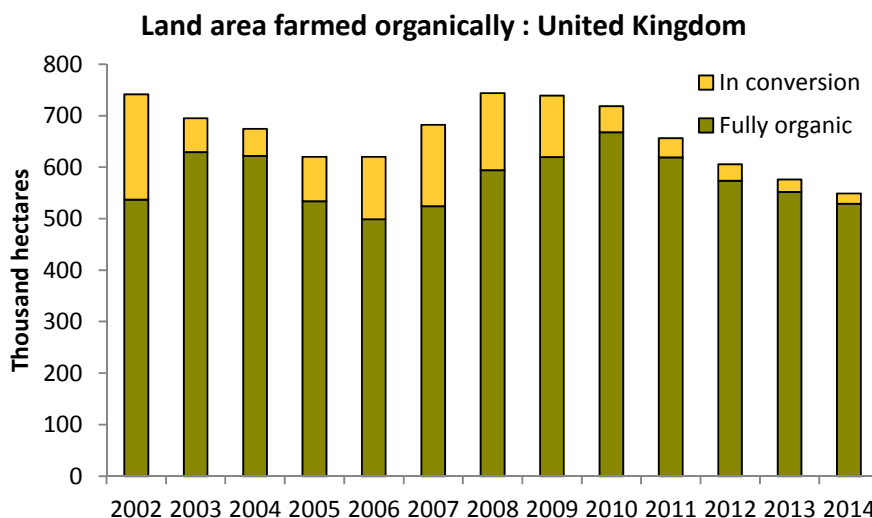
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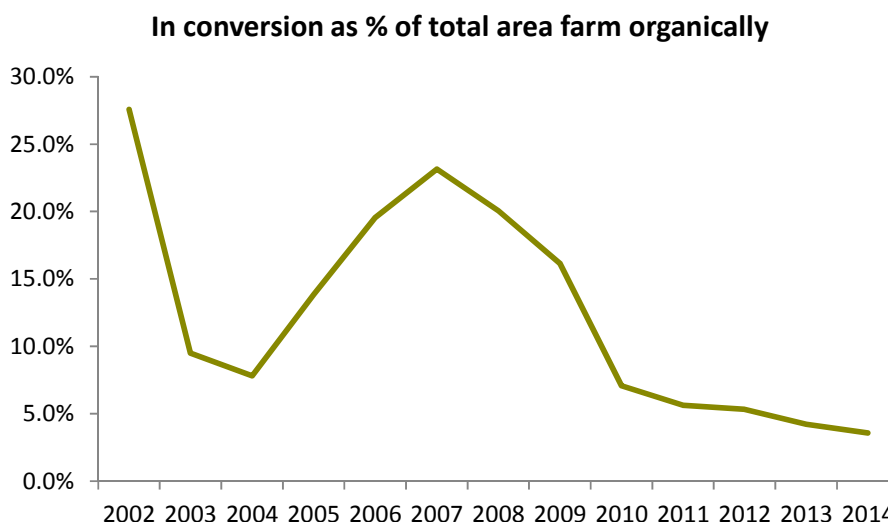
## Land area farmed organically

In 2014, the United Kingdom had a total area of 548,600 hectares of land farmed organically (i.e. the fully converted area and area under conversion), down from 576,000 hectares in 2013. Since 2008 when the area of land farmed organically peaked, the organically farmed area has declined by 26 per cent. The organically farmed area represents 3.2 per cent of the total utilised agricultural land area in the United Kingdom.



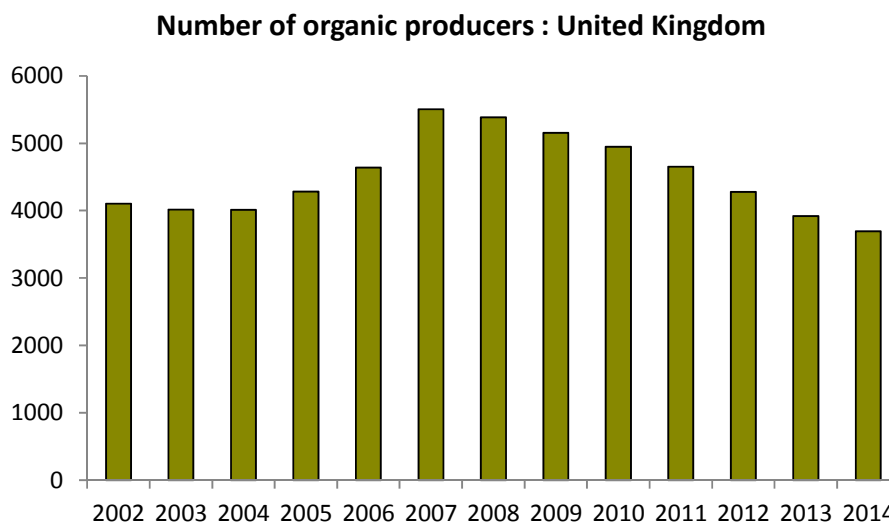
## Land in conversion

Organic production comes from fully converted land. Before an area can be considered as fully organic, it must undergo a conversion process. The area in conversion expressed as a percentage of the total organic area can give an indication of the potential growth in the organic sector. This proportion continued to decline in 2014 though the decline has slowed in the last four years compared to the period between 2007 and 2010.



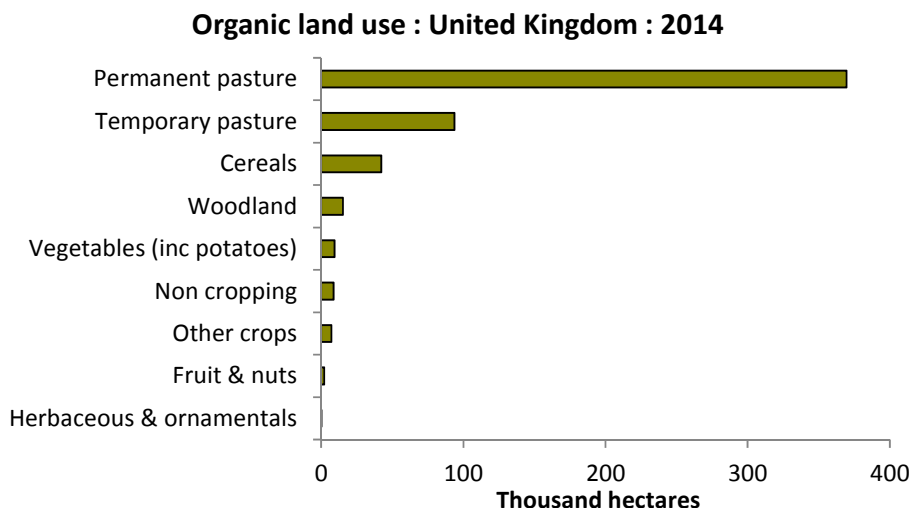
## Number of agricultural producers

In 2014, there were 3,695 agricultural producers registered with the organic certification bodies in the United Kingdom, down from 3,918 in 2013. The number of producers has declined by 33 per cent since 2007, mirroring the decline in the land area farmed organically.



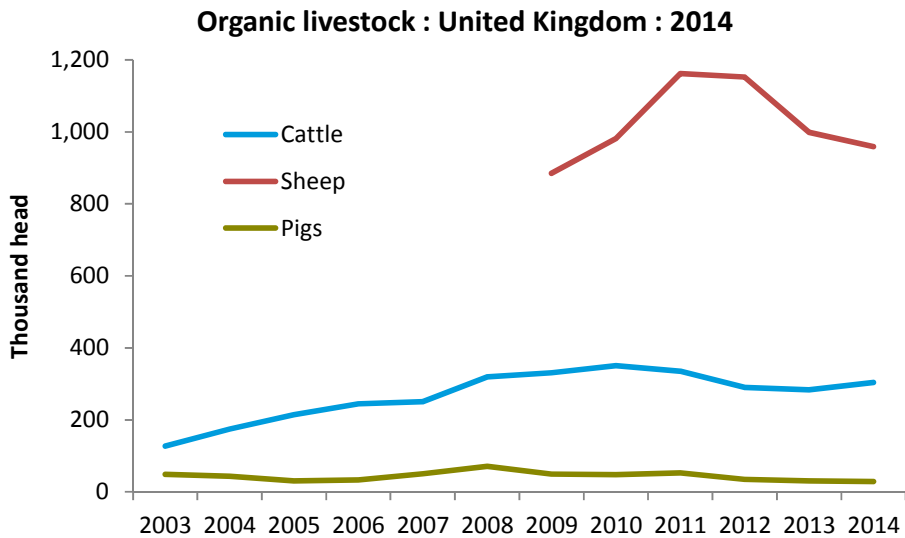
## Organic land use

Permanent pasture accounts for the biggest share of the organic area (about 67%) followed by temporary pasture (around 17%) and cereals (around 8%).



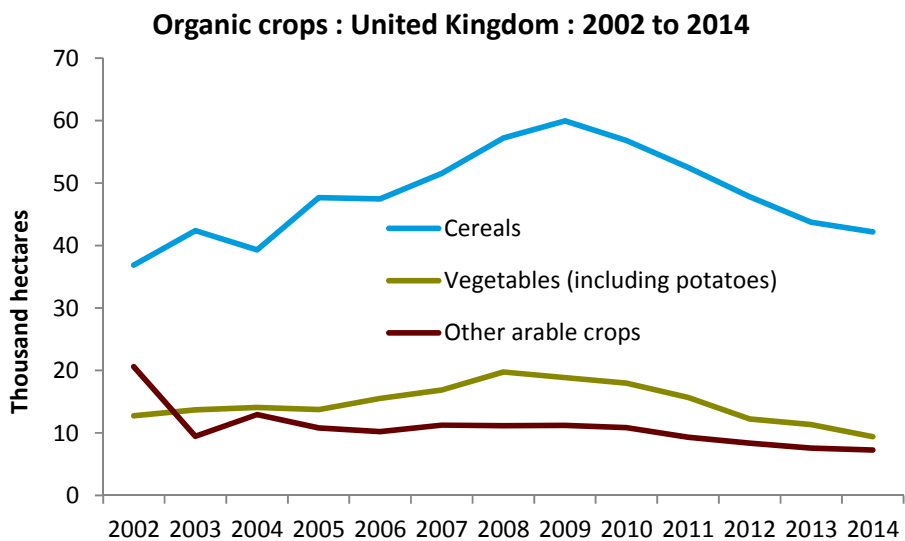
## Organic livestock

The organic livestock figures for 2014 show that, with respect to cattle, sheep and pigs, sheep was the most popular species, around 959 thousand animals in 2014. Both sheep and pigs numbers continued to decline in 2014 but cattle numbers increased by 7.4 per cent following three years of downturn.



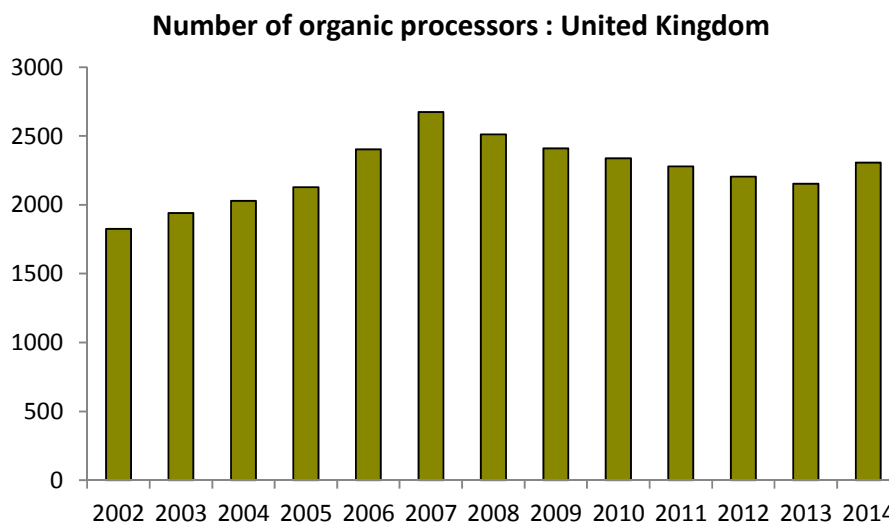
## Organic crops

The three main crop types grown organically are cereals, vegetables and potatoes, and other arable crops. All have shown a decline since the late 2000s, mirroring the fall in the land area farmed organically since 2008.



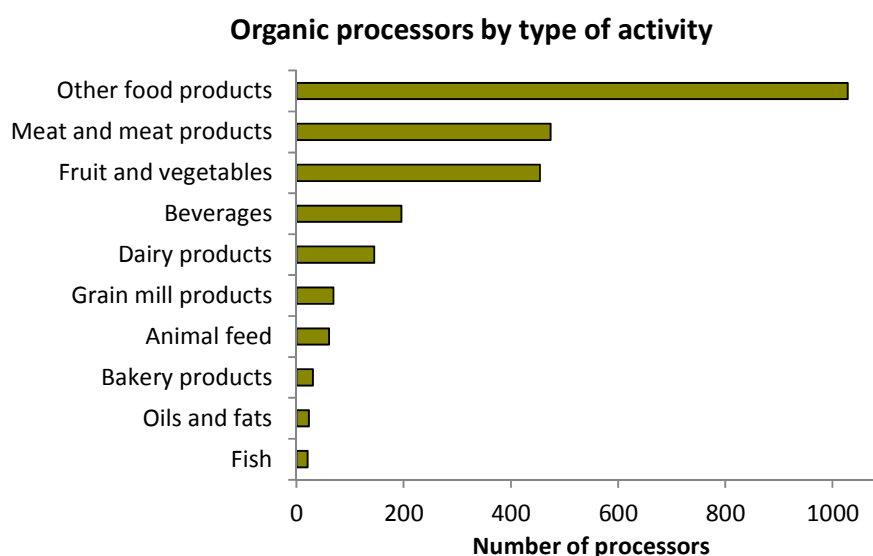
## Number of processors

There were 2,481 certified organic processors (including agricultural producers who are also processors) in 2014, a 7.1 per cent increase compared to 2013, reversing a long-term decline.



## Manufacture of organic products

Food manufacturing activities may be grouped using NACE Rev. 2 classification as shown in the table. In 2014, other than the manufacture of 'other food products', most processors in the United Kingdom were engaging in the processing and preserving of meat and production of meat products (18.1%), and the processing and preserving of fruit and vegetables (18.9%).



**Table 1 Land area farmed organically**

	Thousand hectares						
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
<b>United Kingdom</b>							
In conversion	149.1	119.4	50.8	36.9	32.2	24.4	19.7
Fully organic	594.4	619.3	667.6	619.1	573.4	551.7	529.0
<b>England</b>							
In conversion	91.1	67.6	29.8	25.4	19.2	14.0	12.5
Fully organic	284.0	311.2	362.0	325.6	304.8	302.4	295.7

**Table 2 Organic land use**

	Thousand hectares						
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014		% change 2014/2013
<b>United Kingdom</b>							
Cereals	56.8	52.5	47.8	43.7	42.2		-3.5%
Other crops	10.8	9.3	8.4	7.6	7.3		-3.7%
Fruit & nuts	2.3	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.1		3.3%
Vegetables (inc potatoes)	18.0	15.7	12.3	11.3	9.4		-17.1%
Herbaceous & ornamentals	6.2	6.1	5.8	6.8	0.3		-96.2%
Temporary pasture	124.7	116.1	106.1	98.9	93.7		-5.2%
Permanent pasture (inc rough grazing)	479.0	434.9	405.6	387.0	369.7		-4.5%
Woodland	8.1	8.3	7.4	7.6	15.3		101.3%
Non cropping	12.4	10.9	10.1	10.4	8.7		-16.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>718.3</b>	<b>656.0</b>	<b>605.6</b>	<b>575.3</b>	<b>548.6</b>		<b>-4.6%</b>
<b>England</b>							
Cereals	45.3	41.4	37.9	35.2	34.9		-0.8%
Other crops	7.8	7.0	6.0	5.6	5.3		-5.5%
Fruit & nuts	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.0	2.1		2.8%
Vegetables (inc potatoes)	13.7	12.2	9.7	9.2	7.7		-16.0%
Herbaceous & ornamentals	4.8	5.0	5.1	5.8	0.3		-95.6%
Temporary pasture	103.1	96.1	87.1	81.2	77.3		-4.8%
Permanent pasture (inc rough grazing)	199.4	173.2	163.1	163.2	161.7		-0.9%
Woodland	6.1	6.2	5.4	5.4	12.1		125.6%
Unutilised land	9.5	7.9	7.6	8.0	6.8		-15.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>391.8</b>	<b>351.0</b>	<b>323.9</b>	<b>315.6</b>	<b>308.1</b>		<b>-2.4%</b>

**Table 3 Detailed organic land use 2014**

				Thousand hectares	
	In conversion	Organic	Total	Total areas at June 2014 (a)	Organic area as % of June area
<b>United Kingdom</b>					
<b>Cereals</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>41.2</b>	<b>42.2</b>	<b>3179</b>	1.3%
Wheat	0.2	12.6	12.8	1 936	0.7%
Barley	0.6	12.9	13.5	1 080	1.3%
Oats	0.0	11.3	11.4	137	8.3%
Other cereals	0.1	4.4	4.5	26	17.0%
<b>Other arable crops</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>7.3</b>	1 239	0.6%
Sugar beet	0.0	0.0	0.0	116	0.0%
Fodder, forage & silage	0.2	6.3	6.5	79	8.2%
Maize, oilseeds & protein crops	0.0	0.7	0.8	1 044	0.1%
Vegetables	0.1	8.1	8.2	116	7.1%
Potatoes	0.0	1.2	1.2	141	0.8%
Fruit & nuts	0.1	2.0	2.1	33	6.5%
Herbaceous & ornamentals	0.0	0.3	0.3	12	2.2%
Temporary pasture	3.2	90.5	93.7	1 396	6.7%
Permanent pasture (inc rough grazing)	13.5	356.1	369.7	9 755	3.8%
Woodland	1.2	14.1	15.3	897	1.7%
Unutilised land	0.3	8.4	8.7		
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.7</b>	<b>529.0</b>	<b>548.6</b>		
<b>England</b>					
<b>Cereals</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>34.1</b>	<b>34.9</b>	<b>2634</b>	1.3%
Wheat	0.2	11.7	11.9	1 797	0.7%
Barley	0.5	9.9	10.4	709	1.5%
Oats	0.0	8.7	8.7	105	8.3%
Other cereals	0.1	3.8	3.9	24	16.1%
<b>Other arable crops</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>5.3</b>	1 131	0.5%
Sugar beet	0.0	0.0	0.0	116	0.0%
Fodder, forage & silage	0.2	4.4	4.5	41	11.0%
Maize, oilseeds and protein crops	0.0	0.7	0.7	973	0.1%
Fruit & nuts	0.1	2.0	2.1	98	2.1%
Vegetables	0.1	6.8	6.9	105	6.5%
Potatoes	0.0	0.8	0.8	30	2.8%
Herbaceous & ornamentals	0.0	0.2	0.3	10	2.5%
Temporary pasture	2.7	74.6	77.3	671	11.5%
Permanent pasture (inc rough grazing)	7.3	154.4	161.7	3 728	4.3%
Woodland	0.9	11.2	12.1	331	3.7%
Unutilised land	0.3	6.5	6.8		
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>295.7</b>	<b>308.1</b>		

**Table 4 Area farmed organically by country and English region**

	In conversion	Organic	Total	Thousand Hectares	
				Total agricultural area at June 2014 (a)	Organic area as % of June area
United Kingdom	19.7	529.0	548.6	17257	3.2%
Scotland	3.0	132.9	135.8	5596	2.4%
Wales	4.1	91.6	95.7	1631	5.9%
Northern Ireland	0.2	8.8	9.0	997	0.9%
England	12.5	295.7	308.1	9033	3.4%
North East	0.8	26.3	27.1	588	4.6%
North West	0.6	13.6	14.2	904	1.6%
Yorkshire and the Humber	0.6	10.1	10.8	1087	1.0%
East Midlands	0.9	13.7	14.6	1193	1.2%
West Midlands	1.2	29.3	30.5	943	3.2%
Eastern	0.5	13.8	14.3	1388	1.0%
South East (inc London)	1.9	45.6	47.5	1140	4.2%
South West	6.1	143.1	149.2	1791	8.3%

**Table 5 Organic and in conversion livestock numbers 2014**

	In conversion	Organic	Total	Thousand hectares	
				Total livestock at June 2014 (a)	Organic as % of total livestock
<b>United Kingdom</b>					
Cattle	0.3	304.1	304.4	9,837	3.1%
Sheep	4.0	954.9	958.9	33,743	2.8%
Pigs	0.0	28.3	28.3	4,815	0.6%
Poultry	0.1	2,398.7	2,398.8	169,684	1.4%
Other livestock	0.0	5.7	5.7	:	:
<b>England</b>					
Cattle	0.0	215.6	215.6	5,374	4.0%
Sheep	0.8	404.2	405.0	15,389	2.6%
Pigs	0.0	25.8	25.8	3,954	0.7%
Poultry	0.1	1,495.9	1,495.9	125,544	1.2%
Other livestock	0.0	3.1	3.1	:	:

(a) Source: June survey of agriculture / Cattle Tracing System for cattle populations

(b) "Other livestock" includes goats, farmed deer, horses, camelids and any livestock not recorded elsewhere.



**Table 6 Organic and in conversion livestock numbers 2010 to 2014**

	Thousand heads					% change 2014 / 2013
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
<b>United Kingdom</b>						
Cattle	350.2	334.8	290.2	283.3	304.4	7.4%
Sheep	981.2	1161.7	1152.1	999.2	958.9	-4.0%
Pigs	47.4	52.6	34.6	30.2	28.3	-6.1%
Poultry	3870.9	2838.2	2457.7	2487.6	2398.8	-3.6%
Other livestock (a)	4.5	5.0	4.2	4.1	5.7	38.5%
<b>England</b>						
Cattle	248.6	233.5	201.7	199.5	215.6	8.0%
Sheep	431.3	423.6	434.5	400.8	405.0	1.1%
Pigs	42.1	47.9	29.5	26.5	25.8	-2.7%
Poultry	1931.1	1746.1	1681.2	1687.5	1495.9	-11.4%
Other livestock (a)	2.0	1.3	3.6	3.4	3.1	-9.0%

(a) "Other livestock" includes goats, farmed deer, horses, camelids and any livestock not recorded elsewhere

**Table 7 Number of organic producers and processors 2014**

	Number of producers only	Number of producer/ processors	Number of processors	Total
United Kingdom	3521	174	2307	6002
Wales	640	21	118	779
Scotland	382	5	189	576
Northern Ireland	147	0	46	193
England	2352	148	1954	4454
North East	91	2	37	130
North West	114	7	125	246
Yorkshire & the Humber	109	6	123	238
East Midlands	151	11	184	346
West Midlands	247	14	163	424
Eastern	170	13	262	445
South East (inc London)	343	28	649	1020
South West	1127	67	411	1605

**Table 8 Number of organic producers and processors 2010 to 2014**

	Number					% change 2014 / 2013
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
United Kingdom	7 287	6 929	6 487	6072	6002	-1.2%
Wales	1 166	1 119	1 080	913	779	-14.7%
Scotland	737	679	611	551	576	4.5%
Northern Ireland	253	234	204	189	193	2.1%
England	5 131	4 897	4 592	4419	4454	0.8%
North East	160	152	137	127	130	2.4%
North West	315	301	273	253	246	-2.8%
Yorkshire & The Humber	302	278	262	240	238	-0.8%
East Midlands	408	383	366	351	346	-1.4%
West Midlands	494	476	442	426	424	-0.5%
Eastern	515	481	456	449	445	-0.9%
South East (inc London)	984	975	950	957	1020	6.6%
South West	1 953	1 851	1 706	1616	1605	-0.7%

**Table 9 Number of organic crop and livestock producers and processors (a)**

	Number of:			
	Crop producers	Crop producers and processors	Livestock producers	Livestock producers and processors
United Kingdom	3389	167	2511	136
Scotland	354	5	275	5
Wales	691	20	587	14
Northern Ireland	117	0	105	0
England	2227	142	1544	117
North East	89	2	75	2
North West	112	7	78	6
Yorkshire and the Humber	101	6	76	5
East Midlands	132	10	106	6
West Midlands	244	12	171	11
Eastern	139	13	67	9
South East (inc London)	328	28	173	23
South West	1082	64	798	55

(a) Mixed organic holdings will be recorded under both the crop and livestock headings above. The numbers shown cannot be added together to arrive at total producers / processors by region as this will lead to double counting.

## **Organic statistics methodology**

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

The data collected during these inspections are sent to Defra each January, to form an annual return required by the European Commission under Regulation No. 889/2008 of 5 September 2008.

The information collated by Defra is checked thoroughly before the figures are presented in this statistical release. Data are checked against historical data for comparability and any unusual values are queried with the relevant certification bodies. Due to the nature of the inspections, the data are collected at varying times through the year. Therefore, the data presented here do not give an exact snapshot of organic farming at any specific time of year, so they should be treated with a degree of caution. Defra is very grateful to the inspectors and members in the UK's Organic Certification Bodies for the information collected in the annual returns each year.

### **Note**

In this statistical release, unless specified otherwise, all figures include both in conversion and fully organic holdings. Also, totals in this release are based on unrounded figures so may not agree with the sum of their components in the tables.

### **Organics overview**

Only food that has been produced in accordance with organic standards by farmers /producers registered with an approved inspection body may be legally sold as 'organic' within the EU. The inputs and practices used in organic farming are strictly regulated in accordance with EU Regulation..

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

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

### **Conversion**

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

### **Other relevant data sources**

Data on agricultural crop areas and livestock numbers are collected through the annual June Survey of Agriculture. Results from this survey can be accessed at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs/series/structure-of-the-agricultural-industry>