

User feedback on Defra farming statistics 2013

This note provides a summary of unprompted user feedback received by Defra on farming statistics outputs during 2013. Any action taken as a result is shown in the final column.

Statistics Release	Organisation	Comments	Action as result of feedback (if required)
Poultry Statistics	British Poultry Council (BPC)	<p>They were unable to reconcile their own figures on broiler parent chick placings with Defra published figures.</p> <p>Following a meeting on the subject, we then received feedback from an attendee "Thanks for the meeting – we all thought it very useful and we all gained a much better understanding of the process and what needed to change going forward".</p>	<p>We held a meeting with BPC representatives and key data providers to discuss possible reasons for the lack of coherence. A data gap was identified, caused by the complex EU-wide structure of the poultry industry. This was resulting in an undercount of imported chicks. An exercise is underway to resolve this and publish revised historical data, once several disclosure issues are resolved.</p>
Poultry Statistics	Bernard Matthews	<p>Queried the monthly profile of turkey slaughterings as peak slaughterings were in January, not in December as expected</p>	<p>Part of the issue was presentational as the monthly slaughtering numbers are based on the (5,4,4) statistical week system, rather than calendar month so the numbers in the "5 week" months always show a peak. We have re-presented the charts and tables to also show the average weekly volumes to remove this effect.</p> <p>We are also carrying out a review of the model used to calculate the numbers slaughtered. The coefficients may not accurately reflect industry patterns.</p>
TB Statistics	Public user	<p>Received a request for copies of previous copies of the GB stats notice to be made available.</p>	<p>Added a historic notices area to the website where old copies of the main TB stats notice are placed once superseded.</p>
TB Statistics	Public user	<p>Received a request to provide greater detail about the data and methodology to compile the stats notice figures.</p>	<p>Produced and published an Annex to the stats notice – giving detail on data and methodology, background to the statistics and links to other information and data sources.</p>

Egg Statistics	NFU	Wanted to use the egg packing station throughput figures to estimate total volumes of egg production in 2013 in advance of the annual AUK publication	We explained the technical differences between the two data sources. We advised applying the annual % changes on packing station throughput to the 2012 total volumes to give a rough proxy. We offered to check over their calculations.
Farm Business survey	ttz Bremerhaven http://www.ttz-bremerhaven.de/en/	They could not establish the unit of measurement for electricity usage figures published in the FBS Energy module statistical release.	We responded by email informing the enquirer the unit of measurement adopted (kWh). We will ensure that statistical releases clearly state the units of measurements for any of our published figures.
Milk Prices	DairyCo	Queried what would be happening to data collections once the EU milk quota regime ends in 2015.	We explained that currently there are no plans for changes to the price data collections. We will continue to collect and report monthly milk prices.
Slaughter Statistics	Public user	Queried how the "Home-Killed" slaughter volumes in the monthly publication related to the "Home-Fed" slaughter volumes in the quarterly Meat Supplies dataset on-line	We have improved the presentation of the respective outputs by giving clearer titles, definitions and links between the two sources to give better guidance to users.
Slaughter Statistics	Italian Tanners Association	Wanted to know why we use survey data instead of the livestock administrative data sources	We explained that the administrative sources only record the numbers of livestock sent to abattoirs and not the volume of meat produced. Therefore, we choose to use the survey approach in order to collect consistent data on the numbers slaughtered and the production volumes.
Milk Usage by Dairies	DairyCo	"Following publication of their White Paper 2013 (guide to the UK Dairy Industry)". Thank you very much for the data you kindly supplied for the publication, and for the invaluable help you give us over the course of the year. Without the reliable and accurate figures you produce, the publication would not be anything like as comprehensive as it is.	None required.

Milk Usage by Dairies	DairyCo	Requested a three yearly update to their published size distribution tables on the numbers and size of milk processors, split into the product type (e.g. liquid milk, cheese, butter).	As we already produce these tables for Eurostat, we decided to publish this data ourselves on the Defra website with a historic timeseries so the data is also available to other users. This has improved transparency and will be quicker in future for DairyCo to access the updates without having to make specific requests.
Animal Feed statistics	Public user	I thoroughly enjoyed your PDF on the production and growth of Poultry and farming in the UK especially the summer of 2000. I'm a big fan!	None required.
Organic Statistics	Various Organic Certification Bodies (including the "Organic Farmers and Growers" and the Soil Association)	Requested that we talk about 'in-conversion' and 'fully organic' land separately in our publications because grouping all of the land together, especially in something that could be taken as a headline' was mis-leading.	We actioned this in the 2012 stats release (published June 2013) and we also added a new table where the time-series data was presented in the format requested
Farm Rents	Smiths-Gore (Rural Property Advisors)	They were unable to reconcile their own figures on rent values with Defra published figures.	We had a discussion to compare the two methodologies. This highlighted differences in the definitions, time periods and reporting methods which would all contribute to legitimate differences in rental prices.
Farm Rents	Rural Business Research (RBR)	Asked whether further rental price breakdowns could be provided in the publications to give deeper insight into factors behind differing rents.	We intend to publish extra data in the next publication (in March 2014) e.g. length of rental agreement term, whether rent reviews had recently taken place and whether the rent covered land only (as opposed to land and buildings).
June Survey of Agriculture	Open University Professor	I have been looking with interest at the different datasets you have about the structure of agriculture..... Can I say that I think the DEFRA stats site is extremely useful, so thanks for all the work put into it	None required.

Agriculture in the United Kingdom	Philip Lund (President, Manchester Statistical Society)	<p>“While preparing for a lecture to a group of Chinese officials on UK agriculture, I am reading AUK 2012 and, good though it is (as usual), I have come across a few presentational oddities”.</p> <p>Philip supplied several pages of detailed drafting suggestions for future editions.</p>	Suggestions have been considered and will be incorporated into the next edition of the publication (in June 2014)
Basic Horticultural Statistics	<p>Project manager Amis Kleffmann Group</p> <p>John Place Church Farm, Tunstead.</p>	<p>Many thanks for your data and comments. It helps a lot to get a clearer picture. (Fruit Areas data request)</p> <p>Thanks for sending the link to the BHS web pages. Tim has to produce a new paper on English raspberry growing for the international raspberry meeting so your statistics will be useful.</p>	None Required
Cereal Production statistics	Home Grown Cereals Authority (HGCA)	Queried what proportion of total planted wheat area was harvested for wholecrop.	We now include a brief paragraph in the stats release to show these proportions.
Cereal Production statistics	Chair of the Market Information Cereals Committee (MICC)	We were asked if we had any idea how farmers were arriving at their estimates for production tonnages i.e. whether these were weighed estimates or more based on experience (e.g. numbers of lorry loads).	We added a new question to the 2013 cereal production survey which asked farmers to provide information on how they had calculated their production tonnages. The results of this question were published in the methodology section of the final 2013 stats release.