

22 February 2008

DECEMBER 2007 AGRICULTURAL SURVEY RESULTS PUBLISHED

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) have published the results of the December 2007 sample survey of farms in Northern Ireland.

This survey is required by EU legislation and is undertaken to provide estimates of the numbers of cattle, sheep and pigs on farms at the beginning of December. In addition, the survey provides information on levels of hay and silage production and sowings of winter cereals.

Since some of the estimates of livestock numbers and crop areas are derived from a sample survey, rather than a full census, they are subject to sampling error.

The main changes between December 2006 and December 2007 are:

- **Dairy herds:** In December 2007 the estimate of 288,600 dairy cows indicates no change in the dairy herd numbers.
- **Beef breeding herds:** The number of beef cows reduced by 9 per cent to 249,400 compared with December 2006, while the number of beef heifers-in-calf decreased by 5 per cent.
- **All cattle:** In total, there was a 4 per cent reduction in the total cattle on farms in December 2007 compared to December 2006.
- **Sheep:** The sheep breeding flock increased by an estimated 11 per cent between December 2006 and December 2007, though this total was still less than that recorded for 2005.

- **Pigs:** The estimate of 34,600 sows and gilts was 8 per cent less than in December 2006.
- **Hay and silage:** Hay yields increased by 6 per cent during 2007, though overall production fell by 17 per cent. The production of silage was 2 per cent higher than 2006 with yield increasing by 3 per cent, and the area cut by 1 per cent.
- **Winter crops:** The area of cereal crops in the ground at 1st December is estimated to have been 20,900 hectares, a 39 per cent increase compared with 2006.

Tables giving full details of the December Survey results are available at <http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/news/press-releases-statistical/press-release-statistical-current.htm>

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Notes for Editors

- 1 The survey results were prepared by the Policy and Economics Division of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, BT4 3SB.
- 2 All media queries to DARD Press Office on 02890524619
- 3 All recent DARD statistical press releases can be found at <http://www.dardni.gov.uk/index/news/press-releases-statistical>

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**Northern Ireland Agricultural Survey
Results for December 2007**

Table 1 Cattle

	December 2005	December 2006	December 2007	% Change 2007/2006
				%
Total cows mainly for producing milk for sale	280.5	287.2	288.6	0
Total cows mainly for producing and rearing calves for beef	284.2	275.4	249.4	-9
TOTAL COWS	564.7	562.6	537.9	-4
Heifers in calf with first calf intended mainly for producing milk				
Heifers in calf with first calf (2 yrs +)	34.4	31.2	30.6	-2
Heifers in calf with first calf (< 2 yrs)	24.7	28.5	28.6	0
Total	59.1	59.6	59.2	-1
Heifers in calf with first calf intended mainly for producing calves for beef				
Heifers in calf with first calf (2 yrs +)	28.5	22.9	20.6	-10
Heifers in calf with first calf (< 2 yrs)	18.0	24.1	24.3	1
Total	46.6	47.1	44.9	-5
All other cattle and calves 2 years old and over				
Male	48.7	46.9	48.9	4
Females for slaughter	36.3	42.9	38.5	-10
Females for breeding but not in calf	20.7	20.7	18.4	-11
Total	105.7	110.5	105.8	-4
1 year old and under 2 years				
Male	205.9	198.1	185.1	-7
Females for slaughter	125.1	100.5	100.2	0
Females for breeding but not in calf	77.3	83.5	79.3	-5
Total	408.3	382.0	364.6	-5
6 months old and under 1 year				
Male	146.5	137.8	126.4	-8
Female	151.9	148.1	141.9	-4
Total	298.4	286.0	268.3	-6
Under 6 months old				
Male	99.9	89.2	87.1	-2
Female	105.0	99.2	102.2	3
Total	204.9	188.3	189.4	1
TOTAL CATTLE AND CALVES	1,687.8	1,636.2	1,570.1	-4

1 Source - APHIS

Northern Ireland Agricultural Survey

Results for December 2007

Table 2 Sheep and Pigs

	December 2005	December 2006	December 2007	% Change 2007/2006
				%
Sheep				
Breeding flock				
Ewes	841.2	742.2	832.4	12
Ewe lambs tupped	87.2	58.1	56.3	-3
Total breeding flock	928.4	800.3	888.8	11
Other sheep				
Rams for service	29.3	25.7	29.6	15
Other sheep 1 year and over	38.0	32.3	34.3	6
Other lambs				
Ewe lambs not tupped	110.5	N/A	N/A	-
Ram lambs	5.0	N/A	N/A	-
Other lambs under 1 year old	242.0	296.0	318.5	8
Total lambs	357.5	296.0	318.5	8
TOTAL SHEEP AND LAMBS	1,353.3	1,154.3	1,271.1 ¹	10
Pigs				
Breeding herd				
Sows in pig	24.1	24.2	23.3	-4
Gilts in pig	4.0	4.5	3.1	-31
Others sows (being suckled or dry sows kept for further breeding)	8.8	9.0	8.3	-8
Total female breeding herd	36.9	37.6	34.6	-8
Gilts 50kg (110lb) liveweight and over, not yet in pig	3.4	3.8	2.9	-23
Boars being used for service	0.9	0.8	0.8	-3
All other pigs (including culled sows and boars) of liveweight:				
80 kg (175lb) and over	57.7	64.5	81.6	27
50kg (110lb) and under 80kg (175lb)	89.3	79.7	81.6	2
20kg (45lb) and under 50kg (110lb)	101.8	106.3	107.9	2
Under 20kg (45lb)	109.9	106.8	103.8	-3
Total	358.7	357.2	374.9	5
TOTAL PIGS	399.9	399.4	413.3	3

¹ Source - Sheep Inventory

Northern Ireland Agricultural Survey Results for December 2007

Table 3 Hay, silage & winter-sown crops

	December 2005	December 2006	December 2007	% Change 2007/2006
				%
Hay				
Area cut ('000 ha)	15	14	11	-22
Production ('000 tonnes)	100	107	89	-17
Yield (tonnes/ha)	6.9	7.6	8.0	6
Silage				
Area cut ('000 ha)	304	270	272	1
Production ('000 tonnes)	7,920	8,326	8,571	3
Yield (tonnes/ha)	26.0	30.8	31.5	2
Crops sown by 1 December				
Wheat ('000 ha)	8.1	8.6	11.5	34
Barley ('000 ha)	6.2	5.2	8.0	55
Oats ('000 ha)	1.0	1.3	1.4	2
Total Cereals	15.3	15.1	20.9	39