

Research Briefing

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# Agriculture in Sussex



## Summary

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## Summary

The aim of this paper is to support a Westminster Hall debate on 25 October 2022 on agriculture in Sussex. The following points are the key takeaways from this debate pack.

**Land:** In 2021, 3% of England's agricultural holdings (3,145) and 2% of England's total farmed area (223,000 hectares) were in Sussex. The average farm size was 87 hectares in the South East (including London), which was larger than the England average of 85 hectares.

**Crops:** In Sussex in 2021 there was 220,071 hectares of farmed land. 27% of this farmed land was cereals (59,320 hectares), 14% general cropping (15,067 hectares) and 3% horticulture (5,559 hectares).

**Livestock:** Of the England total in 2021, the South East (including London) had 1.6% of cattle (76,700), 2.3% of sheep (341,000), 1.1% of pigs (46,231) and 0.6% of poultry (889,000).

**Labour:** The total agricultural labour in Sussex in 2021 was 10,497, this is 4% of the England total. On average, there were 3.3 people per farm, this is above the England average of 2.8 people per farm. 41% of people were full time, 36% part time, 8% casual and 6% salaried managers.

**Farm Business Income (FBI):** In the South East (including London), the average FBI was £51,192 for all types of farms in 2020/21. This was similar to England's average FBI of £51,923.

**Total Income from Farming (TIFF):** In 2020, TIFF for England was £3,552 million. The South East (including London) contributed to 14% (£504 million) of the England TIFF (3,552 million). The average TIFF per hectare of farmed land in England in 2020 was £389. The South East (including London) was above this average at £443 TIFF per hectare.

**Farm Funding:** In 2020, the South East and London received £265 million in direct payments which accounted for 53% of the TIFF. This is similar to direct payments in England accounting for 59% TIFF. In East Sussex, West Sussex (SW) and West Sussex (NE), direct payments accounted for 69%, 69% and 58% of TIFF respectively.

# 1

## Sussex

Sussex is located in the South East and London region of England. There are two county council areas, East and West Sussex, and one unitary authority, the city of Brighton and Hove. According to [Corine Land Cover](#) 2018, 71% of land in Sussex is agricultural.

The geographical breakdowns used in this briefing paper are:

- England
- South East and London
- Sussex
  - East Sussex
  - West Sussex (South West)
  - West Sussex (North West)
  - Brighton and Hove

## 2 Farming

### 2.1 Land

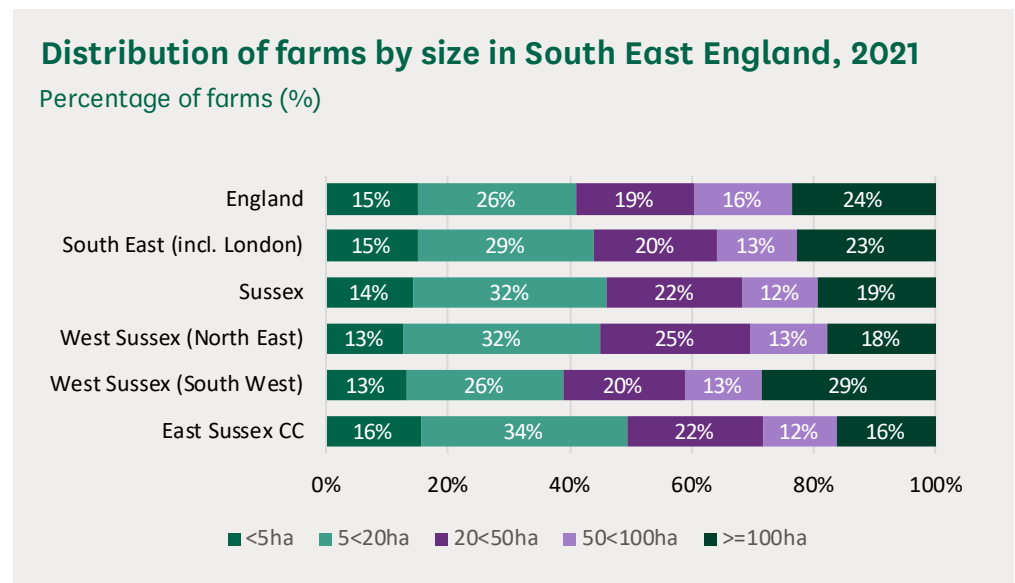
In 2021, 3% of England's agricultural holdings (3,145) and 2% of England's total farmed area (223,000 hectares) were in Sussex. The average farm size was 71 hectares in Sussex, which was below the South East average of 87 hectares and the England average of 85 hectares.

Agricultural holdings in Sussex, 2021			
	Number of holdings	Total farmed area (hectares)	Average holding size (hectares)
Brighton and Hove	11	2,594	236
East Sussex	1,720	108,825	63
West Sussex (South West)	628	64,610	103
West Sussex (North East)	786	46,636	59
<b>Sussex</b>	<b>3,145</b>	<b>222,665</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>South East (incl. London)</b>	<b>13,015</b>	<b>1,133,816</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>England</b>	<b>105,220</b>	<b>8,975,549</b>	<b>85</b>

Source: [Defra, June Survey of Agriculture, Commercial holdings at June 2021](#)

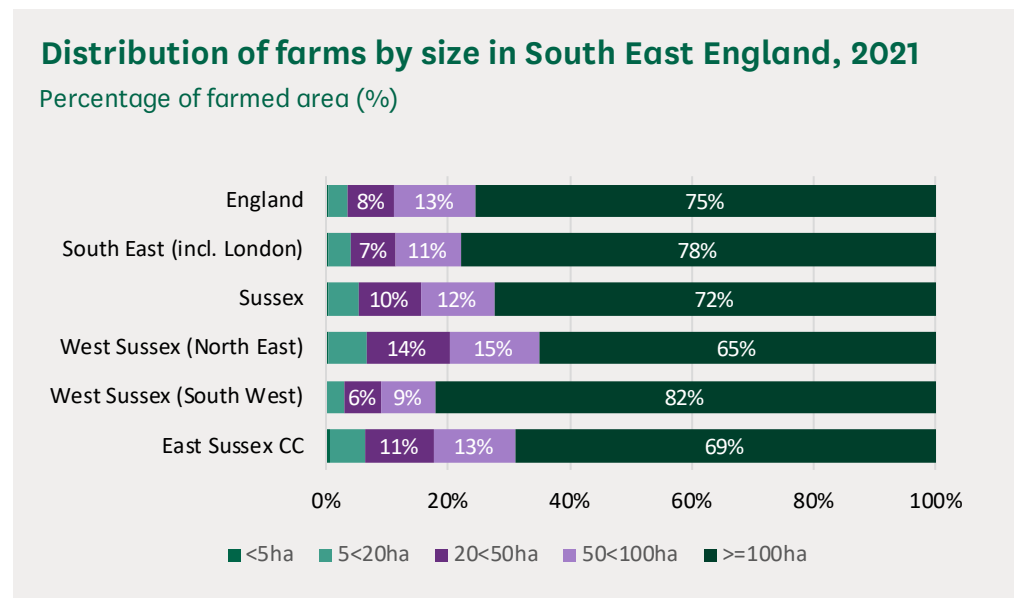
#### Size of farms

Similar to the England average, the distribution of farms by size is fairly even in Sussex and the South East, with the largest majority of farms sized between 5 and 20 hectares.



Source: [Defra, June Survey of Agriculture, Commercial holdings at June 2021](#)

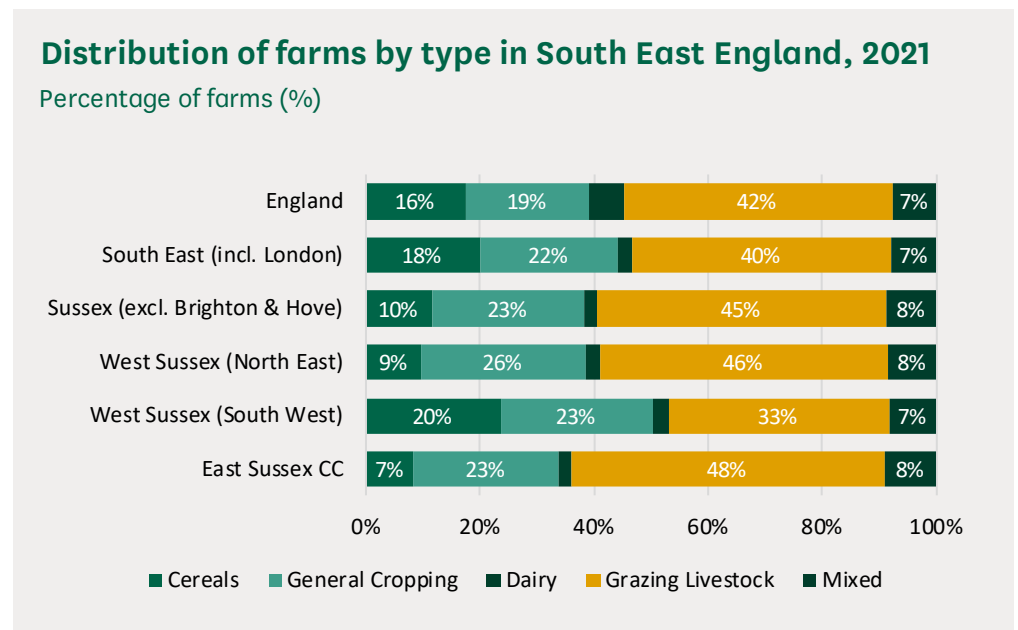
As expected, the largest farms take up the highest percentage of farmed area. In Sussex, farms over 100 hectares made up 72% of farmed land, which is below the South East average of 78% and the England average of 75%.



Source: [Defra, June Survey of Agriculture, Commercial holdings at June 2021](#)

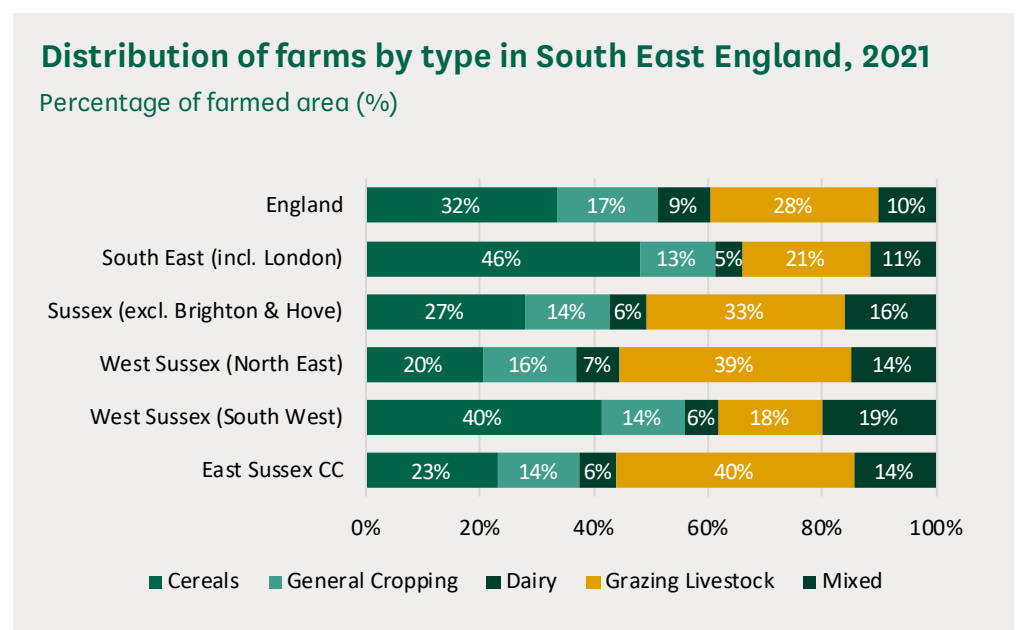
### Types of farms

The distribution of farms by type in East and West Sussex (Brighton Hove has no available data) was fairly similar to the England distribution. The largest proportion of farms were grazing livestock (45%) and general cropping (23%). The South East average had a greater proportion of farms with cereals (18%), compared to East and West Sussex (10%).



Source: [Defra, June Survey of Agriculture, Commercial holdings at June 2021](#)

In East and West Sussex (Brighton Hove has no available data), the highest proportion of farmed area was grazing livestock (33%), cereals (27%) and mixed (16%). In comparison, the highest proportion of farmed area in England was cereals (32%), grazing livestock (28%) and general cropping (17%).



Source: [Defra, June Survey of Agriculture, Commercial holdings at June 2021](#)



## 2.2 Crops

In Sussex in 2021 there was 220,071 hectares of farmed land. 27% of this farmed land was cereals (59,320 hectares), 14% general cropping (15,067 hectares) and 3% horticulture (5,559 hectares).

### Crop areas in Sussex, 2021

Hectares

	Cereals		General Cropping		Horticulture		Total farmed area
Brighton and Hove	..	..	..	..	0	(0%)	2,594
East Sussex CC	24,545	(23%)	15,067	(14%)	2,285	(2%)	108,825
West Sussex (South West)	25,595	(40%)	9,111	(14%)	2,103	(3%)	64,610
West Sussex (North East)	9,180	(20%)	7,277	(16%)	1,281	(3%)	46,636
<b>Sussex</b>	<b>59,320</b>	<b>(27%)</b>	<b>31,455</b>	<b>(14%)</b>	<b>5,669</b>	<b>(3%)</b>	<b>220,071</b>
<b>South East (incl. London)</b>	<b>520,958</b>	<b>(46%)</b>	<b>144,047</b>	<b>(13%)</b>	<b>34,279</b>	<b>(3%)</b>	<b>1,133,816</b>
<b>England</b>	<b>2,904,514</b>	<b>(32%)</b>	<b>1,510,377</b>	<b>(17%)</b>	<b>160,412</b>	<b>(2%)</b>	<b>8,975,549</b>

Notes: Figures in brackets denote the proportion which the region contributes to the English total

Source: [Defra, June Survey of Agriculture, Commercial holdings at June 2021](#)

## 2.3 Livestock

Of the England total in 2021, the South East (including London) had 1.6% of cattle (76,700), 2.3% of sheep (341,000), 1.1% of pigs (46,231) and 0.6% of poultry (889,000).

### Livestock on agricultural holdings in Sussex, 2021

Number of livestock

	Cattle		Sheep		Pigs		Poultry	
Brighton and Hove	..	..	5,450	(0.0%)	0	(0.0%)	..	..
East Sussex CC	38,130	(0.8%)	228,272	(1.6%)	4,845	(0.1%)	489,387	(0.3%)
West Sussex (South West)	18,614	(0.4%)	61,117	(0.4%)	36,322	(0.9%)	52,417	(0.0%)
West Sussex (North East)	19,958	(0.4%)	45,709	(0.3%)	5,064	(0.1%)	347,579	(0.2%)
<b>Sussex</b>	<b>76,702</b>	<b>(1.6%)</b>	<b>340,547</b>	<b>(2.3%)</b>	<b>46,231</b>	<b>(1.1%)</b>	<b>889,383</b>	<b>(0.6%)</b>
<b>South East (incl. London)</b>	<b>350,127</b>	<b>(7.2%)</b>	<b>1,151,506</b>	<b>(7.9%)</b>	<b>200,511</b>	<b>(4.7%)</b>	<b>8,046,500</b>	<b>(5.7%)</b>
<b>England</b>	<b>4,846,934</b>		<b>14,626,232</b>		<b>4,237,758</b>		<b>141,084,056</b>	

Source: [Defra, June Survey of Agriculture, Commercial holdings at June 2021](#)

## 2.4 Labour

The total agricultural labour in Sussex in 2021 was 10,497, this is 4% of the England total. On average, there were 3.3 people per farm, this is above the England average of 2.8 people per farm. 41% of people were full time, 36% part time, 8% casual and 6% salaried managers.

### Agricultural labour force on commercial holdings in Sussex, 2021

Number of people

	Farmers, partners, directors and spouses		Regular workers		Salaried managers	Casual workers	Total labour
	Full time	Part Time	Full time	Part Time			
Brighton and Hove	11	7	..	..	..	..	29
East Sussex	1,190	1,546	451	507	222	451	4,367
West Sussex (South West)	490	499	1,261	329	278	767	3,624
West Sussex (North East)	529	661	323	264	112	590	2,478
<b>Sussex</b>	<b>2,220</b>	<b>2,713</b>	<b>2,035</b>	<b>1,100</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>1,807</b>	<b>10,497</b>
<b>South East (incl. London)</b>	<b>10,032</b>	<b>10,971</b>	<b>7,911</b>	<b>4,099</b>	<b>2,461</b>	<b>9,926</b>	<b>45,400</b>
<b>England</b>	<b>93,988</b>	<b>85,041</b>	<b>41,753</b>	<b>25,924</b>	<b>11,812</b>	<b>38,900</b>	<b>297,418</b>

Source: [Defra, June Survey of Agriculture, Commercial holdings at June 2021](#)

## 2.5 Farm Income

### Farm Business Income (FBI)

Farm business income (FBI) for sole traders and partnerships represents the financial return to all unpaid labour (farmers and spouses, non-principal partners and directors and their spouses and family workers) and on all their capital invested in the farm business, including land and buildings. For corporate businesses it represents the financial return on the shareholders capital invested in the farm business.<sup>1</sup>

In the South East (including London), the average FBI per farm was £51,192 for all types of farms in 2020/21. This was similar to England's average FBI per farm of £51,923.

<sup>1</sup> [Defra, Definitions used by the Farm Business Survey \[PDF\]](#)

## Farm Business Income (FBI) in London and South East

	£ per farm		£ per ha	
	London & SE	England	London & SE	England
All types	51,192	51,923	315	337
Dairy	N/A	92,452	N/A	578
Grazing livestock (lowland)	23,364	18,387	228	209
Grazing livestock (LFA)	N/A	33,360	N/A	204
Cereals	86,204	71,712	385	335

### Notes:

Years ending February, excludes farms with less than 25,000 euros of standard output.  
LFA stands for Less Favourable Areas.

Source: [Defra, Farm Business Survey](#)

## Total Income from Farming (TIFF)

Total Income from Farming (TIFF) is the total profit from all farming businesses in England on a calendar year basis.

More specifically, TIFF is income generated by production within the agriculture industry, including subsidies, and represents business profits and remuneration for work done by owners and other unpaid workers.

TIFF excludes changes in the values of assets, including stocks, due to price changes but includes non-agricultural activities such as further processing or tourist activities where these cannot be separated from the agricultural business.<sup>2</sup>

### Key Statistics

## Key income statistics for the Sussex, 2020

£ million current prices (not adjusted for inflation)

	England	London & SE	East Sussex	West Sussex (SW)	West Sussex (NE)
Total crop output	7,624	1,098 (14.4%)	56 (0.7%)	56 (0.7%)	28 (0.4%)
Total livestock output	9,828	627 (6.4%)	71 (0.7%)	31 (0.3%)	35 (0.4%)
Gross output at basic prices	19,545	1,996 (10.2%)	149 (0.8%)	101 (0.5%)	73 (0.4%)
Total intermediate consumption	11,970	1,135 (9.5%)	83 (0.7%)	61 (0.5%)	42 (0.3%)
Gross value added at basic prices	7,574	861 (11.4%)	66 (0.9%)	40 (0.5%)	32 (0.4%)
Direct payments	2,094	265 (12.7%)	27 (1.3%)	16 (0.8%)	11 (0.5%)
Total Income from Farming	3,552	504 (14.2%)	39 (1.1%)	23 (0.7%)	19 (0.5%)

Notes: Figures in brackets denote the proportion which the region contributes to the English total.

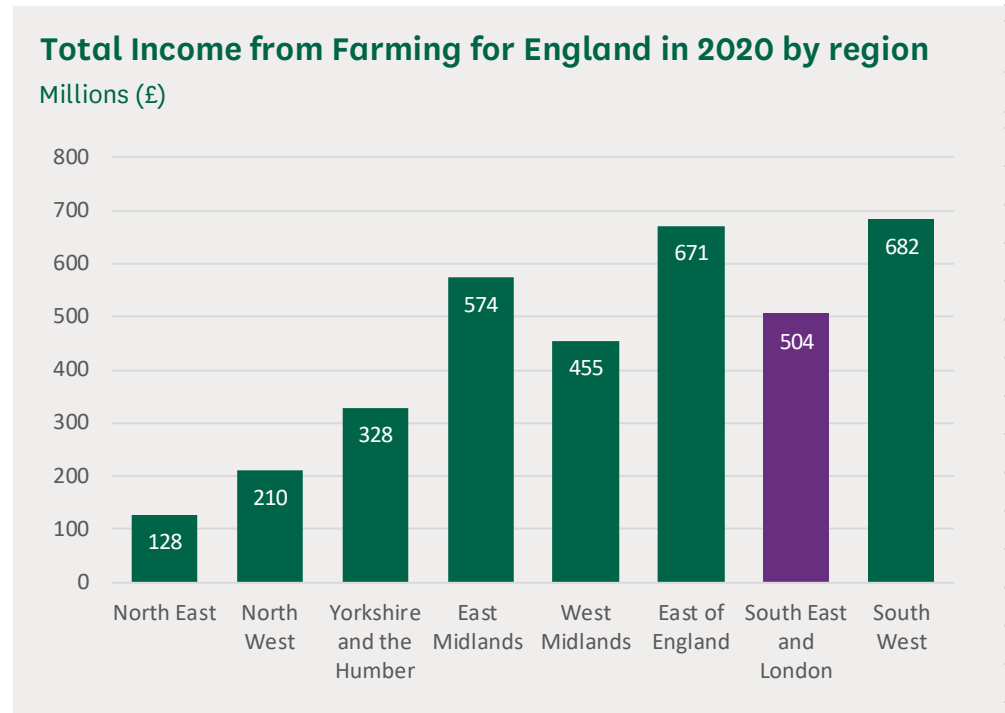
East Sussex consists of the following NUTS3 areas: Brighton and Hove, East Sussex CC

Source: [Defra, Total income from farming for the regions of England](#)

<sup>2</sup> [DEFRA, Total income from farming for the regions of England, 10 February 2022](#)

## Total Income

In 2020, TIFF for England was £3,552 million. The South East (including London) contributed to 14% (£504 million) of the England TIFF (3,552 million). The average TIFF per hectare of farmed land in England in 2020 was £389. The South East (including London) was above this average at £443 TIFF per hectare.

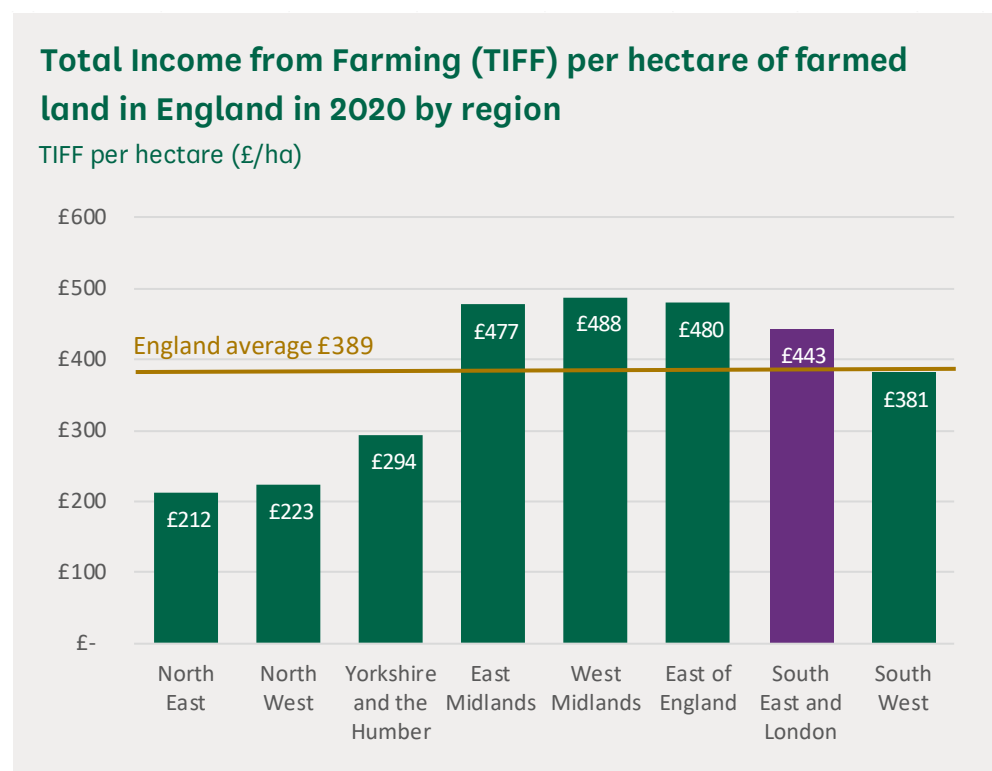


Source: [Defra, Total income from farming for the regions of England](#)

## Income per hectare

The regions are not identical in size. As the value of TIFF is closely linked to the size of the area being farmed, expressing TIFF per hectare of farmed land gives a fairer metric to use for comparisons across regions.

The average TIFF per hectare of farmed land in England in 2020 was £389. The South East and London was slightly above this average at £443 TIFF per hectare.



Source: [Defra, Total income from farming for the regions of England](#)

## Output groups

The gross output at basic prices was £1.8 billion in the South East and London, accounting for 9% of the England total of £19.5 billion in 2020. Output from vegetables, horticulture and potatoes was the region's largest output in 2020. It was £619 million in 2020, equating to 34% of the region's total.

### Gross output at basic prices for the South East and London region, 2020

£ million current prices (not adjusted for inflation)

	South East and London	% of England	England
Gross output at basic prices	1,828	9%	19,545
<i>of which:</i>			
<i>Combinables &amp; Sugar Beet</i>	479	13%	3,608
<i>Veg, Hort &amp; Potatoes</i>	619	15%	4,017
<i>Pigs &amp; Poultry</i>	218	6%	3,860
<i>Dairy</i>	155	5%	2,893
<i>Beef &amp; Sheep</i>	189	9%	2,202
<i>Diversification</i>	169	15%	1,112

Source: [Defra, Total income from farming for the regions of England](#)

## Farm Funding

Farm support in the UK is changing. The UK took part in the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) for decades. In 2019, the UK received some £4.7

billion of CAP funding. Around 80% of this was provided as ‘direct payments’ under the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) based broadly on how much land was farmed. A further tranche of CAP money was spent on rural and environmental programmes such as England’s Countryside Stewardship (CS) scheme.

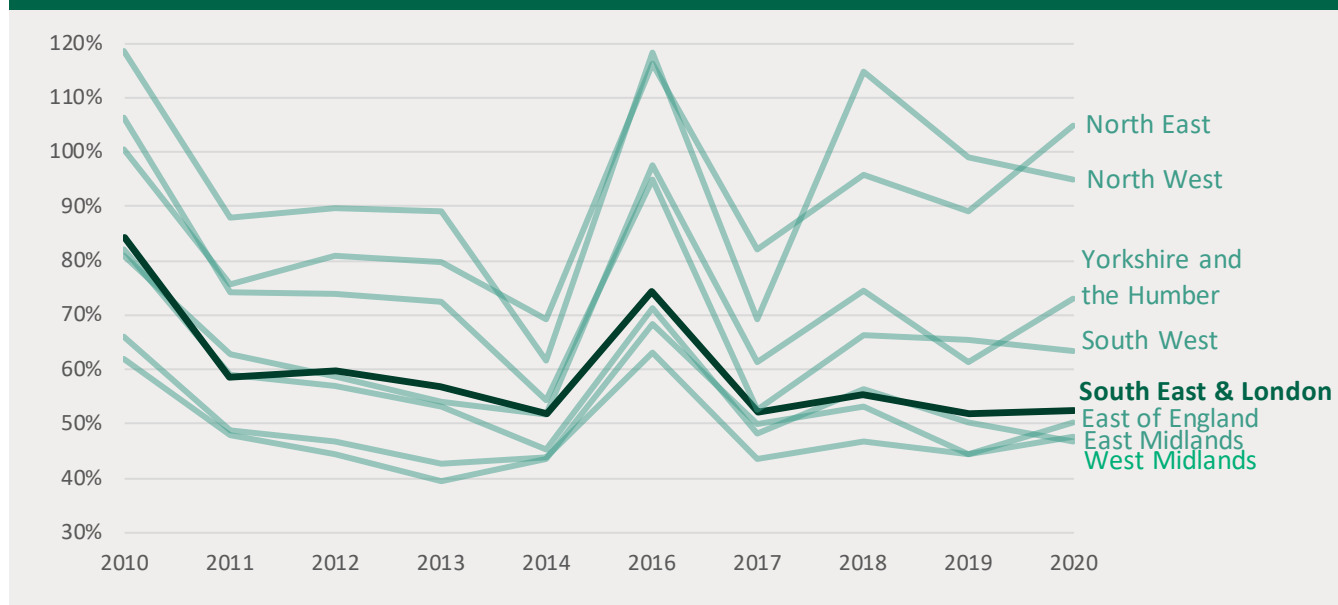
Since Brexit, the [Agriculture Act 2020](#), has been passed to provide a legal framework for the Government to develop very different approaches to supporting agriculture in future. The [Government has guaranteed the current annual budget to farmers in every year of this Parliament](#), ending by 2024. However, in England this money will be spent in different ways in future. The Government is phasing out CAP-style direct payments and is introducing payments for farmers to provide public goods such as environmental and animal welfare improvements. These changes are taking place during a seven-year ‘Agricultural Transition’ period running from 2021.

### Direct Payments in the South East and London

All regions were reliant on Direct Payments for a large proportion of Total Income from Farming (TIFF), in all years. Direct Payments accounted for at least 47% of TIFF in all regions in 2020. Compared to other regions, the South East and London’s reliance on Direct Payments has generally been mid-range throughout the 2010-2020 time period.

## Total Income from Farming accounted for by Direct Payments, for the regions of England, 2010-20

Direct Payments as % of TIFF



Source: [Defra, Total income from farming for the regions of England](#)

### Direct Payments in Sussex

In 2020, the South East and London received £265 million in direct payments which accounted for 53% of the TIFF. This is similar to direct payments in

England accounting for 59% TIFF. In East Sussex, West Sussex (SW) and West Sussex (NE), direct payments accounted for 69%, 69% and 58% of TIFF respectively.

### Total Income from Farming accounted for by Direct Payments in Sussex, 2020

£ million real terms (adjusted for inflation)

	England	London & SE	East Sussex	West Sussex (SW)	West Sussex (NE)
Direct payments	2,094	265	27	16	11
Total Income from Farming	3,552	504	39	23	19
Direct Payments as % of TIFF	59%	53%	69%	69%	58%

Source: [Defra, Total income from farming for the regions of England](#)

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