



**BRIEFING PAPER**

Number 3339, 25 June 2019

# Agriculture: historical statistics

By Yago Zayed,  
Philip Loft

**Inside:**

1. Area of crops and grass
2. Livestock
3. Agricultural workforce
4. Productivity
5. Farm income
6. Reference tables



# Contents

|                                   |           |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Summary</b>                    | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>1. Area of crops and grass</b> | <b>4</b>  |
| 1.1 Individual crops              | 6         |
| 1.2 Wheat and Barley              | 6         |
| 1.3 Orchards                      | 7         |
| <b>2. Livestock</b>               | <b>8</b>  |
| 2.1 Cattle                        | 8         |
| 2.2 Sheep                         | 8         |
| 2.3 Pigs                          | 9         |
| 2.4 Poultry                       | 10        |
| <b>3. Agricultural workforce</b>  | <b>11</b> |
| <b>4. Productivity</b>            | <b>11</b> |
| <b>5. Farm income</b>             | <b>13</b> |
| <b>6. Reference tables</b>        | <b>14</b> |

Contributing Authors: Paul Bolton,  
Carl Baker

Cover page image copyright: [Jon Bunting](#). Licenced by [CC-BY-NC 2.0](#). Image cropped and rotated.

## Summary

Consistent statistics on agriculture have been collected for a longer period of time than for many other industries or subject areas. The first proper agricultural census of Great Britain was taken in 1865 and has been carried out annually in June ever since. It still collects much of the same information on crop areas and livestock numbers. Official statistics on annual crop yields were first published in 1884, livestock products at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and annual data on agricultural workers from 1921.

This note sets out a small number of important indicators of UK agriculture that have been published annually over this time. Together they give an indication of some of the ways that agriculture has changed in response to events over the last 100 years or more including the two world wars, the depression of the 1930s, the post-war boom and entry into the European Community. These long runs of data also give some historical context to more recent changes in agriculture including the dramatic fall in prices and farm incomes in the late 1990s, BSE and the outbreak of foot and mouth disease.

A number of series, notably farm sizes and the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides, are not sufficiently consistent or longstanding to include in this note. Most that are included have one or more breaks in their data. This is either because of changes to data collection which were intended to reflect changes in agriculture; improvements in methods of collection; or geographical change (the partition of Ireland for example). However, in most cases the impact is small and they do not limit the use of the data.

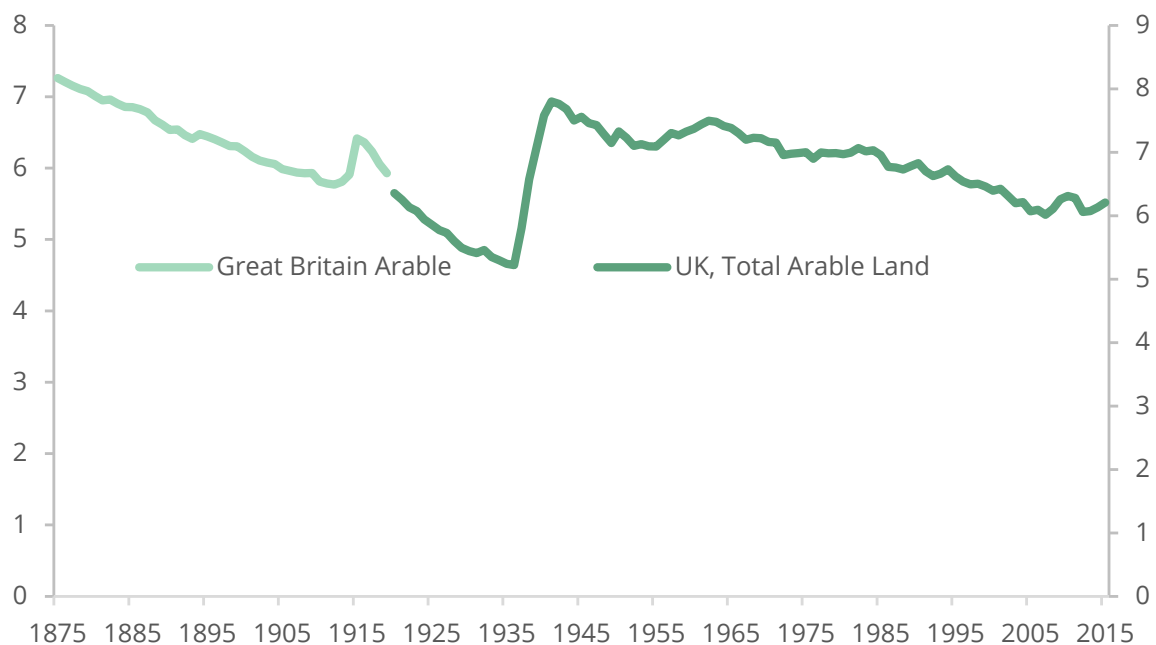
# 1. Area of crops and grass

**Chart 1** and **Table 1** (see appendix) show the total arable area on farms in Great Britain and then the UK since 1875. The arable area is defined as the total area of crops, bare fallow and non-permanent pasture (grass less than five years old). This data is collected in the June Agricultural Census. While earlier data is available, 1875 is used as a starting point as results from this time are considered more reliable.<sup>1</sup>

The total arable area on farms fell at a consistent rate between 1875 and the middle of the First World War. The area of arable farming increased dramatically in the last year of the war, but then resumed its earlier trend to reach the lowest recorded level of 5.2 million hectares just before the Second World War. During the course of this war the total arable area increased by 50% to 7.8 million: going from the smallest area on record to the largest in just five years. Since this time the arable area has been more variable, particularly in the last 15 years. The underlying trend is downwards. The recent average level of just over 6 million hectares is the smallest area of arable land since before the Second World War.

## CHART 1: TOTAL ARABLE AREA ON BRITISH/UK FARMS

Million hectares



In 2018, the area of permanent (over five years old) pasture in the UK was 6.2 million hectares.<sup>2</sup> Unlike arable this area has increased since 1970, but the current area is still well below the level of 7.4 million hectares from the end of the 1920s.<sup>3</sup> The total area on agricultural holdings in the UK in 2018 was 17.5 million hectares, or 72% of the total land area of the UK.

The proportion of land dedicated to agriculture in 2017 in England is shown in the map below. Similar maps for are available for Wales and Scotland.

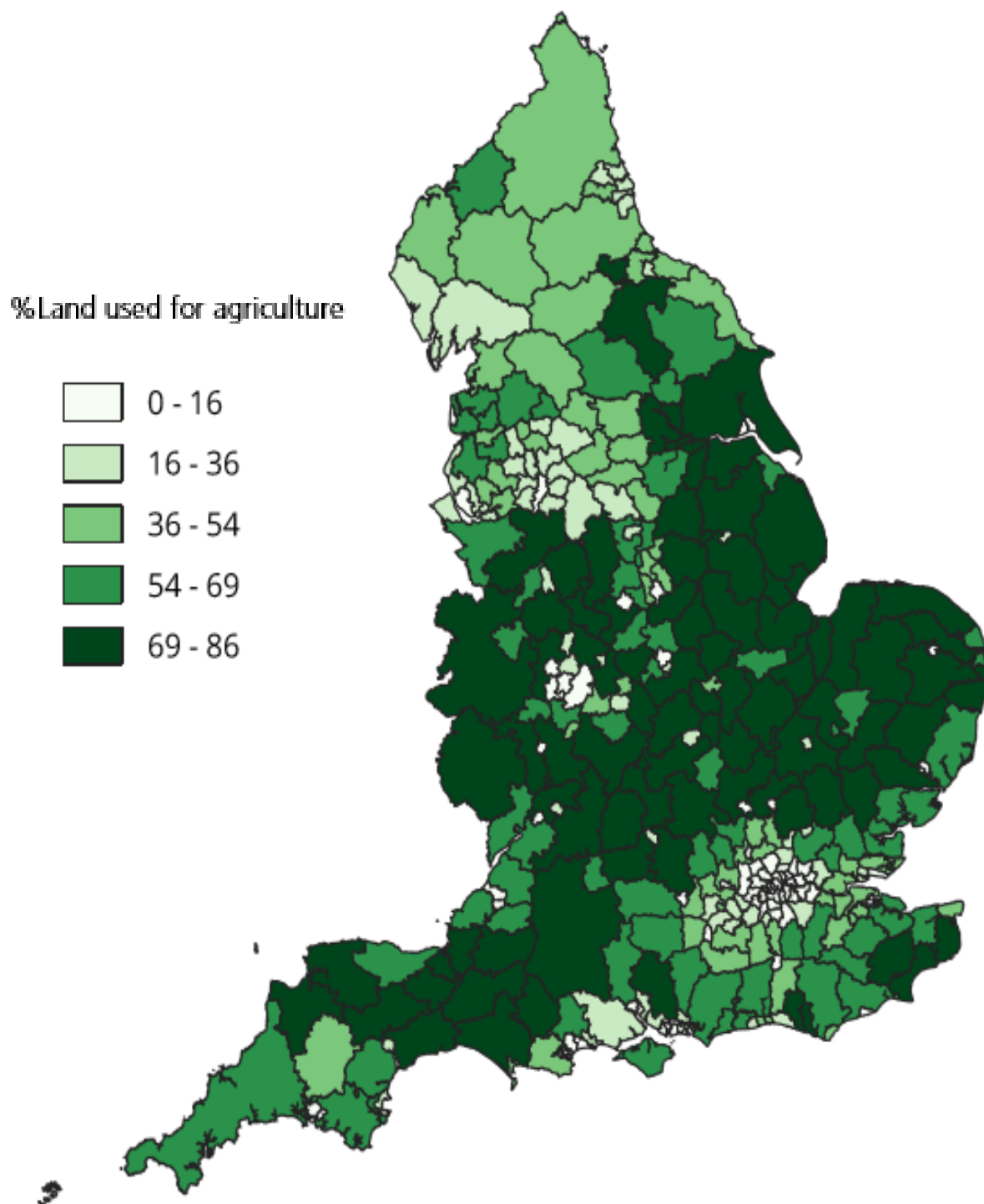
<sup>1</sup> B. R. Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics* (1988), p. 182/

<sup>2</sup> DEFRA, [Agriculture in the UK 2018](#), Table 2.1. This figure excludes rough grazing

<sup>3</sup> H. F. Marks and D. K. Britton, *A hundred years of British food & farming: A statistical survey* (1989); Table 3.2

## AGRICULTURAL LAND USE, 2017

% of land given over to agriculture, England



Note: These are a new dataset of experimental statistics, and are open to revision.

Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, ['Land use tables 2017'](#)

## 1.1 Individual crops

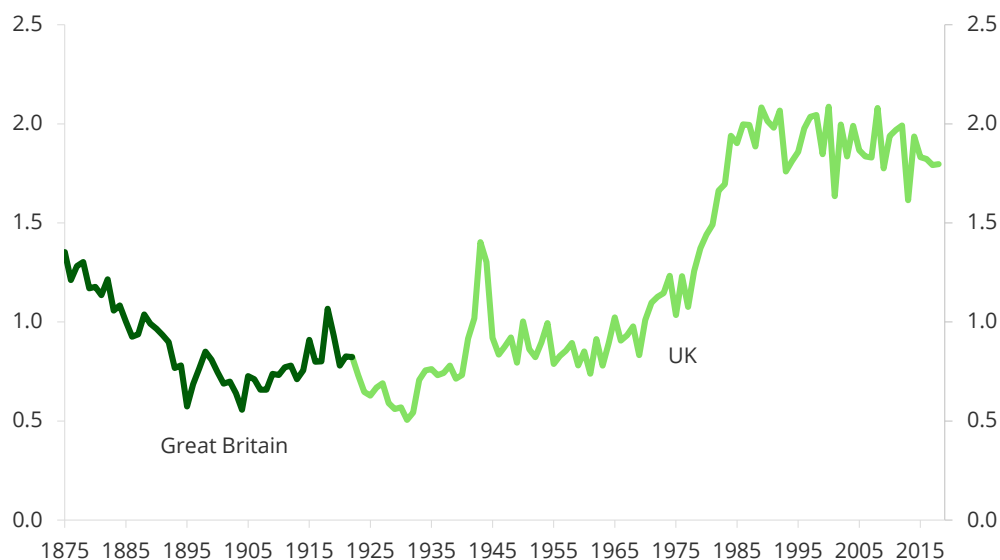
Within the total area of crops the individual types with the most consistent and largest declines were turnips and swedes (a 90% reduction in their area in the 100 years from 1875), oats (an 87% reduction in their area in the 100 years from 1875) and fodder crops in general.<sup>4</sup>

## 1.2 Wheat and Barley

Two crops which underwent large periods of expansion in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were wheat and barley, as detailed in **Charts 2 & 3** and **Table 1**.

**CHART 2: TOTAL AREA OF WHEAT IN GREAT BRITAIN/UK**

Million hectares



The collapse of cereal prices in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century caused the total area under wheat to decline from over 1.3 million hectares to below 700,000 hectares. Other than wartime peaks, it generally remained between 600,000 and 800,000 hectares until the mid 1960s. A period of gradual increase followed, which became a more rapid expansion to over 2 million hectares in the late 1980s. This expansion was due to the switch in production from barley to wheat (illustrated in the next chart) owing to the potential greater productivity of wheat.<sup>5</sup>

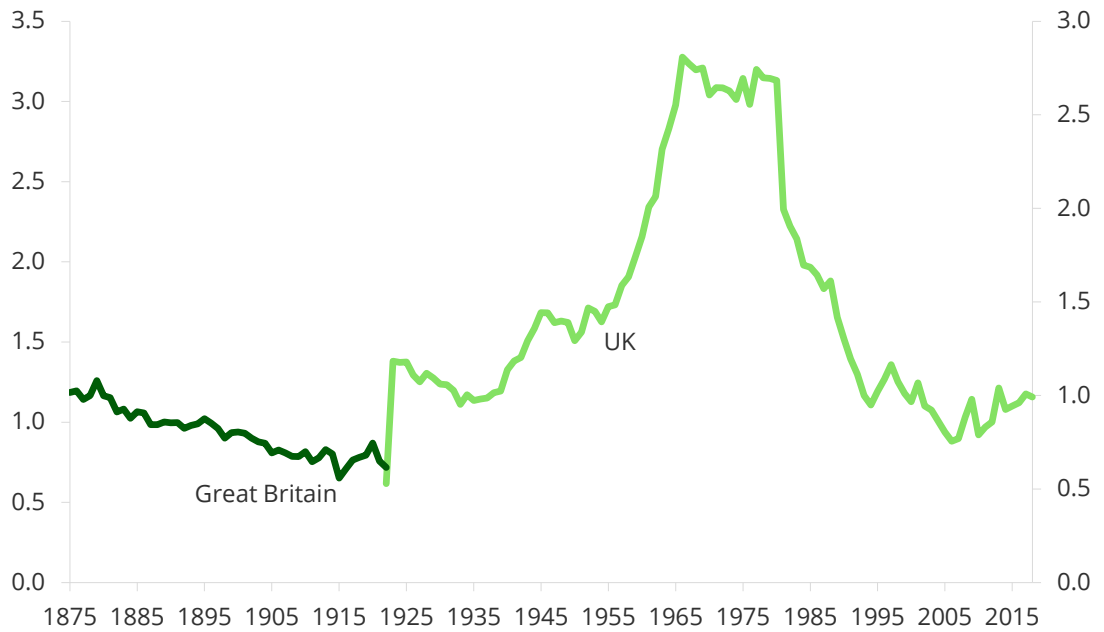
The collapse in cereal prices also caused a fall in the area of barley during the first half of this period. The post-Second World War expansion in the area of barley was even faster than that experienced by wheat in the 1980s. The area increased more than three-fold between 1950 and 1965 when it reached 2.5 million hectares (one third of all arable land). The effect of the switch from barley to wheat in the 1980s is very clear in **Chart 3**. At the start of the decade the area of barley was 60% greater than that of wheat; at the end it was 25% smaller.

<sup>4</sup> Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics*, Table III 1

<sup>5</sup> Marks and Britton, *A hundred years of British food & farming: A statistical survey*, p. 35-6.



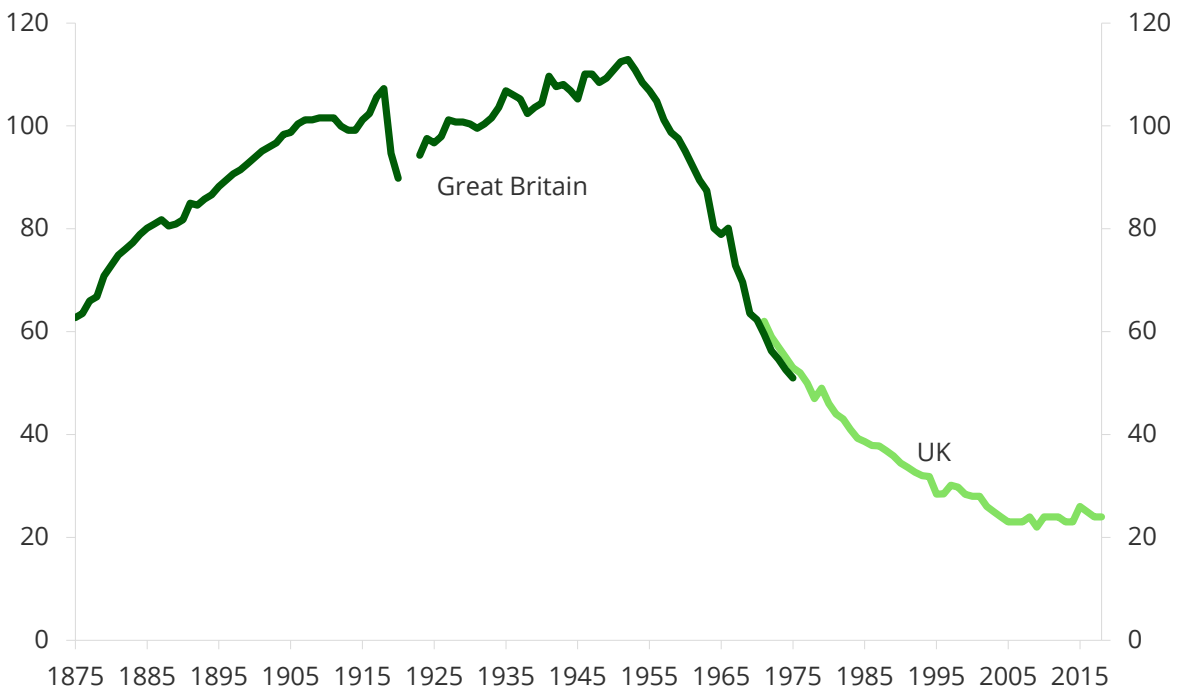
**CHART 3: TOTAL AREA OF BARLEY IN GREAT BRITAIN/UK**  
 Million hectares



### 1.3 Orchards

The decline in the number of orchards across the country has been much commented upon and is frequently seen as an indication of the industrialisation of agriculture. **Chart 4** and **Table 1** show trends in the total area of orchards. There was a general increase between 1875 and the early 1950s, interrupted by a sharp decline during the First World War. Since 1951 the decline has been very rapid. The total area covered by orchards in Great Britain was 113,000 hectares in 1951; by 1995, the UK figure was just 28,000. There has been some slowing in the rate of decline, but it reached another all-time low of 22,000 hectares in 2009. It has recovered to 24,000 in 2018.

**CHART 4: TOTAL AREA OF ORCHARDS IN GREAT BRITAIN/UK**  
 Thousand hectares



## 2. Livestock

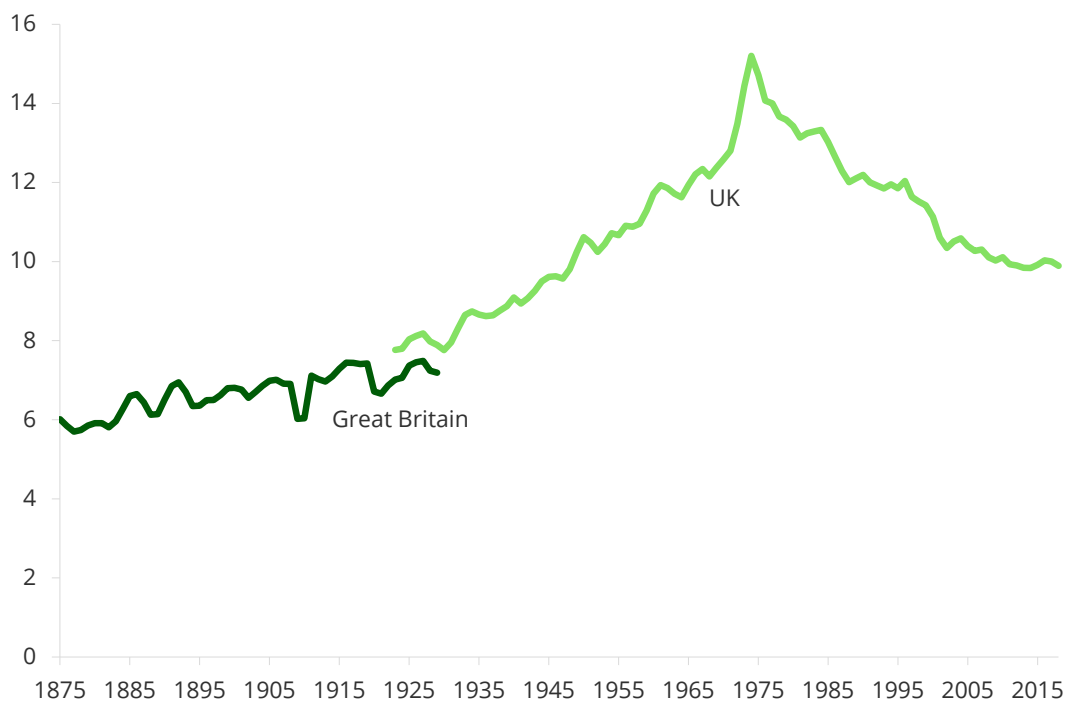
Data on the number of livestock on farms is also collected in the June Agricultural Census. For the same reasons given in the previous section data is presented from 1875 onwards.

### 2.1 Cattle

**Chart 5** and **Table 2** (appendix) show trends in the total number of cattle on farms. Despite some year-on-year variation, there was a consistent upward trend for the first 100 years shown here (1875 to 1974), over which time the total number of cattle increased from 6 million to 15.2 million. Since then, the number of cattle has fallen by almost 5 million; or 32%. More recent falls associated with BSE and foot and mouth disease have magnified the downward trend. Much of the underlying decline in numbers since the 1980s has been in the dairy herd as a result of restrictions on milk production from milk quotas.<sup>6</sup>

**CHART 5: NUMBER OF CATTLE ON BRITISH/UK FARMS**

Millions



### 2.2 Sheep

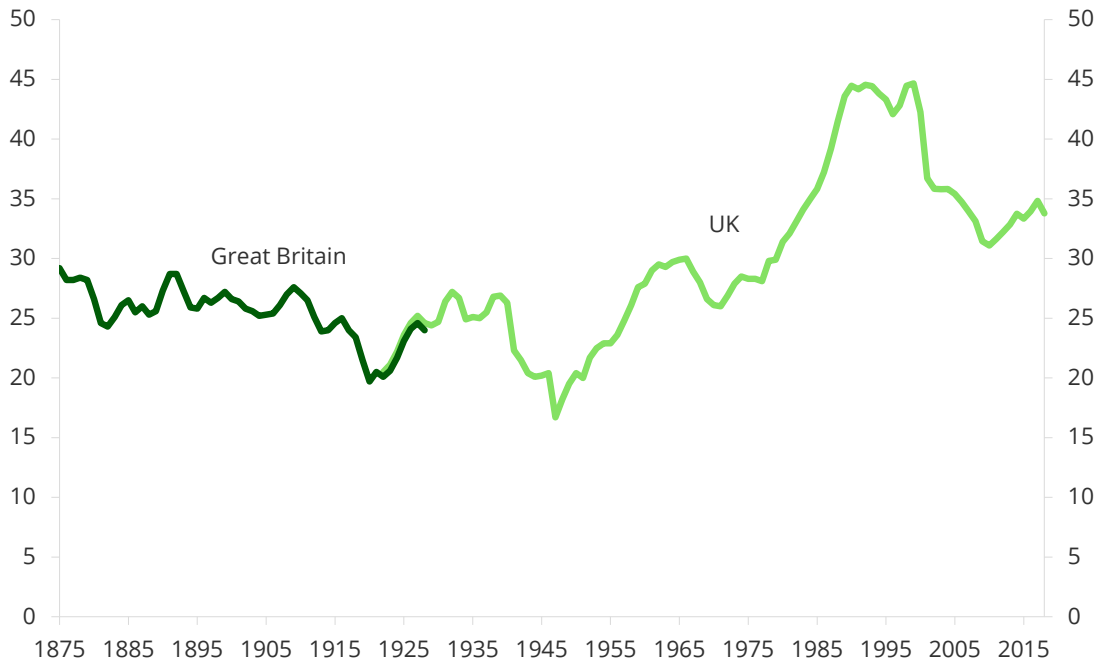
**Chart 6** and **Table 2** show trends in the total number of sheep and lambs on farms. In the period up to the early 1970s the only clear patterns were sharp falls during and just after both wars (due to an emphasis on crop production), followed by slower periods of recovery. Outside of these periods, numbers varied between 25 and 30 million. While this is a large range in absolute terms it is relatively small compared to the change since 1980 when the CAP for sheep meat was introduced and profitability improved. Numbers increased by 14.6 million, or almost 50%, to their highest recorded level of 44.5 million in 1992. The outbreak of foot and mouth disease affected sheep numbers more than cattle; in the year to June 2001 the total number fell by 13% or 5.5 million. The numbers have yet to recover.

<sup>6</sup> DEFRA, [Analysis of recent data for dairy cows in England and implications for the environment](#) (2009), section 3.



**CHART 6: NUMBER OF SHEEP ON BRITISH/UK FARMS**

Millions



## 2.3 Pigs

**Chart 7** and **Table 2** show trends in the total number of pigs on farms. The most noticeable pattern in the number of pigs, when compared to cattle and sheep, is the volatility in numbers. This reflects the ability to respond to prices more quickly and the dominance of meat in the value extracted from pigs.

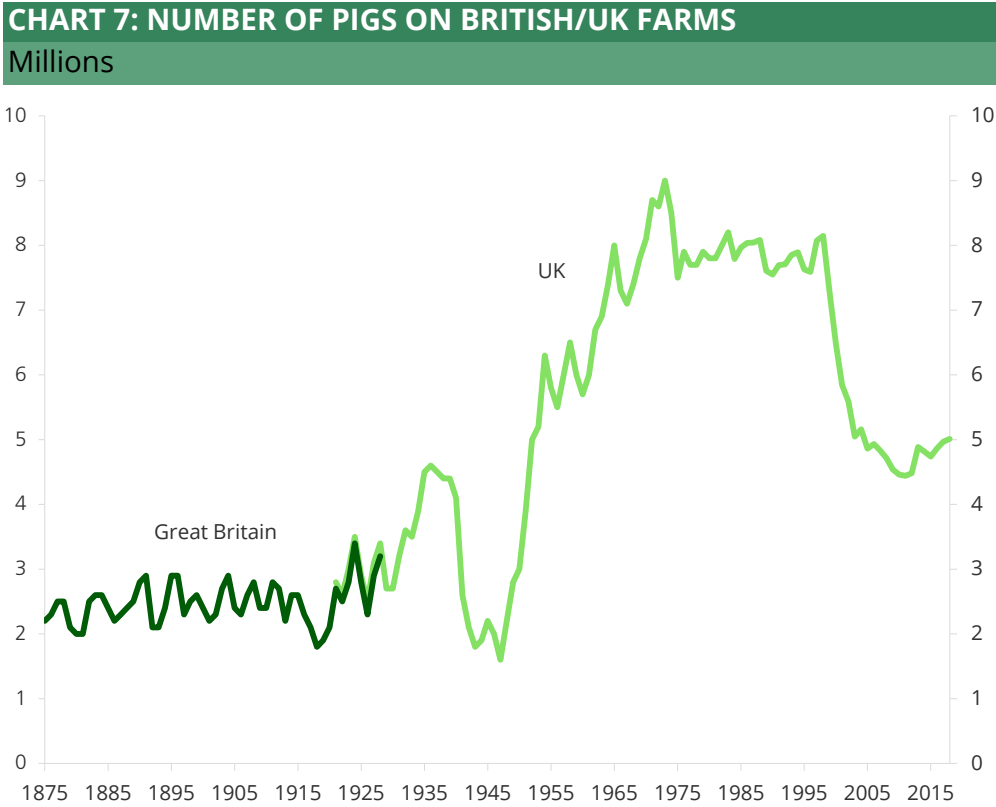
Total numbers varied between two and three million up to the First World War. Numbers expanded rapidly to 4.6 million in the mid-1930s. A dramatic fall in numbers took place during the Second World War, owing to reductions in pigs' main food supplies of cereals and imported concentrates. Numbers started to increase by the end of the 1940s: this expansion was just as rapid as the decline with a four-fold increase in the seven years to 1954. After then, the expansion in numbers continued more slowly and more erratically, peaking at 9 million in 1973. Falling profitability meant that numbers subsequently declined to around 8 million and remained around this level until the late 1980s.<sup>7</sup> Falling prices at the end of the 1990s, coupled with outbreaks of swine fever in 2000 and foot and mouth in 2001 resulted in a decline of approaching 40% between 1998 and 2003 when numbers reached their lowest level for half a century. They have since fallen still further, though the 2013 figure showed a sharp increase followed by declines. In 2018, there are around 5 million pigs, around the same level as 2003.

Pig farming underwent major specialization and intensification from the 1970s onwards. The average size of a herd increased from 70 in 1966<sup>8</sup> to nearly 600 in 2000.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Marks and Britton, *A hundred years of British food & farming: A statistical survey*, p. 73-4.

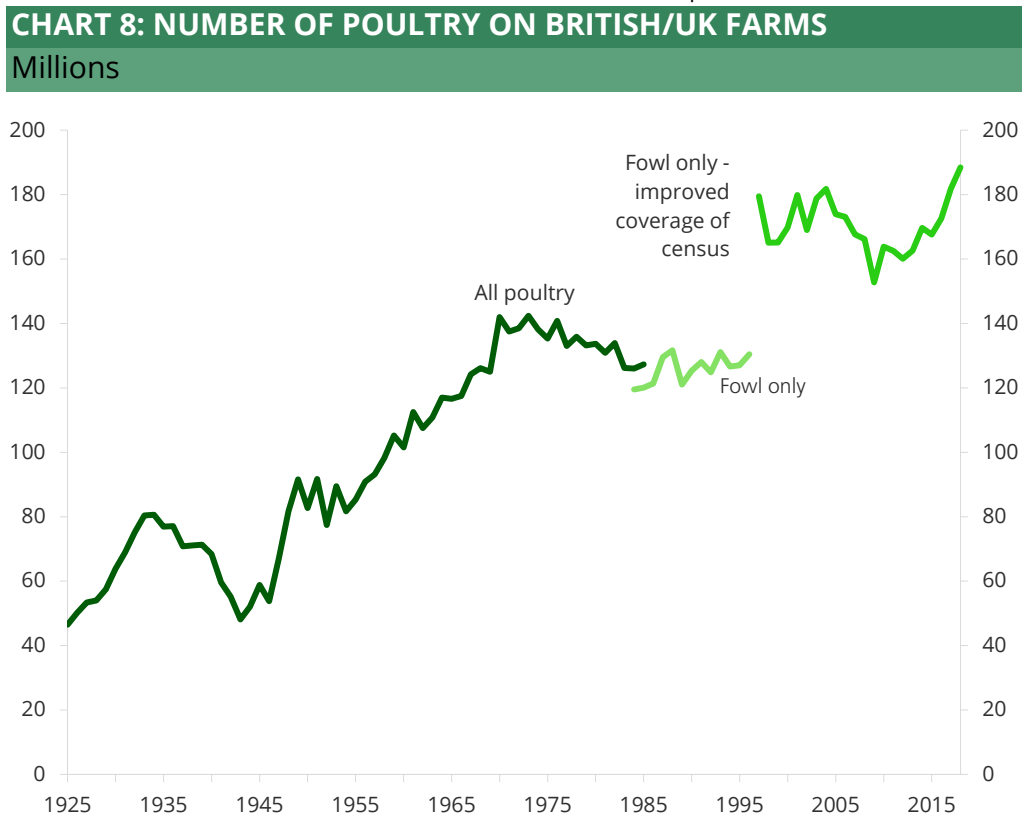
<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Farming, *Agricultural statistics 1966/67 England and Wales*

<sup>9</sup> DEFRA, *Agricultural census data –frequency distribution analysis*



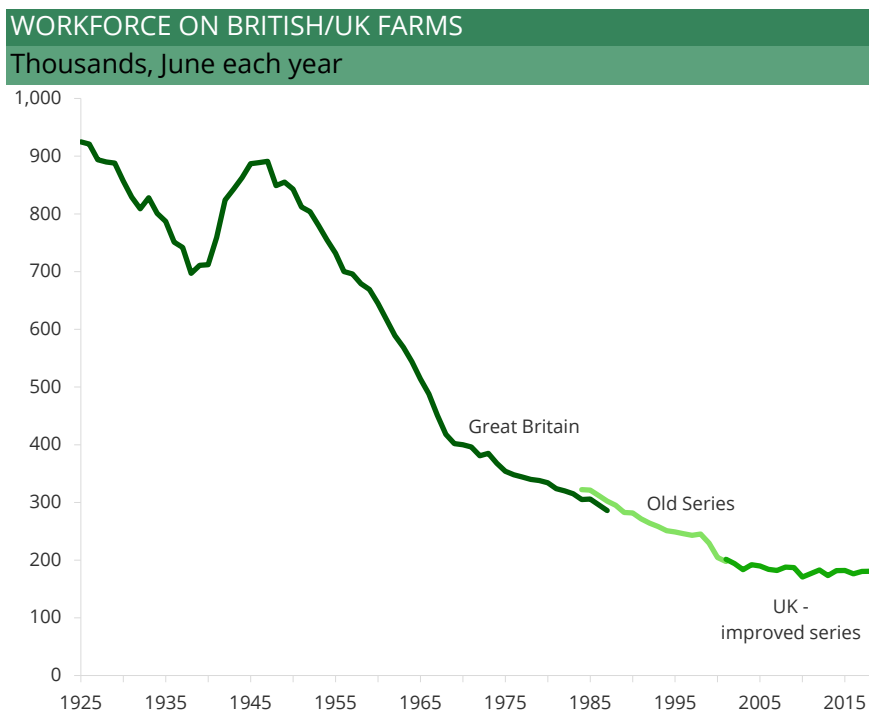
## 2.4 Poultry

**Chart 8** and **Table 2** show trends in total poultry numbers on farms since 1925. The trend in the early part of this period is similar to that seen for pigs: expansion during the 1930s; wartime falls in numbers; and rapid postwar expansion followed by a slower rate of expansion. Numbers peaked at just over 140 million in 1973. This was followed by a slow fall in numbers. Recent breaks in series make trends since 1980 more difficult to interpret.



### 3. Agricultural workforce

The Agricultural Census only started collecting information on the number of hired agricultural workers in the 1920s. **Chart 9** and the appended **Table 3** show trends in the *headcount* of agricultural workers (this excludes farmers, their spouses or farm partners and directors) since 1923. There has been near continual decline in numbers during this period, a trend only interrupted by the Second World War (when numbers were swelled by the Women's Land Army and prisoners of war). The fastest period of decline was between the end of the 1940s and the early 1960s, during which time the agricultural workforce went from almost 900,000 to just over 400,000. Since then the rate of decline has been slower, but just as consistent. In 2009 the total workforce was 187,100. This then fell to low of 170,600 in 2010, before recovering to 182,900 in 2012.



Figures from before this time are available from the population Census, but only for every 10 years. Census results showed a fall from 1.7 million agricultural workers in 1851 to just under 1 million in 1921. The greatest fall in numbers was between 1861 and 1881 when there was a fall of 380,000. The number of farmers has only been recorded in more recent Agricultural Censuses. When this data is combined with figures from the population Census it can be inferred that the number of farmers has fallen, but at a much slower rate than hired workers. The total fall is estimated at around one-sixth between the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the late 1980s.<sup>10</sup>

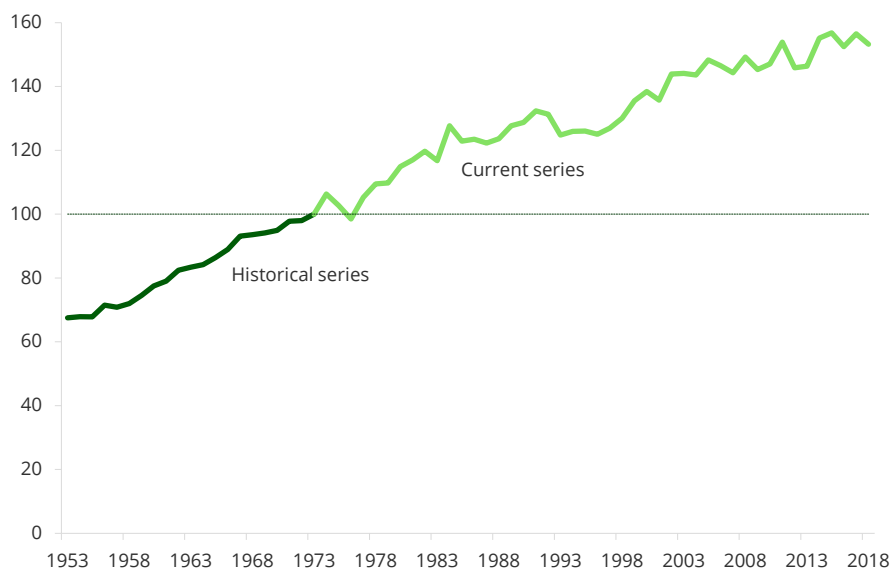
### 4. Productivity

Productivity of UK agriculture as a whole measures how well the industry uses the resources that are available to it to turn inputs into outputs. The statistic is based on the ratio of the volume of outputs to the volume of inputs. Productivity plays a vital part in agriculture's competitiveness and has clear impacts on farm incomes and the economic sustainability of the

<sup>10</sup> Marks and Britton, *A hundred years of British food & farming: A statistical survey*, p. 15-16.

industry. **Chart 10** and **Table 4** (appendix) show trends since 1953. Figures are given in an index form (1973=100).

**CHART 10: INDEX OF TOTAL FACTOR PRODUCTIVITY IN UK AGRICULTURE**  
1973=100



There was a general increase in productivity from the mid -1950s to the mid -1980s. Productivity increased by nearly 50% up to 1973 and by a further 30% in the following decade. This increase in productivity is explained by producing considerably more (final output nearly doubled) from a broadly similar amount of inputs (an increase of less than 10% over 30 years). Up to the mid-1990s there was little change in the volume of inputs or outputs, and hence little change in productivity. Between 1996 and 2006 productivity increased by 19%, but this was driven by a fall of just over 18% in inputs. Output also fell over this period, but by a smaller amount, other than in 2001. Labour has been the main input that has fallen for the whole of the period shown, but since the mid-1990s there have also been relatively large reductions in fertilisers and energy.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> DEFRA, [Agriculture in the UK 2018](#), chapter 5; DEFRA, [Agriculture in the UK 2013](#), chapter 5

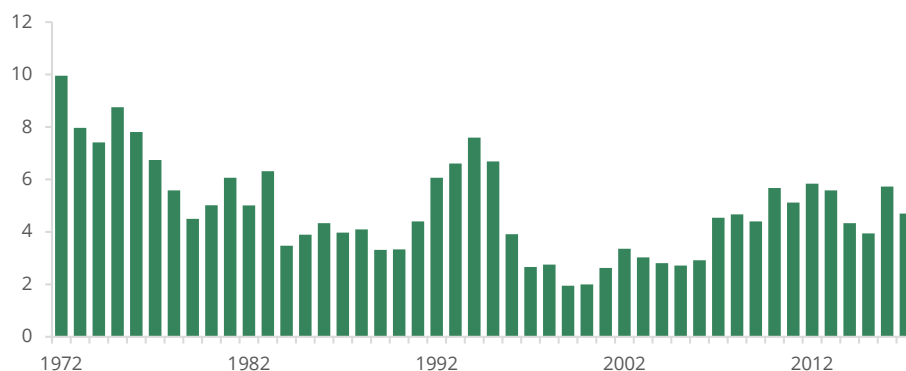
## 5. Farm income

Data showing aggregate farm income is given in **Chart 11** and the appended **Table 5**. This series, 'Total Income from Farming' (TIFF), covers non-principal partners, directors and family workers.

TIFF as shown here only goes back to 1973. It was produced for earlier years, but a major change in the way the aggregate agricultural accounts were compiled was introduced in 1998 alongside changes in the national accounting framework. At the time the new TIFF series was only calculated back to 1973.

**CHART 11: FARM INCOME IN THE UK**

£million, 2018 prices



Income from farming remained relatively stable from the mid-1940s to the 1970s, being around £5-6 billion per annum (2018 prices).<sup>12</sup> Farming income then rose sharply in 1973 to £9.9 billion (2018 prices), partly as a result of UK entry into the European Community and the CAP.<sup>13</sup>

Since 1973 Farming income and TIFF have varied to a much greater extent. Much of the variation – in general, not just in this period - is due to changes in prices and exchange rates. The underlying trend was downwards during the rest of the 1970s and early 1980s. TIFF fell to £3.08 billion in 1985 (2018 prices). After some years of relative stability there was a very sharp increase in income in 1993 following the decline in the exchange rate after the UK left the Exchange Rate Mechanism. The Pound strengthened in the late 1990s together with lower commodity prices and BSE caused an even more rapid decline in aggregate income. TIFF reached a low of £1.9 billion in 2000, a fall of 70% in five years. Since 2000, TIFF has recovered to a high of £5.8 billion in 2013 but dropped to almost £4.7 billion in 2018. In 2017, TIFF was at its second highest level in 20 years (second only to the value in 2013), as a result of a favourable combination of a weaker pound, strong commodity prices and high levels of production.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Before 1973, measurements of farming income only included the income of farmers and their spouses.

<sup>13</sup> Marks and Britton, *A hundred years of British food & farming: A statistical survey*, p. 26.

<sup>14</sup> DEFRA, [Agriculture in the UK 2018](#), p. 11.

## 6. Reference tables

**TABLE 1: AREA OF TOTAL ARABLE LAND AND SELECTED CROPS IN BRITISH/UK FARMS**

Thousand hectares at June each year

|      | Total arable |       | Orchards |    | Barley |       | Wheat |       |
|------|--------------|-------|----------|----|--------|-------|-------|-------|
|      | GB           | UK    | GB       | UK | GB     | UK    | GB    | UK    |
| 1875 | 7,326        |       | 63       |    | 1,016  |       | 1,352 |       |
| 1900 | 6,357        |       | 94       |    | 805    |       | 747   |       |
| 1910 | 5,936        |       | 102      |    | 700    |       | 732   |       |
| 1920 | 6,232        |       | 90       |    | 745    |       | 779   |       |
| 1930 |              | 5,728 | 100      |    |        | 457   |       | 569   |
| 1940 |              | 5,806 | 104      |    |        | 542   |       | 732   |
| 1950 |              | 7,428 | 111      |    |        | 719   |       | 1,003 |
| 1960 |              | 7,305 | 95       |    |        | 1,365 |       | 851   |
| 1970 |              | 7,199 | 62       |    |        | 2,243 |       | 1,010 |
| 1980 |              | 6,996 |          | 46 |        | 2,330 |       | 1,441 |
| 1990 |              | 6,760 |          | 34 |        | 1,518 |       | 2,014 |
| 1991 |              | 6,729 |          | 34 |        | 1,395 |       | 1,981 |
| 1992 |              | 6,778 |          | 33 |        | 1,299 |       | 2,067 |
| 1993 |              | 6,829 |          | 32 |        | 1,166 |       | 1,759 |
| 1994 |              | 6,700 |          | 32 |        | 1,108 |       | 1,811 |
| 1995 |              | 6,626 |          | 28 |        | 1,193 |       | 1,859 |
| 1996 |              | 6,663 |          | 28 |        | 1,269 |       | 1,976 |
| 1997 |              | 6,731 |          | 30 |        | 1,359 |       | 2,036 |
| 1998 |              | 6,619 |          | 30 |        | 1,253 |       | 2,045 |
| 1999 |              | 6,540 |          | 28 |        | 1,179 |       | 1,847 |
| 2000 |              | 6,495 |          | 28 |        | 1,128 |       | 2,086 |
| 2001 |              | 6,504 |          | 28 |        | 1,245 |       | 1,635 |
| 2002 |              | 6,460 |          | 26 |        | 1,101 |       | 1,996 |
| 2003 |              | 6,395 |          | 25 |        | 1,076 |       | 1,836 |
| 2004 |              | 6,423 |          | 24 |        | 1,007 |       | 1,990 |
| 2005 |              | 6,313 |          | 23 |        | 938   |       | 1,867 |
| 2006 |              | 6,197 |          | 23 |        | 881   |       | 1,836 |
| 2007 |              | 6,215 |          | 23 |        | 898   |       | 1,830 |
| 2008 |              | 6,070 |          | 24 |        | 1,032 |       | 2,080 |
| 2009 |              | 6,092 |          | 22 |        | 1,143 |       | 1,775 |
| 2010 |              | 6,015 |          | 24 |        | 921   |       | 1,939 |
| 2011 |              | 6,106 |          | 24 |        | 970   |       | 1,969 |
| 2012 |              | 6,258 |          | 24 |        | 1,002 |       | 1,992 |
| 2013 |              | 6,310 |          | 23 |        | 1,213 |       | 1,615 |
| 2014 |              | 6,278 |          | 23 |        | 1,080 |       | 1,936 |
| 2015 |              | 6,059 |          | 26 |        | 1,101 |       | 1,832 |
| 2016 |              | 6,073 |          | 25 |        | 1,122 |       | 1,823 |
| 2017 |              | 6,131 |          | 24 |        | 1,177 |       | 1,792 |
| 2018 |              | 6,206 |          | 24 |        | 1,157 |       | 1,797 |

Notes: Orchards - includes non-commercial orchards from 1985. Barley - excludes 'mixed corn' from 1918 onwards.

Sources: B. R. Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics* (1988); *Annual Review of Agriculture*, various years, DEFRA, [Agriculture in the UK 2018](#)

## 15 Agriculture: historical statistics

**TABLE 2 LIVESTOCK ON BRITISH/UK FARMS**

Millions at June each year

|      | Cattle and Calves |                | Sheep         |                | Pigs          |                | Poultry (UK) |           | Fowl only - improved series |
|------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|-----------|-----------------------------|
|      | Great Britain     | United Kingdom | Great Britain | United Kingdom | Great Britain | United Kingdom | All poultry  | Fowl only |                             |
| 1875 | 6.0               |                | 29            |                | 2.2           |                |              |           |                             |
| 1900 | 6.8               |                | 27            |                | 2.4           |                |              |           |                             |
| 1910 | 6.0               |                | 27            |                | 2.4           |                |              |           |                             |
| 1920 | 6.7               |                | 20            |                | 2.1           |                |              |           |                             |
| 1930 |                   | 7.8            |               | 25             |               | 2.7            | 64           |           |                             |
| 1940 |                   | 9.1            |               | 26             |               | 4.1            | 68           |           |                             |
| 1950 |                   | 10.6           |               | 20             |               | 3.0            | 83           |           |                             |
| 1960 |                   | 11.7           |               | 28             |               | 5.7            | 102          |           |                             |
| 1970 |                   | 12.6           |               | 26             |               | 8.1            | 142          |           |                             |
| 1980 |                   | 13.4           |               | 31             |               | 7.8            | 134          |           |                             |
| 1990 |                   | 12.2           |               | 44             |               | 7.5            |              | 125       |                             |
| 1991 |                   | 12.0           |               | 44             |               | 7.7            |              | 128       |                             |
| 1992 |                   | 11.9           |               | 45             |               | 7.7            |              | 125       |                             |
| 1993 |                   | 11.9           |               | 44             |               | 7.9            |              | 131       |                             |
| 1994 |                   | 12.0           |               | 44             |               | 7.9            |              | 127       |                             |
| 1995 |                   | 11.9           |               | 43             |               | 7.6            |              | 127       |                             |
| 1996 |                   | 12.0           |               | 42             |               | 7.6            |              | 130       |                             |
| 1997 |                   | 11.6           |               | 43             |               | 8.1            |              |           | 179                         |
| 1998 |                   | 11.5           |               | 44             |               | 8.1            |              |           | 165                         |
| 1999 |                   | 11.4           |               | 45             |               | 7.3            |              |           | 165                         |
| 2000 |                   | 11.1           |               | 42             |               | 6.5            |              |           | 170                         |
| 2001 |                   | 10.6           |               | 37             |               | 5.8            |              |           | 180                         |
| 2002 |                   | 10.3           |               | 36             |               | 5.6            |              |           | 169                         |
| 2003 |                   | 10.5           |               | 36             |               | 5.0            |              |           | 179                         |
| 2004 |                   | 10.6           |               | 36             |               | 5.2            |              |           | 182                         |
| 2005 |                   | 10.4           |               | 35             |               | 4.9            |              |           | 174                         |
| 2006 |                   | 10.3           |               | 35             |               | 4.9            |              |           | 173                         |
| 2007 |                   | 10.3           |               | 34             |               | 4.8            |              |           | 168                         |
| 2008 |                   | 10.1           |               | 33             |               | 4.7            |              |           | 166                         |
| 2009 |                   | 10.0           |               | 31             |               | 4.5            |              |           | 153                         |
| 2010 |                   | 10.1           |               | 31             |               | 4.5            |              |           | 164                         |
| 2011 |                   | 9.9            |               | 32             |               | 4.4            |              |           | 163                         |
| 2012 |                   | 9.9            |               | 32             |               | 4.5            |              |           | 160                         |
| 2013 |                   | 9.8            |               | 33             |               | 4.9            |              |           | 163                         |
| 2014 |                   | 9.8            |               | 34             |               | 4.8            |              |           | 170                         |
| 2015 |                   | 9.9            |               | 33             |               | 4.7            |              |           | 148                         |
| 2016 |                   | 10.0           |               | 34             |               | 4.9            |              |           | 173                         |
| 2017 |                   | 10.0           |               | 35             |               | 5.0            |              |           | 182                         |
| 2018 |                   | 9.9            |               | 34             |               | 5.0            |              |           | 188                         |

Note: Poultry - Improvements to the Census methodology were introduced in 1997 onwards to account for poultry production on unregistered units; data for earlier years are therefore not directly comparable.

Sources: B. R. Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics* (1988); *Annual Review of Agriculture*, various years, DEFRA, [Agriculture in the UK 2018](#)



| <b>TABLE 3: WORKFORCE ON BRITISH/UK FARMS</b> |               |                           |                                |
|---|---------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Thousands at June each year                   |               |                           |                                |
|   | Great Britain | United Kingdom Old series | United Kingdom Improved series |
| 1923  | 892           |                           |                                |
| 1930  | 857           |                           |                                |
| 1940  | 712           |                           |                                |
| 1950  | 843           |                           |                                |
| 1960  | 645           |                           |                                |
| 1970  | 400           |                           |                                |
| 1980  | 334           |                           |                                |
| 1990  |               | 281.9                     |                                |
| 1991  |               | 271.5                     |                                |
| 1992  |               | 263.9                     |                                |
| 1993  |               | 258.3                     |                                |
| 1994  |               | 251.0                     |                                |
| 1995  |               | 248.8                     |                                |
| 1996  |               | 245.7                     |                                |
| 1997  |               | 242.9                     |                                |
| 1998  |               | 245.2                     |                                |
| 1999  |               | 229.6                     |                                |
| 2000  |               | 204.4                     |                                |
| 2001  |               | 197.5                     | 201.6                          |
| 2002  |               |                           | 194.0                          |
| 2003  |               |                           | 183.6                          |
| 2004  |               |                           | 192.2                          |
| 2005  |               |                           | 190.0                          |
| 2006  |               |                           | 184.0                          |
| 2007  |               |                           | 182.1                          |
| 2008  |               |                           | 187.9                          |
| 2009  |               |                           | 187.1                          |
| 2010  |               |                           | 170.6                          |
| 2011  |               |                           | 177.0                          |
| 2012  |               |                           | 182.9                          |
| 2013  |               |                           | 173.3                          |
| 2014  |               |                           | 181.1                          |
| 2015  |               |                           | 182.7                          |
| 2016  |               |                           | 176.3                          |
| 2017  |               |                           | 180.3                          |
| 2018  |               |                           | 180.6                          |

Notes: Data for 1944-1950 include the Women's Land Army and prisoners of war.

Sources: H. F. Marks and D. K. Britton, *A hundred years of British food & farming: A statistical survey* (1989); *Annual Review of Agriculture*, various years, DEFRA, [Agriculture in the UK 2018](#)

| <b>TABLE 4: INDEX OF TOTAL FACTOR<br/>PRODUCTIVITY OF UK AGRICULTURE</b> |                      |                |
|--|----------------------|----------------|
| 1973=100   |                      |                |
|  | Historical<br>series | Current series |
| 1953   | 67.5                 |                |
| 1963   | 83.4                 |                |
| 1973   | 100.0                | 100.0          |
| 1983   |                      | 116.7          |
| 1990   |                      | 125.8          |
| 1991   |                      | 129            |
| 1992   |                      | 131            |
| 1993   |                      | 127.5          |
| 1994   |                      | 130.7          |
| 1995   |                      | 127.5          |
| 1996   |                      | 126.2          |
| 1997   |                      | 128.1          |
| 1998   |                      | 131.2          |
| 1999   |                      | 136.7          |
| 2000   |                      | 139.4          |
| 2001   |                      | 136.8          |
| 2002   |                      | 144.9          |
| 2003   |                      | 145.1          |
| 2004   |                      | 145.6          |
| 2005   |                      | 150.4          |
| 2006   |                      | 148.0          |
| 2007   |                      | 145.8          |
| 2008   |                      | 151.9          |
| 2009   |                      | 147.7          |
| 2010   |                      | 147.1          |
| 2011   |                      | 153.9          |
| 2012   |                      | 145.9          |
| 2013   |                      | 146.4          |
| 2014   |                      | 155.2          |
| 2015   |                      | 156.8          |
| 2016   |                      | 152.5          |
| 2017   |                      | 156.5          |
| 2018   |                      | 153.2          |

Note: Data for 1944-1950 include the Women's Land army and prisoners of war

Sources: B. R. Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics* (1988); *Annual Review of Agriculture*, various years, DEFRA,  
[Agriculture in the UK 2018](#)

**TABLE 5: AGGREGATE FARM INCOME**  
 £MILLION, 2018 prices

|      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1973 | 9,949 |
| 1974 | 7,964 |
| 1975 | 7,409 |
| 1976 | 8,752 |
| 1977 | 7,804 |
| 1978 | 6,737 |
| 1979 | 5,581 |
| 1980 | 4,498 |
| 1981 | 5,012 |
| 1982 | 6,063 |
| 1983 | 5,006 |
| 1984 | 6,316 |
| 1985 | 3,473 |
| 1986 | 3,892 |
| 1987 | 4,331 |
| 1988 | 3,975 |
| 1989 | 4,092 |
| 1990 | 3,313 |
| 1991 | 3,331 |
| 1992 | 4,399 |
| 1993 | 6,063 |
| 1994 | 6,603 |
| 1995 | 7,596 |
| 1996 | 6,682 |
| 1997 | 3,914 |
| 1998 | 2,663 |
| 1999 | 2,754 |
| 2000 | 1,949 |
| 2001 | 1,997 |
| 2002 | 2,623 |
| 2003 | 3,359 |
| 2004 | 3,029 |
| 2005 | 2,811 |
| 2006 | 2,718 |
| 2007 | 2,919 |
| 2008 | 4,537 |
| 2009 | 4,666 |
| 2010 | 4,399 |
| 2011 | 5,674 |
| 2012 | 5,117 |
| 2013 | 5,839 |
| 2014 | 5,584 |
| 2015 | 4,332 |
| 2016 | 3,940 |
| 2017 | 5,731 |
| 2018 | 4,697 |

Note: Total income from farming includes income of non-principal partners, directors, and family workers.

Sources: B. R. Mitchell, *British Historical Statistics* (1988); *Annual Review of Agriculture*, various years, DEFRA, [Agriculture in the UK 2018](#)

The House of Commons Library research service provides MPs and their staff with the impartial briefing and evidence base they need to do their work in scrutinising Government, proposing legislation, and supporting constituents.

As well as providing MPs with a confidential service we publish open briefing papers, which are available on the Parliament website.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publicly available research briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email [papers@parliament.uk](mailto:papers@parliament.uk). Authors are available to discuss the content of this briefing only with Members and their staff.

If you have any general questions about the work of the House of Commons you can email [hcinfo@parliament.uk](mailto:hcinfo@parliament.uk).

Disclaimer - This information is provided to Members of Parliament in support of their parliamentary duties. It is a general briefing only and should not be relied on as a substitute for specific advice. The House of Commons or the author(s) shall not be liable for any errors or omissions, or for any loss or damage of any kind arising from its use, and may remove, vary or amend any information at any time without prior notice.

The House of Commons accepts no responsibility for any references or links to, or the content of, information maintained by third parties. This information is provided subject to the [conditions of the Open Parliament Licence](#).