

Results from the June 2018 Scottish Agricultural Census



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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A National Statistics
publication for Scotland



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Introduction

Main findings

Scottish agriculture was impacted by the effect of poor weather throughout last year.

The total number of sheep in Scotland fell over the past year. Snow from 'The Beast from the East' impacted lambing, contributing to an eight percent drop in lamb numbers compared to June last year; with total sheep numbers down by six per cent. Cattle numbers continue to fall in both the beef and dairy sectors.

Adverse weather conditions affected various crops in Scotland. Cereals, including barley, saw a fall in their total area due to poor planting conditions. The area of cereals is down three per cent compared to last year.

The total soft fruit area has increased for the fourth year in a row. The area used to grow food for human consumption fell for the first time since 2011.

Most of Scotland's land area is used for agriculture



LFA land in Scotland
The dark green areas on the map show naturally disadvantaged land in Scotland.



Total area on agricultural holdings

6.2 million hectares

Scotland's land is mostly used for agriculture. An estimated 80 per cent of Scotland's land area is agricultural land, roughly 6.2 million hectares.

Scotland's land quality is generally quite poor. Over 5.73 million hectares of Scottish land is classified as "Less-Favoured Area" (LFA) land. LFA land has a natural disadvantage which makes agricultural production difficult.

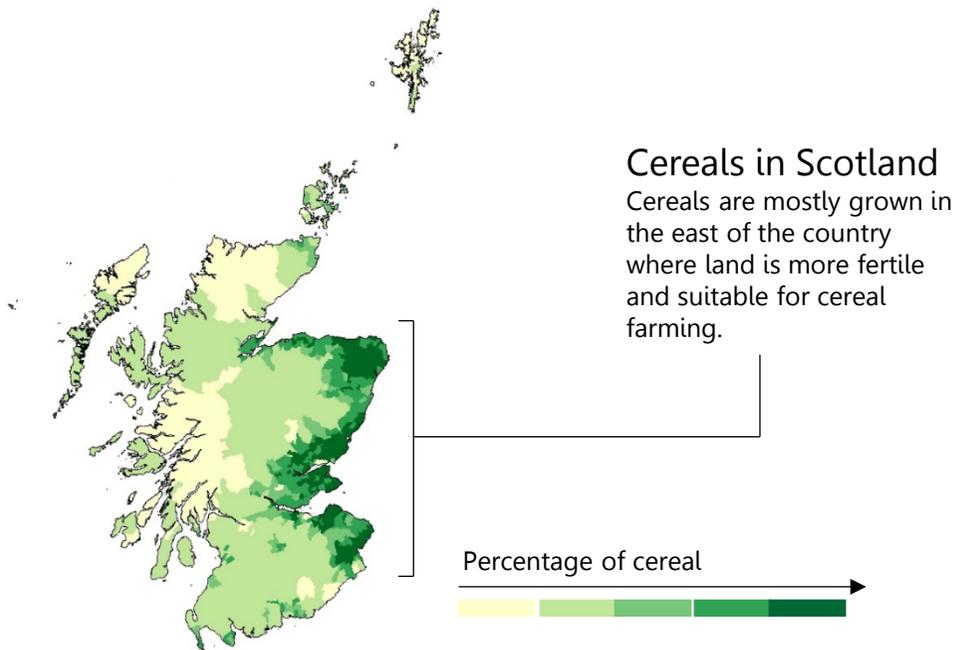
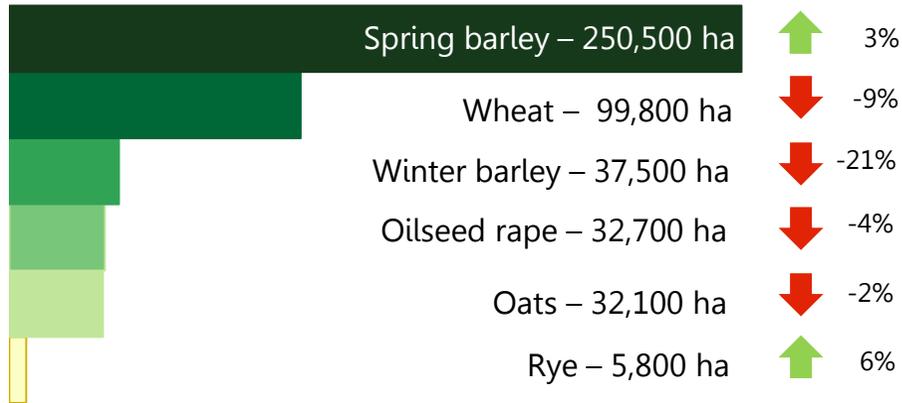
Due to the poor land quality most of Scotland's agricultural land is used for livestock grazing. Over 3.6 million hectares of Scotland's land is rough or common grazing; a further 1.3 million hectares is grass. Only 574,000 hectares of Scottish land is used for crops or fallow.

Agricultural land use 2018



Poor weather impacts Scotland's cereals

Cereal and oilseed areas (hectares) in June 2018



Area used to grow cereals and oilseed rape

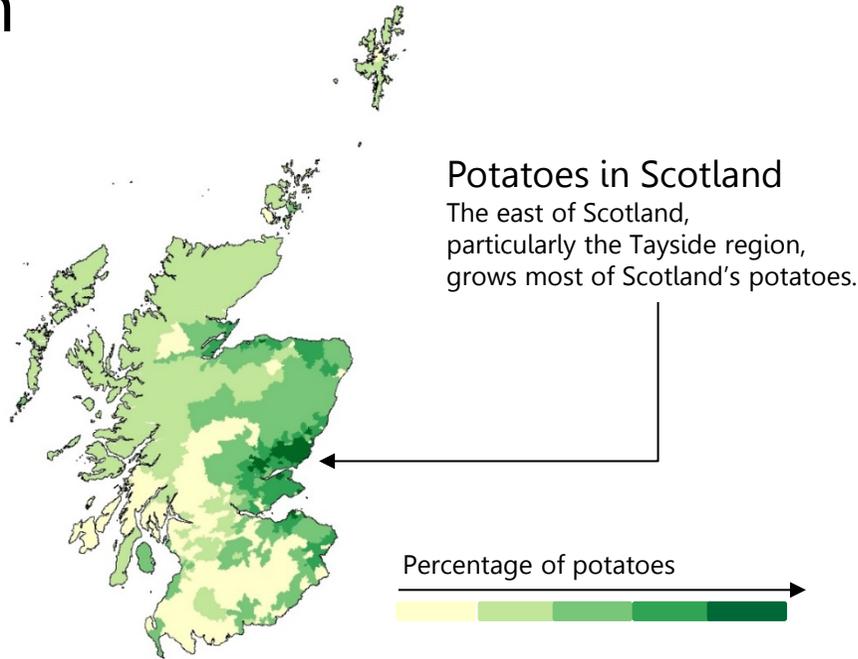
459,400 hectares

Poor weather caused a drop in the total amount of cereals and oilseeds planted in Scotland. In June 2018, the total area used was reduced by three per cent to 459,400 hectares.

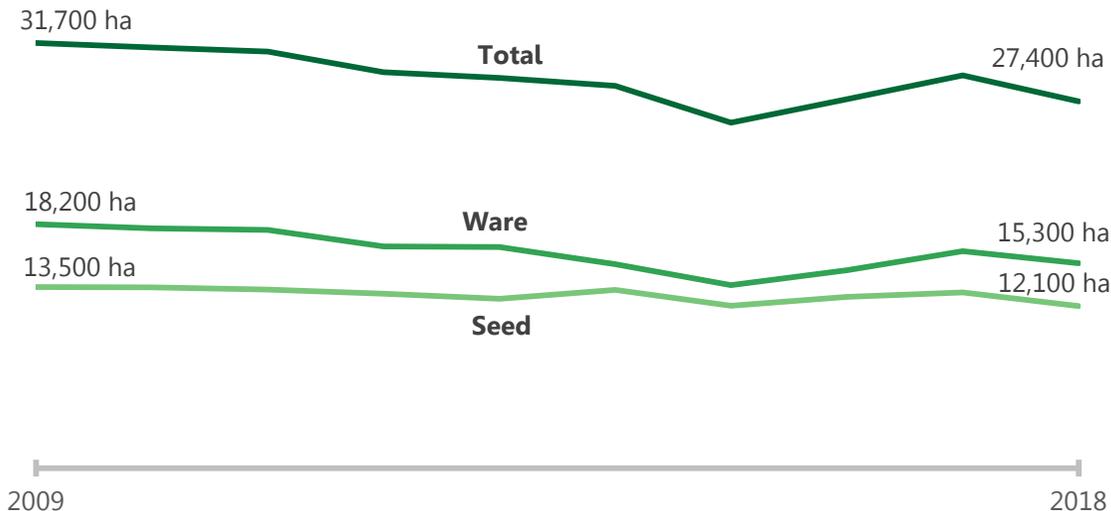
Barley, Scotland's biggest crop, fell by one per cent. This was caused by a 21 per cent decrease in winter-planted barley, down to 37,500 ha. The drop was offset by an increase in spring barley, rising by three per cent to 250,500 ha. Wheat, Scotland's second biggest crop, fell by nine per cent over the past year, to 99,800 ha.

The area of rye has increased over the past year. Rye, which can be used in fuel production or distilling, has increased 14-fold from the 400 hectares recorded in 2014 to 5,800 hectares in 2018.

Potato areas are slightly down



Potato areas (hectares) in June 2018



Area used to grow potatoes

27,400 hectares

The area used to grow potatoes fell in the past year. There was a decrease by approximately 2,000 hectares to 27,400 ha, a drop of seven per cent.

The reduction in total potato area was due to a decrease in the area of both seed (planting) and ware (eating) potatoes. In June 2018, there were 12,100 hectares of seed potatoes in Scotland, a drop of eight per cent over the past year. Similarly, the area used to grow ware potatoes fell by six per cent over the past year, to 15,300 hectares.

Vegetable area falls while stock-feeding crops increase

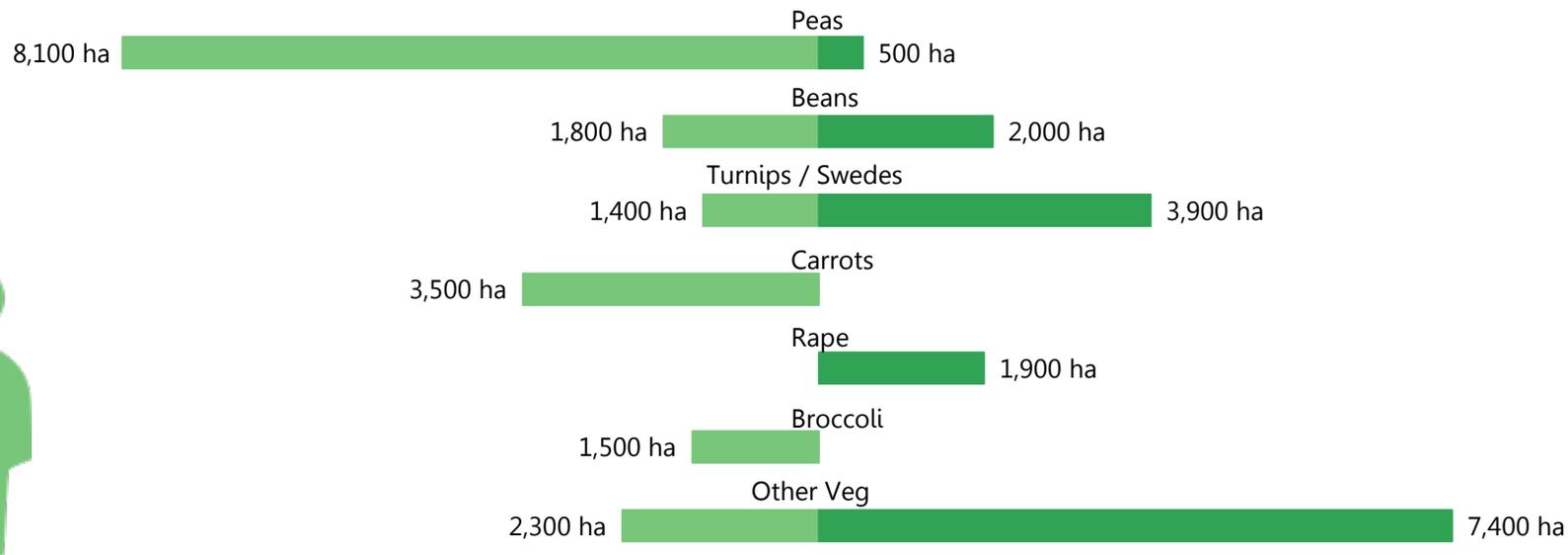


Area used to grow vegetables for human consumption

18,900 hectares

16,800 hectares

Area used to grow vegetables for stock-feed

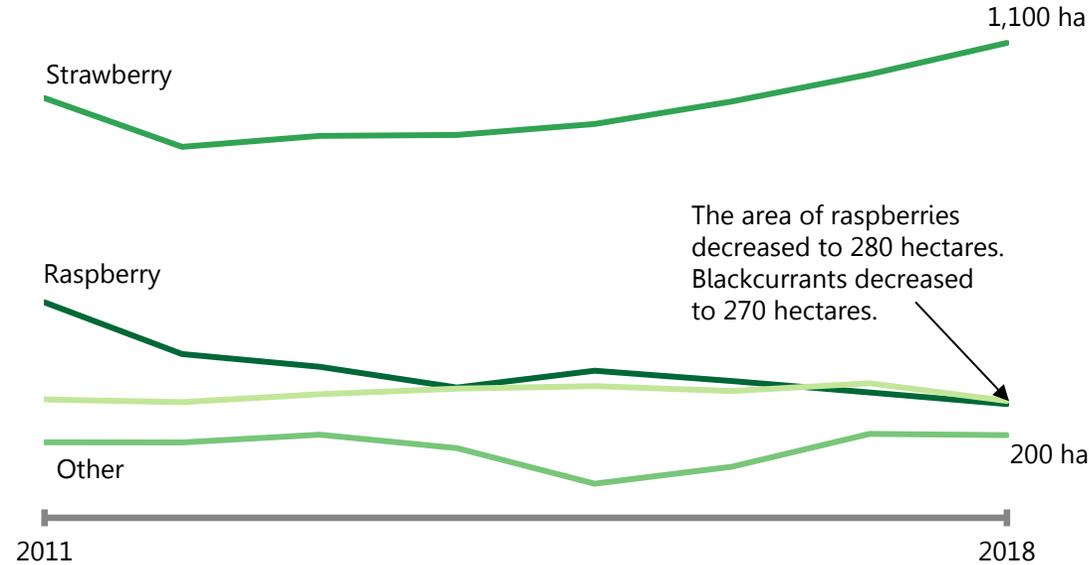


The area used to grow vegetables for human consumption fell for the first time since 2011. Over the past year the area of vegetables reduced by two per cent to 18,900 hectares.

The area used to grow animal feed increased for the first time since 2011. In the past year the total area of vegetables for stock-feeding rose by five per cent to 16,800 hectares. This may be in response to an ongoing shortage of other stock-feed.

Soft fruit area continues to grow

Soft fruit areas – June 2018



Area used to grow fruit in Scotland

2,100 hectares

The total area used to grow soft fruit in Scotland increased over the past year. The area rose by two per cent to 2,100 hectares in June 2018.

Strawberries are the most popular soft fruit grown in Scotland. Rising seven per cent in the past year, the area of strawberries grown in Scotland is now 1,100 hectares.

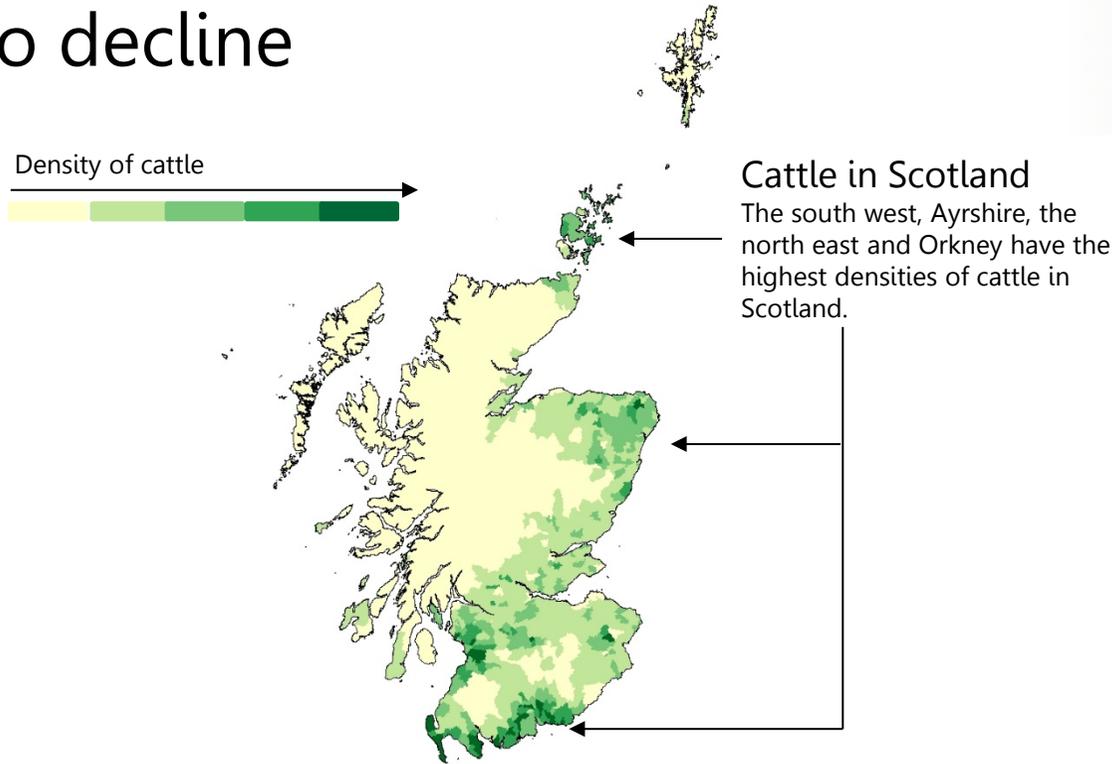
The area of both raspberries and blackcurrants fell in the past year. In June 2018, raspberries had an area of 270 hectares and blackcurrants of 280 hectares.

Bulbs, flowers and hardy nursery stock

In June 2018, 960 hectares of Scottish land was used to grow bulbs, flowers and hardy nursery stock. This number has been decreasing since 2014.

Most of Scotland's fruit is grown under cover in glasshouses or walk-in plastic structures. Over 70 per cent of the total area of soft fruit in Scotland was grown under cover in June 2018.

Cattle numbers continue to decline



Number of cattle
in Scotland in
June 2018

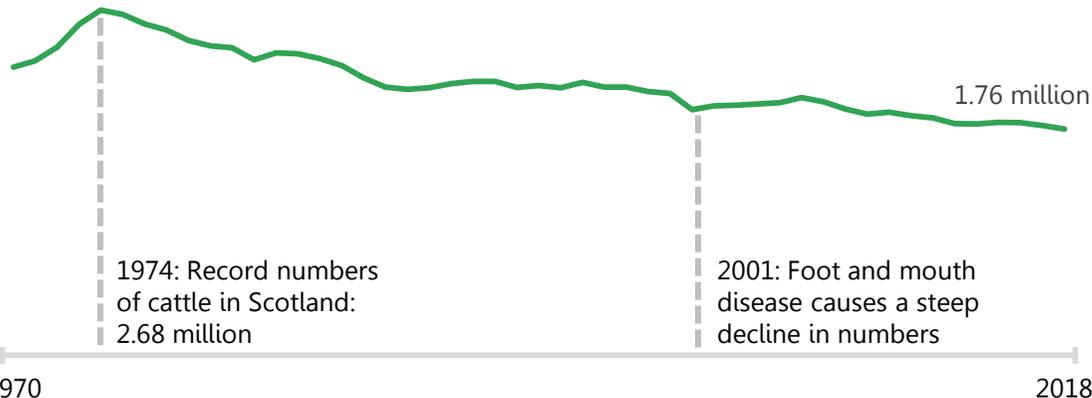
1.76
million

Cattle numbers have steadily declined to a 60 year low. In June 2018, there were 1.76 million cattle in Scotland, a two per cent drop on the previous year and the lowest count since 1957.

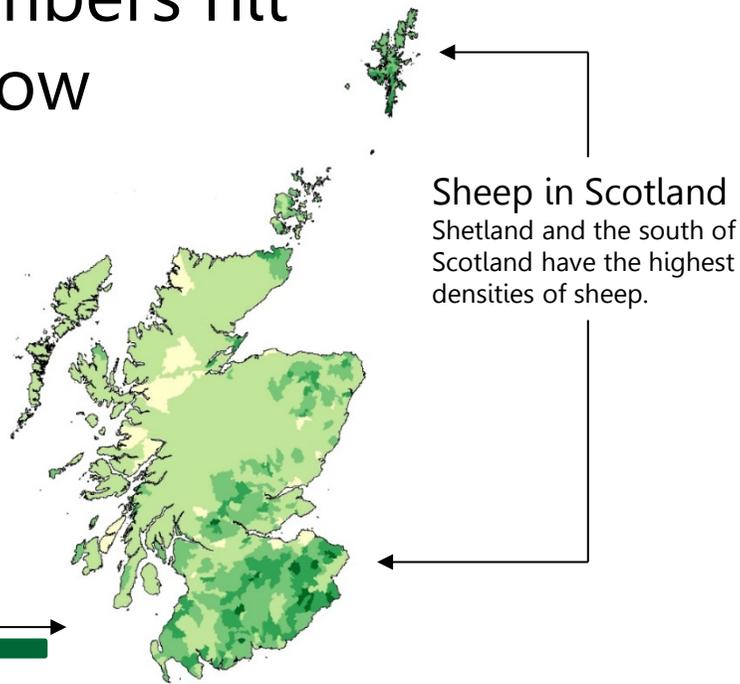
Numbers have fallen in both the beef and dairy sectors, by one and two per cent respectively. There was also a two per cent drop in the number of calves born in the last year.

One factor which may have impacted the fall in the past year was poor weather. The long 2017-18 winter exhausted livestock farmers' feed stock and dry summer weather reduced the amount of grass grown for feed. The grass shortage has led to animals being slaughtered earlier or in higher quantity as farmers look to reduce their cattle numbers to save on feed costs.

Cattle numbers June 1970-2018



Sheep numbers hit five-year low



Number of sheep
in Scotland in
June 2018

6.59
million

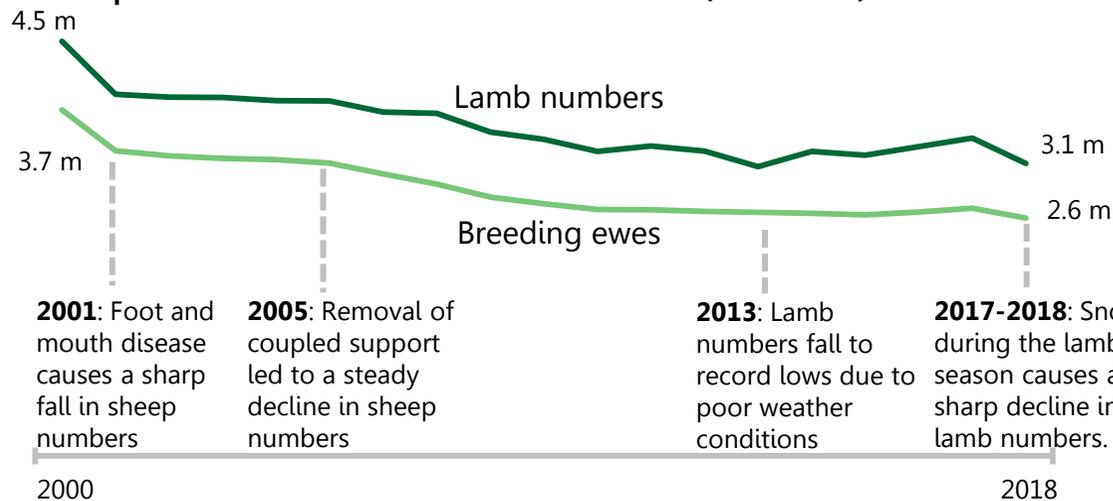
Total sheep numbers fell for the first time since 2013. In June 2018, there were 6.59 million sheep in Scotland, a drop of six per cent on the previous year.

Scottish lamb numbers hit their lowest point since 2013. Lambs made up 48 per cent of the total sheep flock in Scotland and in 2018 their numbers fell by eight per cent to 3.1 million.

Lamb numbers may have been impacted by poor weather. 'The Beast from the East' snow storm hit during lambing season and is likely to have contributed to the lower numbers.

The number of ewes used for breeding also hit a record low. Breeding ewes made up 39 per cent of the Scottish sheep flock and their numbers decreased by four per cent to 2.6 million over the past year.

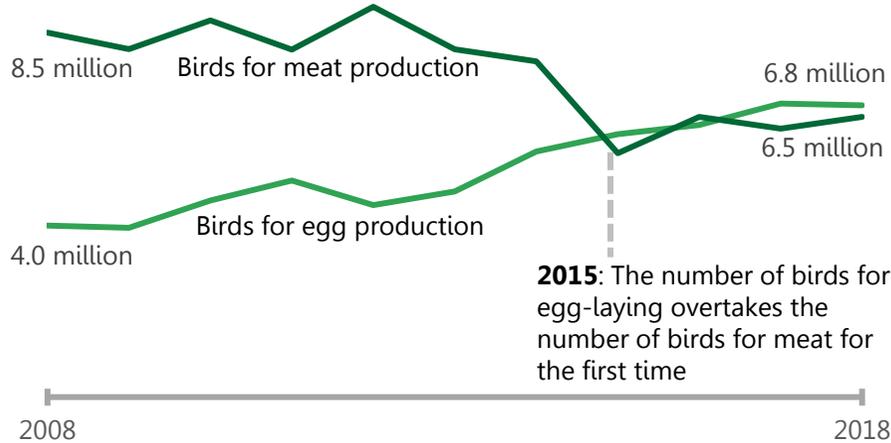
Sheep numbers June 2000-2018 (million)





Number of poultry in Scotland in June 2018

14.5 million



2015: The number of birds for egg-laying overtakes the number of birds for meat for the first time

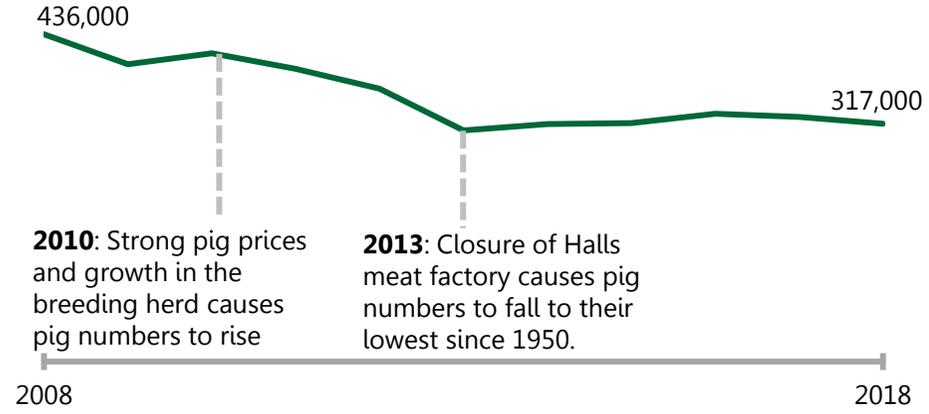
Poultry numbers increased over the past year. In June 2018, there were an estimated 14.5 million poultry birds in Scotland, a rise of two per cent over the past year.

Despite an increase in the number of birds for meat production (four per cent over the past year) the number of egg-laying birds outnumbered them for the second consecutive year.



317 thousand

Number of pigs in Scotland in June 2018



2010: Strong pig prices and growth in the breeding herd causes pig numbers to rise

2013: Closure of Halls meat factory causes pig numbers to fall to their lowest since 1950.

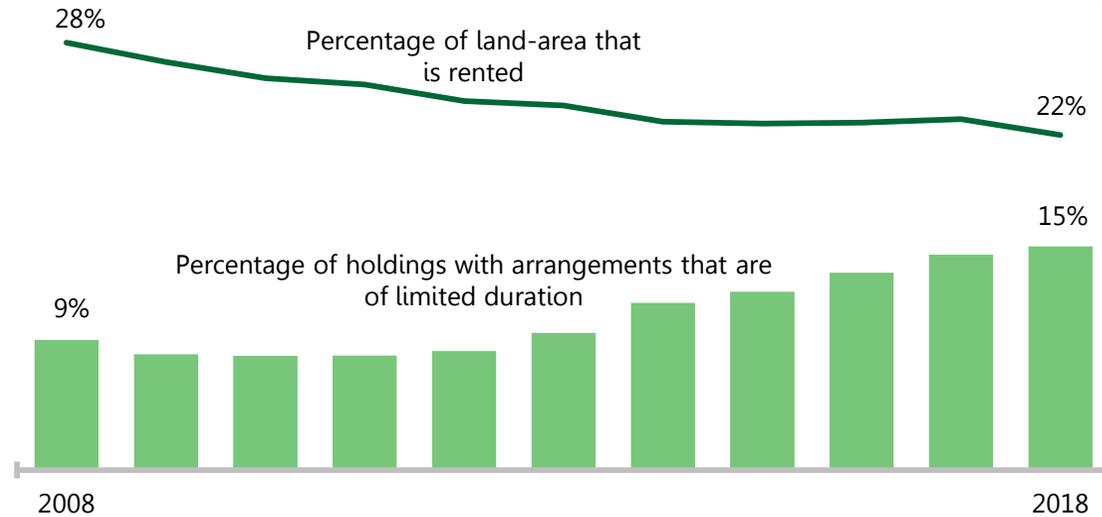
Pig numbers in Scotland have been declining since a peak in 1973. The total number of pigs in Scotland fell in the past year. In June 2018, there were 317,000 pigs, a drop of three per cent.

Other livestock

In June 2018, Scottish farms also had:

- 34,400 horses
- 9,700 farmed deer
- 1,300 donkeys
- 4,100 beehives
- 1,900 camelids

Further drop in the area of rented agricultural land



Rental arrangements

Most farmers who rent land have an open-ended right to keep their farm. The number of these "secure" arrangements (1991 Act tenancies and crofts) has been steadily falling, with them now making up 85 per cent of rental arrangements.

Newer tenancy arrangements tend to be for a limited period of time. The percentage of rented holdings with these tenancies increased from nine per cent in 2008 to 15 per cent in 2018.

Total rented agricultural area in Scotland in June 2018

1.28 million hectares

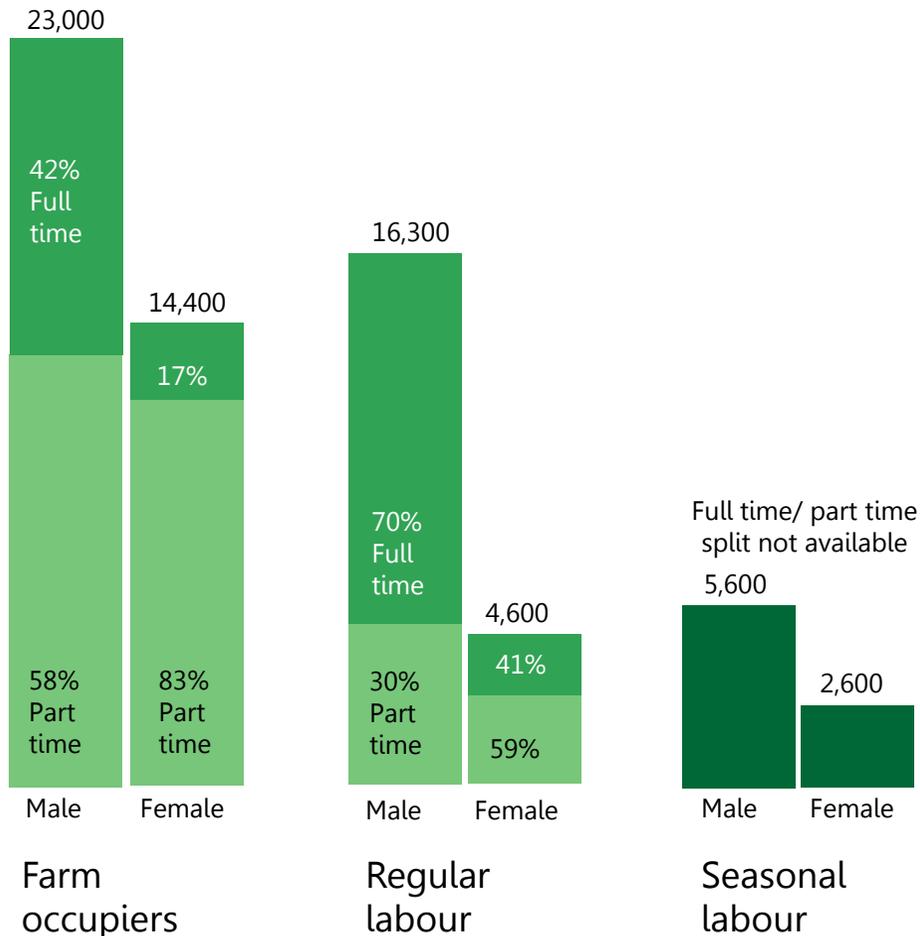
The area of rented agricultural land in Scotland has been declining steadily. In 2018, rented land accounted for 22 per cent of agricultural land in Scotland, down from 28 per cent in 2008.

The number of holdings which rent land has been falling in recent years. In June 2018, there were 16,100 holdings which had rented land, a fall of seven per cent since 2013. Just under 9,900 of these holdings were registered as rented crofts.

Since 2014, the number of holdings with long-term (non-limited) tenancy agreements has dropped, meanwhile the number of those with shorter-term (limited) agreements has risen.

Number of people working in agriculture decreases

Working patterns split by gender in June 2018



Gender and age data for occupiers is based on the 75 per cent of occupiers who returned this information.

Number of people working in agriculture Scotland in 2018

66,600

The total number of people working in agriculture dropped over the past year. The total number fell by 400 workers to 66,600 in June 2018.

Most of these workers are farm occupiers. Farm occupiers are people who own or rent the farm and work on it. They make up 56 per cent of the agricultural workforce.

Most farm occupiers are male, with 38 per cent of working occupiers being female. Farm occupiers are mostly older; an estimated 36 per cent of male working occupiers and 30 per cent of female occupiers are 64 and older. Female occupiers are more likely to work part time, 83 per cent amongst females compared to 58 per cent of males.

Regular staff make up 31 per cent of the total workforce, of which more worked full time than part time.

The number of seasonal and casual workers, largely associated with fruit farms, was reported as 8,200 in 2018, though this is likely to be an undercount.

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Data sources and more information

Data source

This data is collected via an annual Agricultural Census run by the Rural and Environmental Science & Analytical Services Division of the Scottish Government. The census collects various data from agricultural holdings across Scotland.

A full quality assurance and methodology report can be found accompanying this report.

www.gov.scot/stats/bulletins/01320

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Data tables

The data used to create the charts in this publication are available online in the accompanying spreadsheet.

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