

Quality report:

UK Wood Production and Trade

Last updated:

May 2021

Next update due:

May 2022

Introduction

Statistics on UK Wood Production and Trade comprise a series of annual surveys and data requests on the UK timber industry. Data are compiled by Forest Research (on behalf of the Forestry Commission, Scottish Forestry, Natural Resources Wales and the Northern Ireland Forest Service) on:

- removals of roundwood from UK woodlands;
- deliveries of roundwood to wood processors and others;
- production of wood products; and
- imports and exports of wood and wood products (based on overseas trade statistics published by HM Revenue & Customs).

More detailed information on data sources is available in:

- the survey quality reports for the private sector softwood removals survey, sawmill survey, survey of round fencing manufacturers and survey of pellet and briquette production, available from <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/about-our-statistics/surveys/>; and

- the quality assurance of administrative data report for timber sales data, available from <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/statistics-by-topic/timber-statistics/uk-wood-production-and-trade-provisional-figures/>.

Relevance

The main uses of statistics on UK Wood Production and Trade include:

- Deliveries of roundwood – Trends in the supply of, and demand for, UK grown timber are monitored by the Forestry Commission, devolved administrations, the UK timber industry and others;
- International reporting – Data on wood production in the UK and imports and exports of wood products are provided to UN Economic Commission for Europe, UN Food and Agriculture Organisation and others as part of the Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (covering wood production and trade);
- Forestry Commission Key Performance Indicators – indicators on wood harvested in England are reported annually.
- Woodlands for Wales Indicators – Indicators on use of Welsh wood and on demand for wood are reported annually.
- UK Government Departments and devolved administrations – deliveries of roundwood and/or sawnwood production are used in a number of statistical publications produced by other government bodies, including the Office for National Statistics (Environmental Accounts).

The Expert Group on Timber and Trade Statistics (EGTTS), comprising representatives from the UK timber industry, the Forestry Commission, Scottish Forestry, Natural Resources Wales and the Northern Ireland Forest Service are consulted regularly to ensure that UK wood production and trade statistics remain relevant to users. Further information on the EGTTS is available at

<https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/about-our-statistics/expert-group-on-timber-and-trade-statistics/>.

Accuracy

A number of checks are performed on the data to ensure accuracy. These include checks against data for previous years, corrections of apparently incorrect data and quality assurance of data with experts from the UK timber industry (through the Expert Group on Timber and Trade Statistics).

Details of non-sampling errors for survey data are provided in the relevant quality reports for the private sector softwood removals survey, sawmill survey, survey of round fencing manufacturers and survey of pellet and briquette production, all available at <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/about-our-statistics/surveys/>.

These show provisional response rates to 2020 surveys of between 36% and 71%, and weighted response rates (taking account of the size of businesses) of between 34% and 93%.

Timeliness and punctuality

Provisional results are published in *UK Wood Production and Trade: provisional figures* in mid-May, 4.5 months after the end of the reference period (calendar year).

Final results are published in *Forestry Statistics* at end September, 9 months after the end of the reference period (calendar year).

Accessibility and clarity

The annual *Forestry Statistics* publication, available on the Forest Research website at <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/forestry-statistics/> provides the most comprehensive results, including background

information on the sources, data collected, response rates, methodology, revisions and reporting. *Forestry Statistics* is published in line with the Forest Research website accessibility statement.

Longer time series data, providing additional breakdowns for some statistics, are published in accompanying tables to *UK Wood Production and Trade: provisional figures*. Longer time series are also available for *Forestry Statistics*. Excel and ODS versions of all tables in *UK Wood Production and Trade: provisional figures* and *Forestry Statistics* are available to download from the Forest Research website.

Summary results are also published in *Forestry Facts & Figures*, available on the Forest Research website <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/forestry-statistics/>.

Comparability

Most of the data collections on wood production have been run annually by the Statistics team in Forest Research (previously the Forestry Commission) since 1994. Results for a 10-year period are published in *Forestry Statistics*.

The coverage has changed over time to take account of changes in uses of UK grown timber. This includes development of data collections on roundwood exports, roundwood use for shavings and for wood fuel. In 2004, the surveys were extended to cover the UK (rather than GB) and in 2009 a survey of UK pellet and briquette production was introduced.

A number of other refinements have been made to the surveys and data collections, in response to consultation with the Expert Group on Timber and Trade Statistics and suggestions/issues raised by users and data providers. These include the addition of new data items on woodfuel and employment, the addition of a breakdown of UK consumption by country and changes to the frequency of, and size of mills covered by, the detailed sawmill survey.

Coherence

Data on UK softwood deliveries (obtained from the sawmill survey and other surveys and data requests) are compared with estimates of total UK softwood removals (obtained from Forestry England/Forestry and Land Scotland/Natural Resources Wales/Forest Service administrative systems and Forest Research's Private Sector Softwood Removals Survey), available in the annual *Forestry Statistics* publication.

Revisions

Our Revisions Policy, available at <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/about-our-statistics/code-of-practice/quality-of-official-statistics/>, outlines our general approach to revisions.

Statistics from surveys of the timber industry (private sector softwood removals, sawmills, round fencing and pellets) are subject to annual revision, as new information becomes available. Further details are provided in the quality reports for each survey and in the annex to relevant releases.

The statistics for woodbased panels and for pulp and paper are provided by industry associations and are not normally revised after publication. On occasion a provisional figure or estimate may be published, then replaced by the actual figure in a subsequent publication.

Other timber statistics (wood fuel, other miscellaneous products, exports of roundwood) are not normally revised.

Information on significant revisions made to published statistics is available in the Annex.

Annex: Significant revisions to published statistics

Starting with the release of 2004 data (in August 2005), the scope of the wood production statistics was extended to include Northern Ireland. All tables were revised to give figures for this wider scope, with estimates or indications of missing data in cases where relevant data were not available for Northern Ireland.

A review of the methodology used to estimate the quantity of UK softwood removals from woodland that is not owned or managed by the Forestry Commission (covering England, Wales and Scotland at that time) or the Forest Service (in Northern Ireland) was undertaken in 2011-2012. The *Methodology Review of Softwood Removals from Non-FC/ FS Woodland* paper presents the results from this review and the implications of the change in methodology. It can be found at: <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/about-our-statistics/methodology-and-outputs/>.