

Woodfuel Statistics

(2008 provisional figures)

4 June 2009

This release gives estimates of the amount of woodfuel supplied in the UK in 2008. The figures have been compiled from a new survey of woodfuel suppliers, augmented by estimates using other sources. All of the results provided should be treated as broadbrush estimates rather than accurate figures.

The main results are:

- Around 125 thousand oven dry tonnes (odt) of logs for stoves and open fires were supplied in 2008.
- Around 1,121 thousand oven dry tonnes (odt) of wood chips were supplied as woodfuel in 2008.
- Around 539 thousand oven dry tonnes (odt) of wood pellets were supplied in 2008.
- Around 119 thousand oven dry tonnes (odt) of woodfuel in other forms were supplied in 2008.
- Of the total wood chips supplied for woodfuel, 37% were obtained from wood processing, 36% from arboriculture, 18% from forestry operations and 9% from recycled wood.
- UK production accounted for around one in six of all wood pellets supplied in the UK in 2008. The remainder were imported.

Table 1: UK supply of woodfuel, 2008

Thousand oven dry tonnes	
Form	Quantity ¹
Logs for stoves and open fires	125
Wood chips	1,121
Wood pellets	539
Other ²	119

Note:

(1) Estimated, based on woodfuel suppliers survey 2008 and other sources.

(2) Includes other sawmill products (e.g. sawdust, slabwood).

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Background

The figures in this release have been obtained from the Woodfuel Suppliers Survey and other sources. All figures are provisional.

This is the first time that such figures have been compiled and all figures should be treated with caution. It is hoped that data quality will improve in future, once data over a longer time period is available.

This release covers wood and short rotation coppice only. Other biomass fuels (e.g. olive stones, coconut husks, etc) are excluded.

Woodfuel suppliers survey

A new survey was run for the first time in Spring 2009 to collect data on woodfuel supplied (including own use by suppliers) in 2008. The survey asked for quantities of:

- logs for stoves and open fires,
- wood chips,
- wood pellets and
- other woodfuel.

Additional questions asked about the source of any wood chips and wood pellets.

The questionnaire was issued to 321 woodfuel suppliers and arboriculturists. A total of 142 responses were received (including nil returns), giving a response rate of 44%. In order to improve the results from the survey, estimates were made for non-respondents, where possible, using data from other sources.

Other sources

A variety of other sources were used to estimate for non-respondents and for businesses involved in woodfuel supply that were not covered by the survey. These included:

- Forestry Commission surveys of sawmills and round fencing manufacturers;
- Expert Group on Timber and Trade Statistics estimates;
- HM Revenue & Customs data on imports;
- estimates for specific companies, based on expert advice.

Estimates of the amount of roundwood from forestry delivered for woodfuel were included in the First Release "UK Wood Production and Trade (provisional figures)", published on 14 May 2009. That release, which did not make use of information from the new survey and did not include material from arboriculture, estimated a total of 300 thousand green tonnes of UK softwood roundwood and 300 thousand green tonnes of UK hardwood roundwood delivered for woodfuel in 2008, which equates to around 350 thousand oven dry tonnes. Corresponding estimates from this publication are around 125 thousand oven dry tonnes of logs for stoves and open fires plus around 200 thousand oven dry tonnes of wood chips from forestry; in addition, this release includes around 400 thousand oven dry tonnes of wood chips from arboriculture.

Statistics on wood production will next be published in Forestry Statistics 2009 on 24 September.

Data quality

This is the first time that the estimates of UK woodfuel supply have been compiled. Given the complex nature of the woodfuel supply chain in the UK, it is extremely difficult to produce figures with any degree of confidence. In particular, it is likely that some woodfuel may have been double counted (e.g. wood products that are used to make pellets), whilst others (e.g. logs for stoves and open fires) will have been under-counted.

Therefore, the data shown in this publication should be considered as approximate, broadbrush estimates rather than accurate estimates. It is hoped that, in time, the data quality of these estimates will improve, enabling reliable assessment of trends in UK woodfuel supply.

Official Statistics

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