

# Methodology Note:

# UK Timber Forecasts

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Forest Research is the Research Agency of the Forestry Commission and is the leading UK organisation engaged in forestry and tree related research.

The Agency aims to support and enhance forestry and its role in sustainable development by providing innovative, high quality scientific research, technical support and consultancy services.

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## Introduction

Forest Research produces estimates for the current year and forecasts for the coming year of removals, production and trade of wood and wood products on an annual basis. The figures are submitted to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) as part of the Timber Forecast Questionnaire.

This paper sets out the methods used to derive these estimates and forecasts for the UK, and provides guidance on the appropriate interpretation of the figures.

## Sources

Historical figures on removals, production and trade of wood and wood products are compiled annually by Forest Research for publication in UK Wood Production and Trade: provisional data in May and Forestry Statistics and Forestry Facts and Figures in September. They are also reported to international organisations through the Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (provisional data in May, final data in September).

The data sources used to estimate UK wood production and trade are described in the Sources section of each edition of Forestry Statistics, available at [www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/forestry-statistics/](http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/forestry-statistics/). They include:

- Industry surveys run annually by Forestry Research: Private Sector Softwood Removals Survey, Sawmill Survey, Survey of Round Fencing Manufacturers, and Pellet and Briquette Production Survey. Details on each survey and methodology is available at [www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/about-our-statistics/surveys/](http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/about-our-statistics/surveys/)

- Data from trade associations including the Wood Panel Industries Federation, the Confederation of Forest Industries (Confor), the Confederation of Paper Industries and the Timber Trade Federation; and
- Overseas trade statistics produced by HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) and available at [www.uktradeinfo.com](http://www.uktradeinfo.com).

## Methodology

Near-final historical data is shared with the Expert Group on Timber and Trade Statistics ([www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/about-our-statistics/expert-group-on-timber-and-trade-statistics/](http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/about-our-statistics/expert-group-on-timber-and-trade-statistics/)) at their August meeting, as part of the quality assurance process for historic statistics. The group is also asked to provide estimates for the current year and forecasts for the coming year based on the historical data and their expert knowledge of the current markets. The Confederation of Paper Industries are also consulted for their views.

The initial assumption, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, is that all figures will remain at latest historical levels for both the current year and the following year.

For figures that are expected to change, forecasts are initially expressed as broad percentage changes from the latest year of data, usually in multiples of five percentage points. This reflects the level of uncertainty inherent in forecasting. For the same reason, the resulting absolute figures are rounded to the nearest ten thousand cubic metres (or ten thousand metric tonnes) prior to submission to UNECE.

## Interpretation of results

As previously noted, the estimates and forecasts produced are approximate. They should be interpreted as a broad indication of expected results, rather than precise estimates. In particular, estimates and forecasts that are reasonably close to the latest historical figures (within 5 thousand cubic metres or 5 thousand metric tonnes) should be considered to represent the expectation of a relatively constant level.

## Revisions

The Timber Forecast data submitted to UNECE is not normally revised.

A revision to the 2013 estimates and 2014 forecast was made in October 2013 to take account of additional information from the Timber Trade Federation (TTF) and Timbertrends (working on behalf of the Forestry Commission and TTF).

Our revisions policy sets out how revisions and errors to statistics are dealt with, is available at [www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/about-our-statistics/code-of-practice/quality-of-official-statistics/](http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/about-our-statistics/code-of-practice/quality-of-official-statistics/).

## Glossary

### Deliveries

The quantities of UK-grown roundwood that is delivered to processors (mills) or for other uses (such as wood fuel and exports). Note that for sawmills and round fencing mills, the deliveries figure reported is actually the quantity of roundwood consumed by the mill, which may differ from the true deliveries figure if the levels of input stocks vary.

### Forest Research (FR)

The Forestry Commission agency responsible for forestry and tree related research (including statistics).

### Forestry Commission (FC)

The government department responsible for forestry matters in England. The Forestry Commission's functions in Wales transferred to the Welsh Government and to Natural Resources Wales on 1 April 2013. The Forestry Commission's functions in Scotland transferred to Scottish Forestry and to Forestry and Land Scotland on 1 April 2019. The Forestry Commission is supported by two agencies; Forestry England and Forest Research.

### Great Britain (GB)

England, Wales and Scotland.

### Hardwood

The wood of broadleaved trees, such as oak, birch and beech; a term sometimes used for the broadleaved trees themselves.

### HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC)

The United Kingdom's tax authority.

## Pulp

Fibrous material produced by mechanically or chemically reducing wood into its component parts from which pulp, paper and paperboard sheets are formed after proper slushing and treatment or used for dissolving purposes (dissolving pulp or chemical cellulose) to make rayon, plastics, and other synthetic products.

Sometimes called wood pulp.

## Roundwood

Trunk or branch wood, generally with a top diameter of 7 cm or more. Can be in the form of logs (14 cm top diameter or more) or small roundwood (7 to 14 cm).

## Sawnwood

Sawn timber - timber that has been cut into planks or boards from logs.

## Softwood

The wood of coniferous trees, such as spruce, pine and larch; a term sometimes used for the coniferous trees themselves.

## United Kingdom (UK)

Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

## United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

One of five regional commissions of the United Nations. Its mission is to promote pan-European economic integration. The UNECE is responsible for compiling international statistics on production and trade of wood products for Europe, the Russian Federation and North America.

## Wood pellets

Sawdust or wood shavings compressed into uniform diameter pellets. They are often burned for heat or energy, but may also be used for other purposes (such as horse bedding or cat litter).



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