Standard Report
on
Methods and Quality
for
Agricultural Land Prices

This documentation applies to the reporting period:
2013 onwards

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1 Overview
The Agricultural Land Prices (ALP) publication measures land price indicators for land sold purely for agricultural use in Ireland. The Agricultural Land Prices publication was initially launched in 2017 detailing data for 2013-2015. The data is based on actual transaction data collected from the Revenue Commissioner’s Stamp Duty Returns data.

2 General Information
2.1 Statistical Category
A combination of a number of administrative data sources.

2.2 Area of Activity
Agriculture Prices

2.3 Organisational Unit Responsible, Persons to Contact
Business Statistics Directorate
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2.4 Objectives and Purpose; History
The purpose of the ALP publication is to detail the price of land sold purely for use in the agricultural sector in a given year. Land purchased for non-agricultural reasons along with land purchased with a dwelling attached to the land are specifically out of scope.

The CSO first published information on Agricultural Land Sales in 1991. This data was based on data from the valuations office and was discontinued in 2005 due to difficulties in distinguishing between agricultural land and development land.

In 2014, Ireland started producing agricultural land prices data to a NUTS 2 level as part of a voluntary agreement with Eurostat and Member States and this data was made available on StatBank. However in 2017, in response to consultations with data users, the CSO launched a new publication called Agricultural Land Prices which featured land price information to a NUTS 3 level with additional indicators on volume, value and transaction numbers.

2.5 Periodicity
Agricultural Land Prices are compiled on an annual basis.

2.6 Client
Agricultural Land Prices are compiled on the basis of a voluntary agreement between Eurostat and Member States.

2.7 Users
- Eurostat
- Teagasc
- Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM)
- General Public

2.8 Legal basis
Agricultural Land Prices are compiled on the basis of a voluntary agreement between Eurostat and Member States.

3 Statistical Concepts, Methods
3.1 Subject of the Statistics
The ALP publication is a full census of transactions of land sold purely for agricultural use. In addition to median and mean prices, the ALP publication is accompanied by an extensive range of addition statistics including transaction numbers, volume and value of agricultural land sold.
3.2 Units of Observation/Collection Units/Units of Presentation

The units of observation are agricultural land transactions. Only land sold purely for agricultural use is included in the ALP data.

The units of observation and the units of collection are one and the same for ALP. Both are represented by Stamp Duty Returns, which denote the transfer of the land from one legal owner to another. The unit of presentation is also the same for ALP, as the ALP is based on the price actually paid on the date of legal transfer of the land, also known as the date of execution of the transaction.

In each publication, the number of transactions and units are presented in absolute figures. Areas are presented in acres and data in hectares is available on StatBank. Money is denoted in Euros.

3.3 Data Sources

- Revenue Commissioner’s Stamp Duty Return data
- Property Registration Authority of Ireland (PRAI)
- CSO’s Farm Structure Survey (FSS)
- An Post’s Geo-Directory

3.4 Reporting Unit/Respondents

As 3.3

3.5 Type of Survey/Process

Agricultural Land Prices are compiled entirely from administrative data.

3.6 Characteristics of the Sample/Process

3.6.1 Population and Sampling Frame

Agricultural Land Prices is based on the full population of agricultural land sales. It is a census based on administrative data rather than a sample based on a sampling frame.

3.6.2 Sampling Design

Not applicable

3.7 Survey Technique/Data Transfer

The principal data source used to compile Agricultural Land Prices is stamp duty data collected by the Revenue Commissioners. Every month an encrypted dataset of all stamp duty returns filed the previous month is securely transferred to the CSO’s Administrative Data Centre for processing. Administrative data is received from Property Registration Authority by email.

3.8 Questionnaire (including explanations)

As 3.7

3.9 Participation in the Survey

As 3.7

3.10 Characteristics of the Survey/Process and its Results

Agricultural Land Prices are compiled from matched administrative data.

The first stage in this process is matching individual Stamp Duty Returns to their corresponding PRAI data based on stamp certificate number which is common to both datasets. PRAI data contains information on commonage and also X and Y co-ordinate seedpoints to determine the location of the land sold. Using the data from Geo-Directory, the X and Y co-ordinate seedpoint is match to the small area code detailed in the Geo-Directory. Finally, the transaction is assigned a land type based on the land type associated with the small area code listed in the CSO’s FSS.

3.11 Classifications used

Agricultural Land Prices use NUTS3 regional classification.
3.12 Regional Breakdown of Results

The Agricultural Land Prices covers the following region for volume, value and price information.
- Border region
- Dublin
- Mid-Eastern region
- Mid-West region
- Midland region
- South-East region
- South-West region
- Western region.

4 Production of the Statistics, Data Processing, Quality Assurance

4.1 Data Capture

The stamp duty is obtained from the Revenue Commissioners on a monthly basis via a secure link. The Property Registration Authority data is collected on an annual basis via email. The data is converted to a SAS dataset and is combined with data from the Geo-Directory and the CSO’s Farm Structure Survey and all further processing takes place in SAS.

4.2 Coding

Once the stamp duty data is received it is coded into land sold purely for agricultural use. Transactions are excluded if they fall under the following categories:
- Transactions for non-agricultural purposes e.g. lifestyle buyers, construction sites, etc.
- Transactions with monetary compensation attached to the land e.g. the sale or gift of land to charities or approved sporting bodies
- Any transactions with entitlements related to the land e.g. entitlements to the Basic Payment Scheme are associated with the land and can be transferred when the land is sold
- Any land sold with a dwelling attached to the land
- Any inheritance transfer e.g. transfers of property to a spouse, a descendent, civil partner or cohabitant
- Any commonage which is described as such in the PRAI data
- In addition to these exclusions, properties sold for under a threshold of €100 are excluded

4.3 Data Editing

Apart from data matching and exclusion detection described in 4.2 other edit checks are applied to the data. For example, any outliers in each region are investigated using a combination of sources to determine whether they are true market value transactions. If the transaction is found to match any of the criteria for exclusion set out in 4.2 or to not be of market value then it is manually excluded from the dataset

4.4 Imputation (for Non-Response or Incomplete Data Sets)

4.5 Grossing and Weighting

Not applicable

4.6 Computation of Outputs, Estimation Methods Used

All outputs are produced in SAS (a statistical software package). Results are aggregated – no estimation is used

4.7 Other Quality Assurance Techniques Used

Results are compared with other sources of land price information to compare trends, however prices are difficult to compare due to greatly differing methodology.

5 Quality

5.1 Relevance

Agricultural Land Prices is the official measure of agricultural land prices in Ireland. The uses of ALP include policy and economic analysis. The ALP is used by the Government, policy makers, solicitors and members of the public.
ALP is compiled to a NUTS 2 level for Eurostat as part of a voluntary agreement between member states. It is used a key policy analysis indicator for DG Agri.

5.2 Accuracy and Reliability

5.2.1. Sampling Effect & representivity
Not applicable

5.2.2. Non-Sampling Effects
Not applicable

5.2.2.1 Quality of the Data Sources used (other than survey register)
Administrative data sources are used so the quality of the data is high

5.2.2.2 Register Coverage
Not applicable

5.2.2.3 Non-response (Unit and Item)
Non-response is not an issue for ALP. All land purchasers are legally required to complete and submit a stamp duty return and all land is required to be registered with the Property Registration Authority of Ireland. The Geo-Directory necessarily covers all buildings in the state. All data fields in these datasets are completed so item non-response is not an issue.

5.2.2.4 Measurement Errors
There is a possible error in the size of land parcel sold in the Stamp Duty Returns as some land may be declared in acres as opposed to hectares. However these errors would generally show up in manual checks and as a result there is unlikely to be significant measurement errors with implications for ALP.

5.2.2.5 Processing Errors
Not Applicable

5.2.2.6 Model-related Effects
Not applicable

5.3 Timeliness and Punctuality

5.3.1 Provisional Results
Not applicable as data is final

5.3.2 Final Results
The release of Agricultural Land Prices will be published

5.4 Coherence
Annual data is compared to the previous year to ensure consistency.

The figures are also compared to other national publications on land prices, however the methodology between different surveys can be large.

5.5 Comparability
At the moment there is no European comparability of data as Eurostat don’t publish data on agricultural land prices.

In terms of comparisons of results over time, median and mean prices should not be used to compare price evolution from year to year as the mix of agricultural land sold in different periods can change over time.
5.6 Accessibility and Clarity

5.6.1 Assistance to Users, Special Analyses

Background notes on ALP are published with the annual publication. Further communications documents including an FAQ are available with the publication also.

All ALP results are publically available on StatBank, the CSO’s principal dissemination database.

5.6.2 Revisions

The historical price series were revised when the ALP publication was launched in March 2017. The original price series only contained information to a NUTS 2 level and land prices. The updated data published in March 2017 included data to a NUTS 3 level with additional indicators detailing prices, value, volume and transaction numbers.

5.6.3 Publications

5.6.3.1 Releases, Regular Publications

A national electronic publication “Agricultural Land Prices” containing the result for volume, value and mean and median prices are published annually. The complete results for these indicators are published on StatBank (the CSO’s main dissemination service).

5.6.3.2 Statistical Reports

Annual ALP results are published in the CSO’s Statistical Yearbook of Ireland.

5.6.3.3 Internet

The annual electronic publication “Agricultural Land Prices” is available on the CSO website:


All current and historical ALP results including full additional indicator information are available in the CSO’s StatBank service:


5.6.4 Confidentiality

All administrative data sources used in compilation of the ALP are treated as strictly confidential in accordance with Part V of the Statistics Act (1993). The data is not disclosed by the CSO to any other Government Department or outside body.

6 Additional documentation and publications

www.cso.ie