



**An
Phríomh-Oifig
Staidrimh**

Central
Statistics
Office

Standard SIMS Report: Fertiliser Sales



Single Integrated Metadata Structure (SIMS) Report

For

Fertiliser Sales

This documentation applies to the reporting period:
2024

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2. Introduction

This release contains data on mineral fertiliser sales, the nutrient content of mineral fertilisers sold in Ireland, and on lime sales from 2000 to 2024.

Data on the nutrient content of mineral fertilisers cover the nutrients Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium. These data are expressed in measurement units of tonnes of nutrient.

Data on total fertiliser sales are expressed in measurement units of tonnes of fertiliser. Quarterly data on total fertiliser sales are provided for the years 2015-2024.

Data on lime sales are provided in measurement units of tonnes of lime.

Mineral fertilisers are mainly used in agricultural production to enhance crop production. However, excessive use of mineral fertilisers containing Nitrogen and Phosphorus can lead to water, soil and air pollution as the nutrients are lost to the environment.

3. Contact

Contact Organisation:	Central Statistics Office
Contact Organisation Unit:	Environment
Contact Name:	Clare O'Hara
Contact person function:	Statistician
Contact Mail address:	Central Statistics Office, Ardee Road, Rathmines, Dublin 6. D06FX52
Contact email address:	environment@cso.ie
Contact Phone Number:	(+353) 1 498 4000
Contact Fax Number:	(+353) 1 895 1398

4. Metadata Update

4.1. Metadata last certified

02/04/2025

4.2. Metadata last posted

02/04/2025

4.3. Metadata last update

02/04/2025



5. Statistical Presentation

5.1. Data Description

The dataset includes data on mineral fertiliser sales, the nutrient content of mineral fertilisers sold in Ireland, and on lime sales from 2000 to 2024.

Mineral fertilisers are mainly used in agricultural production to enhance crop production. However, excessive use of mineral fertilisers containing Nitrogen and Phosphorus can lead to water, soil and air pollution as the nutrients are lost to the environment.

Lime is a soil conditioner which is used to regulate the acidity of soil. Applying lime to soil leads to carbon dioxide emissions from the carbon content of the lime. However, as soil acidity is a factor in fertiliser efficiency, applying lime to soil can reduce requirements for Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium fertilisers.

The data are measured in tonnes of fertiliser, tonnes of nutrient, or tonnes of lime.

5.2. Classification System

Not applicable.

5.3. Sector Coverage

All enterprises involved in selling mineral fertiliser products to retailers; quarries involved in lime sales.

5.4. Statistical Concepts and definitions

Mineral fertilisers are also known as inorganic fertilisers. 'Inorganic fertiliser' means a fertiliser in which the declared nutrients are in the form of minerals obtained by extraction or by physical and/or chemical industrial processes. Calcium cyanamide, urea and its condensation and association products, and fertilisers containing chelated or complex micro-nutrients may, by convention, be classed as inorganic fertilisers (Regulation (EC) No 2003/2003).

5.5. Statistical Unit

An enterprise involved in the sale of mineral fertilisers to retailers in Ireland. A quarry involved in the sale of lime.

5.6. Statistical Population

All enterprises involved in the sale of mineral fertilisers to retailers in Ireland. All quarries involved in the sale of lime.

5.7. Reference Area

Ireland.

5.8. Time Coverage

2000-2024

5.9. Base period

Not applicable.



6. Unit of Measure

Tonnes of fertiliser; tonnes of nutrient; tonnes of lime.

7. Reference Period

Data on mineral fertilisers are collected for the crop year, which runs from October to September. Data on lime sales are collected and published for the calendar year.

8. Institutional Mandate

8.1. Legal Acts and other agreements

Data on the Nitrogen and Phosphorus content of mineral fertilisers sold in Ireland are transmitted annually to Eurostat under a voluntary data collection. The data are collected and compiled by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, and are submitted to Eurostat by the CSO.

8.2. Data Sharing

Not applicable.

9. Confidentiality

9.1. Confidentiality – policy

All information supplied to the CSO is treated as strictly confidential. The Statistics Act, 1993 sets stringent confidentiality standards: Information collected may be used only for statistical purposes, and no details that might be related to an identifiable person or business undertaking may be divulged to any other government department or body. These national statistical confidentiality provisions are reinforced by the following EU legislation: Council Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European statistics for data collected for EU statistical purposes. Further details are outlined in the CSO's Code of Practice on Statistical Confidentiality.

For more information on the CSO confidentiality policy please visit:

<https://www.cso.ie/en/aboutus/lgdp/csodatapolicies/statisticalconfidentiality/>

9.2. Confidentiality – data treatment

All confidential data are treated in accordance with Part V of the Statistics Act 1993.

10. Release Policy

10.1. Release Calendar

The date of dissemination of all statistics released by CSO can be found in the Release Calendar published in CSO.ie. This calendar is regularly updated.

10.2. Release calendar access

The release calendar can be accessed via the CSO website, www.cso.ie, or directly from this link:

<https://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/releasecalendar/>



10.3. User access

In accordance with Principle 6 of the European Statistics Code of Practice all users of CSO statistics have equal access via the CSO website at the same time of 11 am. Any privileged pre-release access to any outside user is limited, controlled and publicised. In the event that leaks occur, pre-release arrangements are revised so as to ensure impartiality.

The CSO recognises that in very limited circumstances a business need for pre-release access may be substantiated. Any form of pre-release access is a privilege and a strict CSO pre-release access policy is adhered to for these special requests. The full pre-release access policy can be accessed at <https://www.cso.ie/en/aboutus/lgdp/csodatapolicies/csopolicyonpre-releaseaccess/>

The various results are published nationally in statistical release format on the CSO website (www.cso.ie). Selected extracts from the results are posted on the CSO data dissemination database, PxStat.

11. Frequency of Dissemination

Annual.

12. Accessibility and clarity

12.1. News release

No press release was issued with this publication.

12.2. Publications

The Fertiliser Sales 2024 release is published on the CSO website at the following link: <https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/agri-environment/fertilisersales/>

12.3. On-line database

The tables associated with this release can be found in our online dissemination database, PxStat through the following link: <https://data.cso.ie/product/FSA>

12.3.1. AC 1. Data tables - consultations

Not available.

12.4. Micro-data Access

Not available.

12.5. Other

Not applicable.

12.5.1. AC2. Metadata consultations

Not available.

12.6. Documentation on Methodology

12.6.1. AC3 – Metadata completeness – rate

Not calculated.



12.7. Quality Documentation

Further information on the documentation associated with this output can be found in the Methods page at <https://www.cso.ie/en/methods/agri-environment/fertilisersales/>

13. Quality Management

13.1. Quality Assurance

Quality Management Framework

The CSO avails of an office wide Quality Management Framework (QMF). This framework allows all CSO processes and outputs to meet the required standard as set out in the European Statistics Code of Business Process Model (GSBPM) as the operating statistical production model to achieve a standardised approach to Quality Management. All and any changes implemented to CSO processes and outputs require adherence to the QMF.

13.2. Quality Assessment

The reported data are considered to be of good quality. They are based on a survey of all enterprises involved in the sale of mineral fertilisers and a survey of quarries involved in the sale of lime. The surveys are carried out by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. The response rate is usually 100% for both surveys. Data processing involves collating the data into one report. Data are checked by the Department of Agriculture and any issues identified are clarified with the company.

14. Relevance

14.1. User Needs

Statistics on the nutrient content of fertilisers and lime sales are relevant to the implementation of the Nitrates Directive and the compilation of emissions inventories.

14.1.1. Main National Users

Government, policy-makers, environment sector, national media, general public.

14.1.2. Principal External Users

Policy-makers interested in integration of environmental concerns into the Common Agricultural Policy.

14.2. User Satisfaction

Not measured.

14.3. Data Completeness

Not calculated.

14.3.1. Data Completeness rate

Not calculated.

15. Accuracy and reliability

15.1. Overall accuracy

The degree of accuracy is expected to be high as all companies involved in the sale of fertilisers to retailers provide data to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.



15.2. Sampling Error

Not applicable.

15.2.1. A1. Sampling error indicator

Not applicable as all units of the population are included.

15.3. Non-sampling Error

Not applicable.

15.3.1. Coverage error

All units of the population are covered. Some fertiliser sales may be for non-agricultural purposes.

15.3.1.1. A2. Over coverage rate

Not available.

15.3.1.2. A3. Common units – proportion

Not applicable.

15.3.2. Measurement error

Expected to be low as respondents report simple totals for each type of fertiliser.

15.3.3. Non-Response Error

Expected to be low due to very high or full response rate.

15.3.3.1. Unit non-response rate

None.

15.3.3.2. Item non-response rate

Not known but expected to be very low or non-existent.

15.3.4. Processing error

Expected to be very low or non-existent as data are simply collated to totals by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

15.3.5. Model assumption error

Not applicable.

16. Timeliness and punctuality

16.1. Timeliness

This release was published within 14 weeks of the end of the reference year. Data are submitted to Eurostat 23 months after the end of the reference year.

16.1.1. TP1. Time lag – First results

14 weeks

16.1.2. TP2. Time lag – Final results

14 weeks

16.2. Punctuality

The CSO statistical release was published on 02 April 2025, 11am as specified in the CSO's release calendar.



16.2.1. TP3. Punctuality – Punctuality - delivery and publication

The release was delivered on time according to the release calendar.

17. Comparability

17.1. Comparability – Geographical

Fertiliser sales data are collected on a country level (NUTS 0). The geographical comparability between countries is evaluated by Eurostat. According to Eurostat, geographical comparability is limited due to different methodologies and data sources applied.

17.2. Comparability over time

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine has not made any significant changes to the data collection procedure over the period 2000–2024.

17.2.1. Length of Comparable Time series

25 years.

17.3. Coherence – cross domain

Not applicable.

17.3.1. Coherence – Sub annual and annual statistics

Not applicable.

17.3.2. Coherence with National Accounts

Not applicable.

17.4. Coherence – internal

Not applicable.

18. Cost and Burden

Estimates of Cost and Burden can be obtained from the Response Burden Barometer <https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/enterprisestatistics/responseburdenbarometer/>

Survey specific information is available via CSO's dissemination database PxStat. <https://data.cso.ie/product/RBB>

19. Data Revision

19.1. Data Revision Policy

Revisions refer to changes made to published statistical data when the information used in its production has been updated or corrected. This information includes all data used in compiling the statistic e.g. respondent data, administrative data, weights and factors, methodology, classifications, definitions, modifications to survey questionnaires, survey scope and data collection methods.

The data revision policy that CSO statistics adheres to can be found via the following link: <https://www.cso.ie/en/methods/quality/treatmentofrevisions/>



19.2. Data Revision Practice

Data may be subject to revision; however revisions to fertiliser sales and lime sales data are usually infrequent and minor.

19.2.1. Data Revision – Average size

Not applicable.

20. Statistical processing

20.1. Source Data

The process of data collection is via census of all fertiliser trade companies selling fertilisers to retailers and is carried out by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, and a survey of quarries selling lime. This CSO release is based on the data collected and compiled by the Department.

20.1.1. Population and sampling frame

All enterprises involved in fertiliser sales to retailers in Ireland. Quarries involved in the sale of lime.

20.1.2. Sampling design

Not applicable.

20.1.3. Survey size

There were fourteen enterprises involved in the sale of mineral fertilisers in 2021 and fifty quarries involved in lime sales. These numbers are unlikely to change significantly from year to year.

20.1.4. Survey technique

Written email request for data.

20.2. Frequency of data collection

Quarterly (fertiliser sales) and monthly (lime sales).

20.3. Data Collection

The process of data collection is carried out by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine through direct requests to all relevant enterprises to submit the required sales data within a given timeframe.

20.3.1. Type of Survey/Process

Data collection via direct request to relevant companies.

20.3.2. Questionnaire (including explanations)

Not available.

20.3.3. Survey Participation

All enterprises involved in fertiliser sales to retailers in Ireland. Quarries involved in lime sales. The response rate tends to be high or complete.

20.3.4. Data Capture

Not available.

20.4. Data Validation

Data are checked by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine against levels for previous years and queries may be issued to respondents if needed.



20.5. Data Compilation

Returns from relevant companies are collated into a single report by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

20.5.1. Imputation (for Non-Response or Incomplete Data Sets)

Not applicable.

20.5.1.1. Imputation rate

Not applicable.

20.5.2. Grossing and Weighting

Not applicable.

20.6. Adjustment

Not applicable.

20.6.1. Seasonal Adjustment

Not applicable.

21. Comment