



**An  
Phríomh-Oifig  
Staidrimh**

Central  
Statistics  
Office

## **Standard SIMS Report:**

# **Livestock Populations December**



# **Single Integrated Metadata Structure (SIMS) Report For Livestock Populations December**

**This documentation applies to the reporting period:  
2025**

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## 1. Overview

The Livestock Populations December release is an annual national publication which uses administrative data. The purpose of this publication is to report livestock numbers at State and Regional level in December of the reference year. The cattle data is obtained from the Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine (DAFM) administrative data and Irish Cattle Breeding Federation (ICBF) administrative data. The data for sheep, pigs and goats are obtained from administrative data from DAFM.

## 2. General Information

### 2.1 Statistical Category

Administrative data.

### 2.2 Area of Activity

Agricultural statistics.

### 2.3 Organisational Unit Responsible, Persons to Contact

Sam Scriven,  
Agriculture Surveys,  
Central Statistics Office  
Skehard Road,  
Cork.  
T: 021 4535276  
E: [agri@csso.ie](mailto:agri@csso.ie)

Stephanie Kelleher,  
Agriculture Surveys,  
Central Statistics Office  
Skehard Road,  
Cork.  
T: 021 4535123  
E: [agri@csso.ie](mailto:agri@csso.ie)

Noreen Plunkett,  
Agriculture Division,  
Central Statistics Office  
Skehard Road,  
Cork.  
T: 021 4535569  
E: [agri@csso.ie](mailto:agri@csso.ie)



## 2.4 Objectives and Purpose; History

The objective of the Livestock Populations December release is to compile data on livestock (cattle, sheep, pigs & goat) numbers at State and Regional levels in December of the reference year. Farm surveys have been conducted in Ireland since 1847.

Up until 2009, CSO agriculture surveys collected data on the number of cattle held on farms under different cattle categories (e.g., dairy cows, male cattle 3 years and over etc). Since 2010 the CSO does not collect data on cattle. Published cattle numbers come from administrative data held by the DAFM. The DAFM's Animal Identification and Movement (AIM) system is a database which records all bovine birth, movements and disposals. The system captures details of all animal movements, and this administrative data enables the CSO to publish cattle category totals without requiring farmers to supply the CSO with this information. Bull data is received monthly in aggregate form from the ICBF.

Up until 2016, CSO agriculture surveys collected data on the number of sheep held on farms under different sheep categories (e.g., breeding ewes, rams, other sheep, etc.). Since 2017, the CSO does not collect data on sheep. Published sheep numbers now come from administrative data held by the DAFM. The DAFM's National Sheep & Goat Census is carried out annually and this administrative data enables the CSO to publish sheep category totals without requiring farmers to supply the CSO with this information.

Up until 2024, CSO agriculture surveys collected data on the number of pigs held on farms in December, under different pig categories (e.g. Total pigs, breeding pigs, other pigs, etc.). Since 2025, the CSO has not collected data on pigs in December. Published December pig numbers now come from administrative data held by the DAFM. The DAFM's National Pig Census is carried out annually and this administrative data enables the CSO to publish pig category totals without requiring farmers to supply the CSO with this information.

## 2.5 Periodicity

Annual

## 2.6 Client

General EU & National Requirements



## 2.7 Users

- Eurostat (the statistical service of European Commission)
- EU Commission
- DAFM
- Other sections within the CSO.
- Semi-State organisations such as Teagasc.
- General Public

## 2.8 Legal basis

[EU Regulation 2022/2379 as regards statistics on agricultural input and output \(SAIO\)](#)

[EU Regulation 2023/2745 as regards animal production statistics](#)

## 3. Statistical Concepts, Methods

### 3.1 Subject of the Statistics

Livestock Numbers

### 3.2 Units of Observation/Collection Units/Units of Presentation

The survey's unit of observation are:

- Pigs categorised as Breeding Pigs and Other Pigs. Breeding Pigs are broken down into the sub-categories of Boars, Sows in Pig, Other Sows, Gilts and Gilts in Pig. Other Pigs are broken down into sub-categories based on weight classifications. The Pig data is collected by the AIM section in DAFM in the National Pig Census.
- Sheep broken down into the sub-categories of Rams, Ewes 2 year and over, Ewes less than 2 years and Other Sheep. (As described under 2.4 above, published sheep totals come from the DAFM's National Sheep & Goat Census)
- Cattle broken down into the sub-categories of Dairy cows, Other Cows, Bulls, Male cattle 2 years and over, Female cattle 2 years and over, Male cattle 1-2 years, Female cattle 1-2 years, Male cattle under 1 year, Female cattle under 1 year. (As described under 2.4 above, published cattle totals come from the DAFM's AIM administrative data and ICBF administrative data)
- Results are presented at State and Regional level – the unit of presentation is number of thousand head of livestock.



### **3.3 Data Sources**

Cattle: The results for cattle are obtained from the DAFM's Animal Identification and Movement (AIM) system. Breeding Bull data is received from the ICBF.

Sheep & Goats: The results for sheep are obtained from DAFM's National Sheep & Goat Census.

Pigs: The results for pigs are obtained from DAFM's National Pig Census.

### **3.4 Reporting Unit/Respondents**

Agricultural holdings where the agricultural area utilised for farming is one hectare or more. Farms with less than 1 hectare may also be included if they were engaged in intensive production.

### **3.5 Type of Survey/Process**

Administrative data from DAFM and the ICBF.

### **3.6 Characteristics of the Sample/Process**

#### **3.6.1 Population and Sampling Frame**

Not applicable

#### **3.6.2 Sampling Design**

Not applicable

#### **3.7 Survey Technique/Data Transfer**

Not applicable

#### **3.8 Questionnaire (including explanations)**

Not applicable

#### **3.9 Participation in the Survey**

Not applicable



### 3.10 Characteristics of the Survey Process and its Results

Results are published for the following categories;

- Total Cattle
  - Dairy Cows
  - Other Cows
  - Bulls
  - Cattle male 2 years and over
  - Cattle female 2 years and over
  - Cattle male 1 - 2 years
  - Cattle female 1 – 2 years
  - Cattle male under 1 year
  - Cattle female under 1 year
  
- Total Sheep
  - Breeding Sheep
    - ❖ Ewes 2 years and over
    - ❖ Ewes under 2 years
    - ❖ Rams
  - Other Sheep
  
- Pigs
  - Breeding Pigs
    - ❖ Boars
    - ❖ Sows in pig
    - ❖ Other Sows
    - ❖ Gilts in pig
    - ❖ Gilts not yet served.
  - Other Pigs by live weight
    - ❖ Pigs under 20 kg
    - ❖ Pigs 20 – 50 kg
    - ❖ Pigs 50 – 80 kg
    - ❖ Pigs 80 – 110 kg
    - ❖ Pigs 110 kg and above

Results are published for all the above collection categories of pigs with the exception the of the “80 – 110 kg” and “110 kg and above” categories which are combined as the “80kg and above” category.



The results for sheep and goats come from administrative data from the DAFM's National Sheep & Goat Census. The results for pigs come from administrative data from the DAFM's National Pig Census.

The results for cattle come from administrative data from the Animal Identification & Movement (AIM) system and data from the ICBF.

### **3.11 Classifications used.**

The classifications used are listed at 3.10 above and are based on Eurostat legal requirements.

## **4. Data Capture, Coding, Data Editing and other Quality Assurance Techniques Used**

### **4.1 Data Capture**

Not applicable

### **4.2 Coding**

Not applicable

### **4.3 Data Editing**

Not applicable

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

Not applicable

### **4.5 Grossing and Weighting**

Not applicable

### **4.6 Computation of Outputs, Estimation Methods Used**

The results for cattle, pigs, sheep and goats are obtained from administrative sources.

### **4.7 Other Quality Assurance Techniques Used**

Consultation with experts within industry to ascertain reasons behind emerging trends.



## **5. Relevance, Accuracy, Non-Sampling Effects, Register Cover and Non-Response**

### **5.1 Relevance**

The information is used at European level to monitor the operation of Irish farms. The results are used within the CSO for agriculture and national accounts. They are also used by government departments, companies, and semi- state organisations to monitor trends within the industry.

### **5.2 Accuracy and Reliability**

#### **5.2.1. Sampling Effect & Representativity**

Administrative sources are used for cattle and sheep, pigs and goats-

#### **5.2.2. Non-Sampling Effects**

##### **5.2.2.1 Quality of the Data Sources used (other than survey register)**

No other data sources are used in preparation of results.

##### **5.2.2.2 Register Coverage**

Not applicable

##### **5.2.2.3 Non-response (Unit and Item)**

Not applicable

##### **5.2.2.4 Measurement Errors**

Not applicable

##### **5.2.2.5 Processing Errors**

Data is entered manually into both an Excel spreadsheet and a SAS dataset. There is the possibility of typing errors at this point, but data is checked, and ranges etc. are also checked after data entry.

##### **5.2.2.6 Model-related Effects**

Not applicable



## **5.3 Timeliness and Punctuality**

### **5.3.1 Provisional Results**

No provisional results are produced.

### **5.3.2 Final Results**

Data are transmitted to Eurostat in adherence with deadlines in Regulation (EC) No. 2023/2745 (livestock statistics)

## **5.4 Coherence**

Consistency checks against other data providers, Teagasc, Bord Bia, DAFM.

## **5.5 Comparability**

As a common legislative framework is in place across the European Union for this survey, results are comparable against other European Union countries.

In terms of times series, results are comparable from 2005 to date for livestock numbers.

## **5.6 Accessibility and Clarity**

### **5.6.1 Assistance to Users, Special Analyses**

All assistance within the bounds of maintaining confidentiality is given to users. Decisions on whether to perform special analyses are taken on a case-by-case basis.

### **5.6.2 Revisions**

Revisions do not usually occur from one survey to the next, but revisions may take place due to changes in methodologies and data collection methods.



## 5.6.3 Publications

### 5.6.3.1 Releases, Regular Publications

Livestock Populations December release

The release is available on the CSO website at 11am on the day of publication.

<https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/livestockpopulationsdecember/>

### 5.6.3.2 Internet

Livestock Numbers in December

<https://data.cso.ie/table/AAA06>

Pig Population in June and December

<https://data.cso.ie/table/AAA05>

Livestock Populations December

<https://data.cso.ie/table/ADA03>

And on the Eurostat website at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

### 5.6.4 Confidentiality

All data from respondents are treated as strictly confidential in accordance with the Statistics Act 1993.

Care is taken to ensure that disclosure of potentially confidential results is avoided.

## 6. Additional documentation and publications

The entry for this statistic under PxStat (the portal to Ireland's official statistics) is at <https://data.cso.ie/>