

Quality Report

UK Wood Production and Trade

Introduction

Statistics on UK Wood Production and Trade comprise a series of annual surveys and data requests on the UK timber industry. Data are compiled by Forest Research (in association with Natural Resources Wales and the Forest Service) on:

- removals of roundwood from UK woodlands;
- deliveries of roundwood to wood processors and others;
- production of wood products; and
- imports and exports of wood and wood products (based on overseas trade statistics published by HM Revenue & Customs).

Separate quality reports, covering the private sector softwood removals survey, sawmill survey, survey of round fencing manufacturers and survey of pellet and briquette production in more detail are also available.

Relevance

The main uses of statistics on UK Wood Production and Trade include:

- Deliveries of roundwood – Trends in the supply of, and demand for, UK grown timber are monitored by the Forestry Commission, the UK timber industry and others;
- International reporting – Data on wood production in the UK and imports and exports of wood products are provided to Eurostat, UNECE, FAO and others as part of the Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (covering wood production and trade);
- Scottish Forestry Strategy Indicators – Sawmill log consumption and sawnwood output by sawmills in Scotland are reported annually;
- Forestry Commission England Corporate Plan Performance Indicators – indicators on wood harvested in England are reported annually.
- Woodlands for Wales Indicators – Indicators on use of Welsh wood and on demand for wood are reported annually.
- UK Government Departments and devolved administrations – deliveries of roundwood and/or sawnwood production are used in a number of statistical publications produced by other government bodies, including the Office for National Statistics (Environmental Accounts) and the Scottish Government (High Level Summary of Statistics).

The Expert Group on Timber and Trade Statistics (EGTTS), comprising representatives from the UK timber industry, the Forestry Commission, Natural Resources Wales and Forest Service are consulted regularly to ensure that UK wood production and trade statistics remain relevant to users (details on the EGTTS can be found at www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-5rabj3).

Accuracy

A number of checks are performed on the data to ensure accuracy. These include checks against data for previous years, corrections of apparently incorrect data and quality assurance of data with experts from the UK timber industry (through the Expert Group on Timber and Trade Statistics).

Details of non-sampling errors for survey data are provided in the relevant quality reports for the private sector softwood removals survey, sawmill survey, survey of round fencing manufacturers and survey of pellet and briquette production, all available at www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-7zhk85. These show provisional response rates to 2017 surveys of between 18% and 68%, and weighted response rates (taking account of the size of businesses) of between 36% and 95%, as of May 2018.

Timeliness and punctuality

Provisional results are published in *UK Wood Production and Trade: provisional figures* in mid-May, 4.5 months after the end of the reference period (calendar year).

Final results are published in *Forestry Statistics* at end September, 9 months after the end of the reference period (calendar year).

Accessibility and clarity

The annual *Forestry Statistics* publication, available on the Forestry Commission website at www.forestry.gov.uk/statistics provides the most comprehensive results, including background information on the sources, data collected, response rates, methodology, revisions and reporting. *Forestry Statistics* is published in line with the Forestry Commission's website accessibility statement.

Longer time series data, providing additional breakdowns for some statistics, are published in accompanying tables to *UK Wood Production and Trade: provisional figures*. Longer time series are also available for *Forestry Statistics*. Excel and PDF versions of all tables in *UK Wood Production and Trade: provisional figures* and *Forestry Statistics* are available to download from the Forestry Commission website.

Summary results are also published in *Forestry Facts & Figures*, available on the Forestry Commission website at www.forestry.gov.uk/statistics.

Comparability

Most of the data collections on wood production have been run annually by the Statistics team in the Forestry Commission since 1994. Results for a 10-year period are published in *Forestry Statistics*.

The coverage has changed over time to take account of changes in uses of UK grown timber. This includes development of data collections on roundwood exports, roundwood use for shavings and for wood fuel. In 2004, the surveys were extended to cover the UK (rather than GB) and in 2009 a survey of UK pellet and briquette production was introduced.

A number of other refinements have been made to the surveys and data collections, in response to consultation with the Expert Group on Timber and Trade Statistics and suggestions/issues raised by users and data providers. These include the addition of new data items on woodfuel and employment, the addition of a breakdown of UK consumption by country and changes to the frequency of, and size of mills covered by, the detailed sawmill survey.

Coherence

Data on UK softwood deliveries (obtained from the sawmill survey and other surveys and data requests) are compared with estimates of total UK softwood removals (obtained from Forestry Commission/Forest Service administrative systems and the Forestry Commission's Private Sector Softwood Removals Survey), available in the annual *Forestry Statistics* publication.

Revisions

The Forestry Commission's Revisions Policy, available at www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-7zhk85, outlines our general approach to revisions.

Statistics from surveys of the timber industry (private sector softwood removals, sawmills, round fencing and pellets) are subject to annual revision, as new information becomes available. Further details are provided in the quality reports for each survey.

The statistics for woodbased panels and for pulp and paper are provided by industry associations, and are not normally revised after publication. On occasion a provisional figure or estimate may be published, and replaced by the actual figure in a subsequent publication.

Other timber statistics (wood fuel, other miscellaneous products, exports of roundwood) are not normally revised.

Information on significant revisions made to published statistics is available in the Annex.

Other issues related to quality

Statistical disclosure control checks are run on the sawmill survey and survey of round fencing manufacturers annually, prior to publication, to ensure that the results to be released are not likely to be disclosive for individual businesses. A paper describing the statistical disclosure control checks undertaken for the sawmill survey can be found at: [www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/disc_control_for_fc_surveys.pdf/\\$file/disc_control_for_fc_surveys.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/disc_control_for_fc_surveys.pdf/$file/disc_control_for_fc_surveys.pdf)

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Annex: Significant revisions to published statistics

Starting with the publication of 2004 data, published in August 2005, the scope of British Timber Statistics was extended to include Northern Ireland, and the title changed to *UK Timber Statistics*. All tables were revised to give figures for this wider scope, with estimates or indications of missing data in cases where relevant data were not available for Northern Ireland. From 2007, *Forestry Statistics* was extended to cover data previously published in *UK Timber Statistics* and this publication ceased.

A review of the methodology used to estimate the quantity of UK softwood removals from woodland that is not owned or managed by the Forestry Commission (in Great Britain) or the Forest Service (in Northern Ireland) was undertaken in 2011-2012. The *Methodology Review of Softwood Removals from Non-FC/ FS Woodland* paper presents the results from this review and the implications of the change in methodology. It can be found at: [www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/rem_methodology_rev2011-12.pdf/\\$FILE/rem_methodology_rev2011-12.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/rem_methodology_rev2011-12.pdf/$FILE/rem_methodology_rev2011-12.pdf)

In *UK Wood Production and Trade: 2016 provisional data* revisions have been made since they were previously published (in *Forestry Statistics 2016*) in light of additional information received or to correct error. Please refer to *UK Wood production and Trade; 2016 provisional data*, revisions section, for more detail on the revisions.

In *UK Wood Production and Trade: 2015 provisional data* (Table 9), paper production figures for 2014 were revised with the availability of improved data. Production of packaging materials was revised upwards from 1,797 to 1,801 thousand tonnes (+0.2%), resulting in a small (0.1%) increase in total paper production, to 4,397 thousand tonnes.

Estimates of historical FC/FS softwood removals were refined in May 2014. As a result, in *UK Wood Production and Trade: 2013 provisional data* (Table 1), removals for 2010 were revised upwards from 4598 to 4633 thousand green tonnes (+0.8%), removals for 2011 were revised upwards from 5129 to 5186 thousand green tonnes (+1.1%), and removals for 2012 were revised upwards from 5248 to 5259 thousand green tonnes (+0.2%). The estimate for softwood woodfuel in Table 2 for 2010 was also revised downwards from 1050 to 900 thousand green tonnes (-14.3%).

In *UK Wood Production and Trade: 2013 provisional data* (Table 9), paper production figures for 2012 were revised with the availability of improved data. Sanitary & household papers production was revised upwards from 786 to 795 thousand tonnes (+1.1%), packaging materials production upwards from 1734 to 1798 thousand tonnes (+3.7%), other paper production downwards from 280 to 271 thousand tonnes (-3.2%). Total paper production was revised upwards from 4416 to 4480 thousand tonnes (+1.4%).

Revisions have been made to some of the 2010 and 2011 figures in September 2012 to take account of revised data released by HMRC and further checks. These changes have resulted in upwards revisions of up to 9% in the quantities of paper imported, downwards revisions of up to 1% in the quantities of pulp imported, downwards revisions of up to 24% in the quantities of paper exported, and downwards revisions of up to 5% in the quantities of pulp exported.

The figures for inputs to woodbased panels in 2009 were revised upwards in May 2011 to correct an error in the original figures reported. This resulted in increases of around 130 thousand green tonnes (12%) of UK softwood roundwood and 270 thousand green tonnes (23%) of softwood sawmill products from the figures reported in *Forestry Statistics 2010* (Tables 2.6 and 2.23) and *Forestry Facts & Figures 2010* (Table 6a).

UK Timber Statistics 2006, released in August 2006, was republished in December 2006. This was primarily to correct a reporting error in the Sawmill Survey, in which data for two mills were switched. The UK totals were unaffected, but the corrections resulted in an increase in consumption and production in Scotland and a corresponding decrease in England. The opportunity was also taken to make some other revisions, taking account of some late returns and making some other minor amendments. These revisions resulted in a 2% reduction in the figure for non-FC softwood removals, a slight drop in sawmills' certified consumption and production, a slight increase in the percentage of other products being sold for bio-energy and a corresponding drop in other products being sold to wood processing industries.

The figures for 2004 for UK exports of roundwood and for total deliveries of UK roundwood were revised downwards by 320 thousand green tonnes after publication of *Forestry Statistics 2005*. The published total had been incorrect to include exports of wood chips produced by sawmills, because the roundwood producing these chips had already been counted as part of logs going to sawmills. This affected *UK Timber Statistics 2004* Tables 1, 2 and 26, *Forestry Facts & Figures 2005* Tables 8 and 9, and *Forestry Statistics 2005* Tables 2.3 and 3.1.

Imports and apparent consumption: the figures for imports in each year 1999 to 2002 were revised upwards between *Forestry Facts & Figures 2003* (table 9) and *Forestry Statistics 2003* (table 3.1), by 0.6-1.2 million m³ (around 2%), to reflect revisions to woodbased panel imports following additional data validation work. Corresponding revisions were made to apparent consumption in the same tables.