

Quality report:

Survey of Round Fencing Manufacturers

Last updated:

September 2021

Next update due:

May 2022

Introduction

The survey of round fencing manufacturers (or fencing survey) is one of a series of annual surveys and data requests used to produce statistics on the UK timber industry. The survey is run by Forest Research (in association with the Northern Ireland Forest Service) to collect data from round fencing manufacturers (or mills) in the UK that are believed to use UK-grown roundwood.

The survey comprises a short questionnaire that is sent to around 50 mills. The list of mills covered by the survey is maintained by Forest Research and is updated regularly, following consultations with the Expert Group on Timber and Trade Statistics and others, to add new mills and remove those that have closed.

Relevance

The fencing survey requests data annually from all round fencing manufacturers in the UK that are believed to use UK-grown roundwood. It asks for data on consumption of roundwood, woodfuel use & sales, certification and total employment.

Figures on consumption of UK-grown roundwood from the fencing survey are combined with data from other sources to produce estimates of total deliveries of UK-grown roundwood.

Estimates are made for non-respondents by rolling forward data from previous years for these mills.

The main uses of the survey of round fencing manufacturers include:

- Trends in the supply of, and demand for, UK grown timber are monitored by the Forestry Commission, Devolved Administrations, the UK timber industry and others;
- Deliveries of roundwood in the UK are provided to international organisations (UN Economic Commission for Europe, UN Food and Agriculture Organisation and others) as part of the Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire (covering wood production and trade).

The Expert Group on Timber and Trade Statistics (EGTTS), comprising representatives from the UK timber industry, the Forestry Commission, Scottish Forestry, Natural Resources Wales and Northern Ireland Forest Service are consulted regularly to ensure that UK wood production and trade statistics remain relevant to users. Further information on the EGTTS is available at <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/about-our-statistics/expert-group-on-timber-and-trade-statistics/>.

Accuracy

The survey usually approaches all relevant businesses (around 50 in recent years) and, as a result, there are no sampling errors. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the administration of the survey was restricted to digital methods only, so a few mills (for whom no email addresses were available) were not approached, giving a total of 38 businesses approached. The figures for non-respondents to the

survey, below, include some mills that were not approached to participate in the 2020 survey.

There are a number of non-sampling errors associated with this survey, related to errors of coverage, measurement, processing and non-response. The following tables provide an indication of the response rates (overall and for key items), level of imputed values and the editing rate, to assist users in understanding the quality of the data.

Unit response rates

The overall response rate to the fencing survey in 2020 was 29% of mills. The weighted response rate (taking account of the total roundwood consumption of each mill) was 34%. The relatively low weighted response rates indicate that non-response to the survey is likely to have a significant impact on the accuracy of the results.

Key item response rates

Table 1 presents the response rates for the following key items: total consumption, total employment and certified input (for those with a Chain of Custody certificate). These item response rates are restricted to respondents to the survey. The high response rates indicate that item non-response has very little impact on the accuracy of the results for key items.

Table 1: Key item response rates, 2020

Key item	Response	Non response	Total	Response rate (unweighted) ¹	Response rate (weighted) ²
Consumption	12	1	13	92%	100%
Employment	12	1	13	92%	89%
Certified input ³	9	0	9	100%	100%

Notes:

1. Unweighted item response rate is the number of responses to that item divided by total respondents.
2. Weighted by total estimated value of key item.
3. Item only requested from mills with Chain of Custody certificate.

Total contribution to key items from imputed values

In compiling results from the survey of round fencing manufacturers, values are imputed to estimate for non-response (either to specific questions or to the entire survey). Values for survey non-respondents are imputed by rolling forward the values for that mill in the previous year. For item non-response, imputed values will also take account of responses to the rest of the survey.

Table 2 presents the percentage of the total value that is imputed for the following key items: total consumption, total employment and certified input (for those with a Chain of Custody certificate). The relatively high imputation rates indicate that imputing is likely to have a significant impact on the accuracy of the results.

Table 2: Total contribution to key items from imputed values, 2020

Key item	Imputed	Not imputed	Total	% imputed
Consumption (thousand green tonnes)	183	95	278	66%
Employment (full-time equivalents)	300	207	506	59%
Certified input (thousand m ³) ¹	119	63	182	65%

Notes:

1. Item only requested from mills with Chain of Custody certificate.

Editing rate for key items

The responses received to the survey are checked to ensure that the values provided to questions are consistent with each other and with previous responses from the same mill. Where there are clear inconsistencies that cannot be explained, values are revised to a more realistic level.

Table 3 presents the percentage of mills for which a value was edited for the following key items: total consumption, total employment and certified input (for those with a Chain of Custody certificate).

Table 3: Editing rate for key items, 2020

Key item	Value corrected	Value uncorrected	Total	Editing rate
Consumption	0	12	12	0%
Employment	0	11	11	0%
Certified input ¹	0	9	9	0%

Notes:

1. Item only requested from mills with Chain of Custody certificate.

Timeliness and punctuality

Provisional results from the survey of round fencing manufacturers are released 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 Forest Research website at www.forestresearch.gov.uk/statistics provides the most comprehensive results from the fencing survey, including background information on the data collected, response rates, methodology, revisions and reporting. Forestry Statistics is published in line with Forest Research'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 ODS versions of all tables in UK Wood Production and Trade: provisional figures and Forestry Statistics are available to download from the Forest Research website.

Summary results are also published in Forestry Facts & Figures.

Comparability

The survey of round fencing manufacturers has been run annually by Forest Research/ the Forestry Commission since 1994. Results for a 10 year period are published in Forestry Statistics.

A number of refinements have been made to the survey, 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 (woodfuel sales & use from the 2008 survey, total employment from the 2008 survey, round fencing production & production of other products from the 2010 survey, the addition of a new question on preservative treatment of round fencing production for the 2020 survey).

Coherence

Data on UK softwood deliveries (obtained from the survey of round fencing manufacturers and other surveys and data requests) are compared with estimates of total UK softwood removals (obtained from Forestry England/Forestry and Land Scotland/Natural Resources Wales/Forest Service administrative systems and Forest Research's Private Sector Softwood Removals Survey), available in the annual Forestry Statistics publication.

Revisions

Our Revisions Policy, available at www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/about-our-statistics/code-of-practice/quality-of-official-statistics/, outlines our general approach to revisions.

The statistics for softwood round fencing manufacture are subject to annual revision, as information becomes available about mills opening or closing, or new information becomes available for previous non-respondents. The most common revisions are relatively small downward changes, as late information is incorporated about mill closures.

Other issues related to quality

Statistical disclosure control checks are run on the 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.