

Collection: Rural Communities statistics

Defra provides a collection of high level statistics which present an overall picture of living in rural areas across England.

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Our Products

Rural Communities statistics

- [rural urban classification](#)
- [rural economy – statistical indicators](#)
- [rural living – statistical indicators](#)
- [census rural analyses](#)
- [statistical digest of rural England](#)

Other sources of information

- [Welsh government](#)
- [Scottish government](#)
- [Northern Ireland](#)
- [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\)](#)

Developing our portfolio

The rural portfolio of official statistics is different to the remainder of the wider Defra portfolio in that much of it focuses on looking again at wider socio and economic statistics and drawing out insights by applying the official definitions of rural and urban communities to explore differences as well as rural specific trends. As for the Defra Group portfolio as a whole, we will continue to invest in developing our understanding of user needs and therefore to find the best future balance between compendiums of environmental statistics, regular statistical releases on specific topic and supporting data releases.

Press release: Animal welfare boosted by new law coming into force

New regulations have come into force today (Monday 1 October) to strengthen animal welfare, particularly around puppy sales, in England.

These will:

- Ensure that breeders must show puppies alongside their mother before a sale is made.
- Tighten regulations so that puppy sales are completed in the presence of the new owner – preventing online sales where prospective buyers have not seen the animal first.
- Ban licensed sellers from dealing in puppies and kittens under the age of eight weeks.
- Regulate adverts, including on the internet, by ensuring licensed sellers of all pets include the seller's licence number, country of origin and country of residence of the pet in any advert for sale.
- Introduce a new "star rating" for dog breeders, pet shops and others to help people rate them on their animal welfare standards.

These regulations, which are strongly supported by animal welfare organisations such as the RSPCA who've campaigned for a number of years, complement the government's commitment to introduce a ban on third party sales of puppy and kitten sales which has recently been consulted on.

Animal Welfare Minister, David Rutley, said:

These regulations will end mistreatment and malpractice of puppies and crack down on unscrupulous breeders so pet owners will have no doubt their new dogs have had the right start in life.

The licensing systems for businesses that work with animals have not been reformed for almost fifty years. The changes in place from today simplify these into one system for local authorities, help consumers to make better informed decisions and will further improve animal welfare.

These changes form part of our efforts to ensure we have the highest animal welfare standards in the world. This includes making CCTV cameras mandatory in all slaughterhouses as well as our plans to increase prison sentences from six months to five years for animal abusers.

The myriad of licensing systems that local authorities use to regulate businesses which deal with animals, or animal activities, have been in place for over 50 years. This has led to outdated regulations meaning some businesses require several licences and others, such as home boarding and dog

day care businesses, were not always covered.

These regulations introduce a new system for local authorities to use for the different areas of activity (detailed below), simplifying the licences needed by businesses, ensuring all businesses working with animals are covered and driving up animal welfare standards.

A key part of these new licences will be a new “star rating” (out of five) for dog breeders, pet shops and other licensed activities involving animals. This rates these businesses, on welfare and other grounds, and helps buyers use the best breeders as well as local authorities to more heavily regulate the poorer rated (such as through more welfare inspections, increased costs and shorter licences).

This announcement follows [a public consultation](#) which ran from 20 December 2015 to 12 March 2016.

The five areas of licensed activities with animals by businesses are:

- Selling animals as pets
- Providing or arranging for the provision of boarding for cats or dogs
- Hiring out horses
- Breeding dogs and
- Keeping or training animals for exhibition

News story: BPS 2018 payments exchange rate set

The euro exchange rate for calculating BPS 2018 payments has been set. The rate, an average of the European Central Bank exchange rates set in September, will be €1 = £0.89281.

BPS payments for England are set in euros and then converted into sterling. The previous years' exchange rates for BPS were:

BPS 2017: €1 = £0.89470

BPS 2016: €1 = £0.85228

RPA will make full payments on BPS 2018 claims from the beginning of December.

RPA makes all payments directly into bank accounts by BACS transfer.

Press release: Environment Agency joins forces with eBay to stop illegal vehicle breakers

The partnership will also act to better inform the public who may unknowingly purchase parts from illegal traders.

Business sellers who list used vehicle parts now receive a pop up message to highlight that an environmental permit is needed to break vehicles and directs them to [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) where they can get further information.

Sellers on eBay are also being advised to display their permit number, or the name of the sites where they source the parts they are selling, which provides reassurance to purchasers that they are buying from a legal dealer.

The Environment Agency are directly contacting eBay traders who are not displaying their environmental credentials, providing guidance and warning them about undertaking non permitted breaking activities.

Those intentionally operating illegally and not responding to the Environment Agency will find their trading account suspended or removed from eBay.

It has been discovered that some car breakers and traders are not aware of the need to have a permit. They are also unaware of how to properly dismantle a vehicle, dispose of the hazardous waste, deal with fire risks and subsequent risk to the environment.

The new partnership has resulted in an increase in applications for permits to take their business into legal status. The Environment Agency has also benefited from being able to utilise resources and time in tackling illegal car breaking.

Rich Cloke from the Environment Agency said:

Businesses are not always aware they should have a permit and many are reacting positively to the messages we are getting to them. We have seen an increase in businesses subsequently applying for the relevant permit.

This is proving to be a quick and effective way of communicating our message directly with vehicle breakers and parts dealers.

With sellers who continue to trade, the Environment Agency will take further steps including reporting them to the Police and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and making a site visit.

The partnership will also aim to inform the general public who may unknowingly purchase used parts from illegal businesses.

A spokesperson for eBay commenting on working with the Environment Agency said:

eBay's contribution to supporting the Environment Agency compliance efforts on the sale of vehicle parts sourced from illegal End of life Vehicle (ELV) breakers has significantly increased the level of compliance from business sellers on eBay UK website.

This successful cooperation leads the industry and sets an example of effective collaboration between the private sector and the Environment Agency, rarely seen both offline and online.

News story: Changes to recreational bass restrictions from 1 October

The European Union has announced an amendment to Council Regulation (EU) 2018/120 as regards fishing opportunities for European seabass.

From 1 October to 31 December 2018 in recreational fisheries in ICES divisions 4b, 4c, 6a, 7a to 7k, one specimen of European seabass may be retained per fisherman per day. This applies if you are fishing from a boat or from the shore.

This follows advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) on European seabass stocks and an estimated higher survival rate of the species from catch-and-release practices.

More information is available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).