



Overview of the Irish Agri-food Sector

The agri-food sector is our oldest and largest indigenous exporting sector and its products are traded from every county in Ireland to more than 180 countries around the globe. The agri-food sector includes primary production in farming, fishing and forestry, and the processing and manufacture of food, beverages and wood products.

In 2023 the sector exported goods valued at €18.28 billion, accounting for 9.3% of all the merchandised goods exported from Ireland. The Irish agri-food sector is globally orientated, with approximately 90% of Irish beef, sheepmeat and dairy produce exported each year. In 2023 we exported more than €1 billion euros in value of each of fresh or chilled Irish beef, natural butter and cheese.

These exports are dependent on the more than 173,000 people employed in the sector across 135,000 farms, 2,000 fishing vessels & aquaculture sites and some 2,000 food production and beverage enterprises. The sector is responsible for 4.5 million hectares of agricultural land and 808,848 hectares of forestry.

Key Indicators for Agri- Food Sectors

173,400 - People employed in the agri-food sector in 2023

6.5% of total employment

€17.3 billion - Gross Value Added at Factor Cost in agri-food sector

6 % of GNI* (Modified Gross National Income)

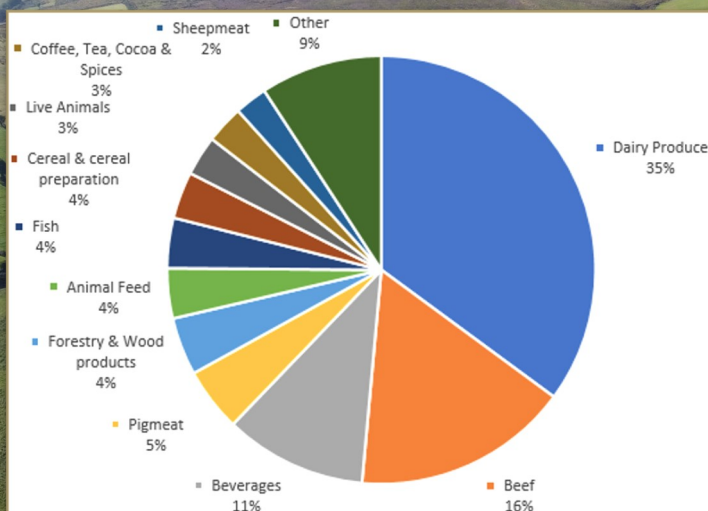
€19,925 was the estimated average Family Farm Income (FFI) across all systems, in 2023, ranging from €7,425 for cattle rearing to €49,432 for dairy

45% decrease on 2022 across all farm systems

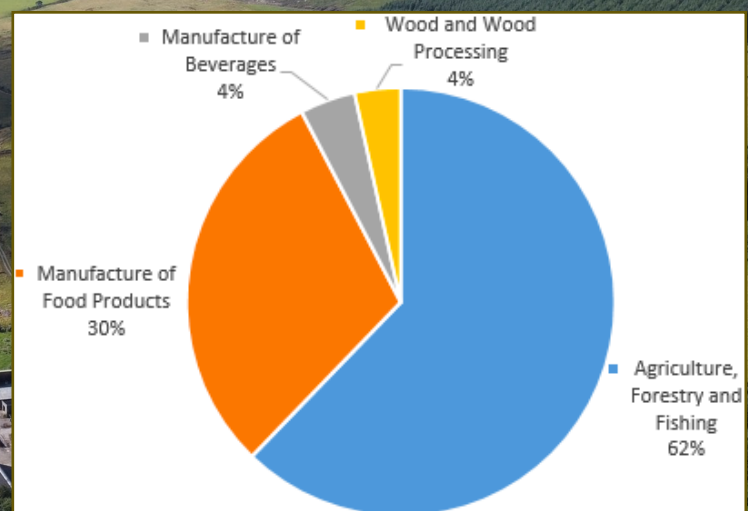
€18.28 billion - Value of total agri-food exports in 2023

9.3% of Irish merchandising exports

Agri-food Exports by Category 2023



Employment 2023





Agricultural Output, Input and Income 2023

According to the CSO release [Output, Input and Income in Agriculture - Final Estimate 2023](#), the value of Agricultural Output at Basic Prices fell by 12,6% to €11.3 billion in 2023. Intermediate consumption costs are estimated to have decreased by €127 million or 1.6% compared to 2022. Agricultural Operating surplus (aggregate farm income) is estimated to have decreased by 39% to €2.9 billion in 2023. When the impact of higher Net Interest payments (+97%) and Land Rental Costs (+15%) are factored in, the fall in Entrepreneurial income amounted to €2 billion, a decrease of 49% on 2022. Overall value of goods output at producer prices decreased by 13.3%, or €1,642 million, to €10,671 million. .

Main Aggregates	Value €m	Main Commodities	Value €m	% GO
Goods Output at Producer Prices ¹	10,670	Goods Output (GO) excl. forage	9,197	100
+ Contract Work	597	of which		
+ Subsidies - Taxes (Products)	32	Cattle	3,013	33
Agricultural Output at Basic Prices	11,299	Milk	3,507	38
- Intermediate Consumption	7,754	Pigs	668	7
Gross Value Added @ Basic Prices	3,546	Sheep	345	4
- Fixed Capital Consumption	1,262	Crops excl. Forage	1,017	11
Net Subsidies	1,607	Other	646	7
- Compensation of Employees	984	Forage Plants	1,474	16
Operating Surplus	2,907	Goods Output at Producer Prices ¹	10,670	

¹including Forage

Source: CSO Output, Input and Income in Agriculture – Final Estimate 2023

Average Family Farm Income 2020 to 2023

The final [Teagasc National Farm Survey 2023](#), which issued in July 2024, shows that the average Family Farm Income across all systems was €19,925 in 2023, a decrease of 57% on 2022. A significant contributor to the drop in average incomes was due to the sharp reduction in Dairy and Tillage farm incomes at 69% and 71% respectively, largely due to lower output value and production volumes coupled with input prices that remained high. While cattle prices remained strong, increased production costs adversely affected income in the beef sector with incomes down between 15 and 20%, while the sheep sector saw a reduction of 22%. In 2023, across farm systems, direct payments made an important contribution to farm income in 2023, the value of direct payments increasing in aggregate terms compared to 2022 and accounting for a larger share of average Family Farm Income (FFI).

Farm Type	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023 vs. 2022	2020-22 Average	2023 vs. 2020-22 Aver- age
Dairy	79,003	97,388	157,591	49,432	-69%	111,327	-56%
Cattle Rear- ing	8,427	10,921	8,767	7,425	-15%	9,372	-21%
Cattle Other	15,525	17,265	18,097	14,735	-19%	16,962	-13%
Sheep	17,880	20,658	16,086	12,625	-22%	18,208	-31%
Tillage	33,339	56,552	73,523	21,399	-71%	54,471	-61%
Average	27,241	34,335	46,595	19,925	-57%	36,057	-45%

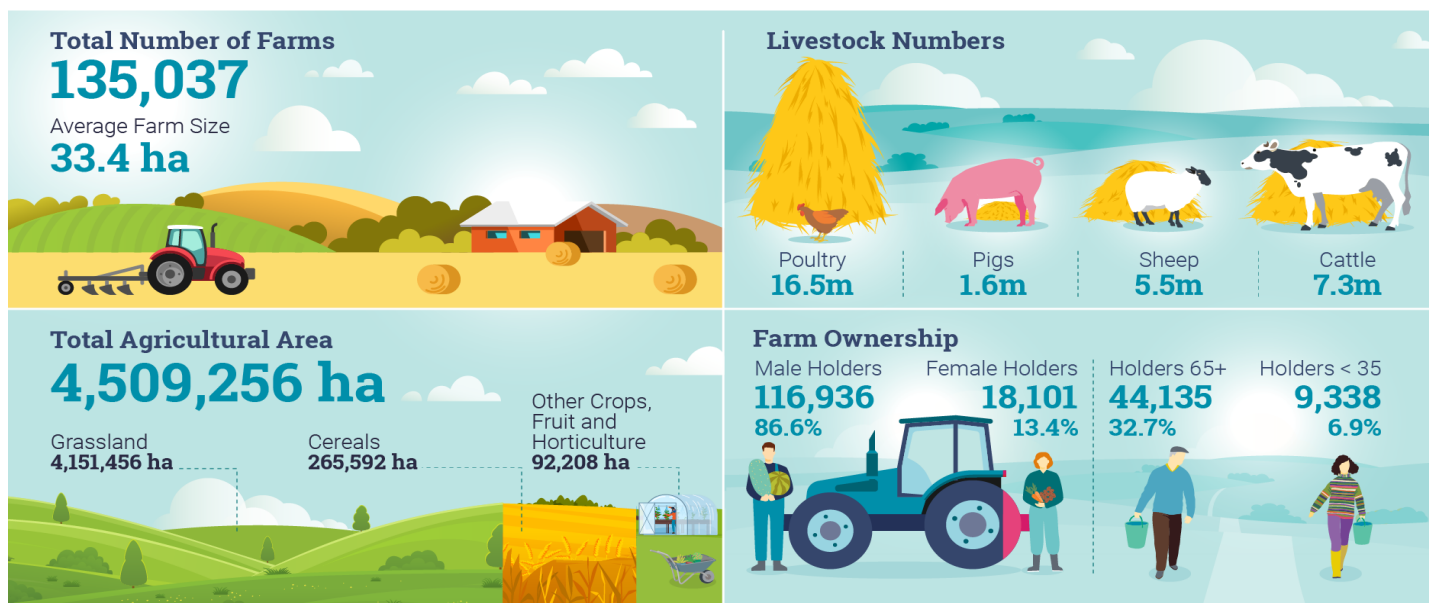
Source : Agricultural Economics and Farm Surveys Department, Teagasc, July 2024



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Census Of Agriculture 2020



Agricultural Land Sales 2018 to 2022

All Land Types	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Value of Land Sold (€)	355,949,924	457,052,808	333,533,125	473,108,978	500,954,653
Number of Transactions (No.)	3,050	3,429	2,807	3,597	3,408
Volume of Land Sold (Acres)	55,145	59,199	48,258	59,597	59,806
Average land price per acre (€)	6,455	7,721	6,911	7,938	8,376

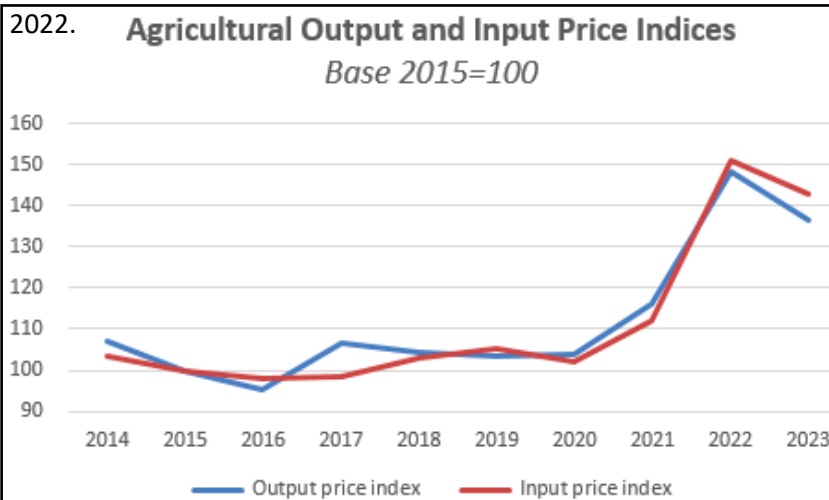
Source: [CSO Agricultural Land Prices](#)

Agricultural Price Indices 2023

The [Agricultural Output Price Index](#) was down 8.2% in 2023 when compared with 2022. The [Agricultural Input Price Index](#) fell by 5.5% over the same period. The Output Price indices show milk and sheep prices were down 27.5% and 1.7% respectively in 2023 when compared with 2022, while pigs and potatoes both rose by 19.1%, eggs were up 15.1%, and cattle by 3.4%. Annual Input price indices decreases were recorded in fertiliser (-31.0%) and energy (-3.5%) when compared with 2022, while the most notable annual increases were in plant protection products (+8.8%), seeds (+7.0%), and veterinary expenses (+6.1%). The annual terms of trade fell 2.9% when compared to

2024 Outlook

In the [12 months to June 2024](#), the Agricultural Input Price Index dropped by 7.3%, while the Agricultural Output Price Index rose by 5.0%. There were significant reductions in the Input prices recorded for Electricity (-20.7%), Feed (-14.4%), Fertiliser (-12.0%), and Motor Fuel (+10.3%). Notable Output price increases were recorded in Potatoes (+64.9%) and Sheep (+11.9%), and significant Output price decreases in Cereals (-31.4%) and in Industrial and Forage Crops (-26.4%)





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Irish Agriculture Labour Force and Organic Farming

Census of Agriculture 2020

Agriculture Labour Force

278,600
persons

73.04%
male

26.96%
female

Labour Units on Farms (Family & Non-Family)

20.09%
female

79.91%
male

Organic Farms in Ireland

1,686

(both fully and under conversion)

Livestock on Organic Farms

Cattle

51,685

Sheep

74,870

Poultry

161,471

0.71% of all cattle

1.36% of all sheep

0.98% of all poultry

Agri-Food Strategy – Food Vision 2030

Food Vision 2030 – A World Leader in Sustainable Food

The agri-food sector has benefited from an approach to strategic planning through the development of ten-year stakeholder-led strategies, updated every five years. Since their inception twenty years ago, these strategies have ensured that the sector has a coherent, stakeholder-led vision and strategy to underpin the sector's continued development.

A Sustainable Food System is profitable throughout (economic sustainability), has broad-based benefits for society (social sustainability) and has a positive or neutral impact on the natural environment (environmental sustainability).

The vision of the current agri-food strategy published in 2021 is that *"Ireland will become a world leader in Sustainable Food Systems over the next decade. This should deliver significant benefits for the Irish agri-food sector itself, for Irish society and the environment."*

In demonstrating the Irish agri-food sector meets the highest standards of sustainability – economic, environmental, and social – this should also provide the basis for the future competitive advantage of the sector. By adopting an integrated food systems approach, Ireland will seek to become a global leader of innovation for sustainable food and agriculture systems, producing safe, nutritious, and high value food that tastes great, while protecting and enhancing our natural and cultural resources and contributing to vibrant rural and coastal communities and the national economy".

Further details at [Food Vision 2030](#)

