

AGRICULTURAL CENSUS 2007

The following data is from the Census of Agriculture 2007. The Agricultural Census is carried out every June by DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs). The census is an annual survey of agricultural activity, which collects information relating to farm type, land use, crops, livestock and labour.

Historically named the June Agricultural and Horticultural Census, this survey was, as its name implied, a census collecting data. In recent years it has been conducted as a sample survey, in which data is only sought from a proportion of holdings in each year. The exception to this is in every tenth year when EU regulations demand a complete census; 2000 was the most recent occasion this was undertaken.

There are currently around 210,000 agricultural holdings in England, many of which are very small. The sample sizes used in recent years are between 45,000 and 75,000, and larger holdings are sampled at a higher rate than smaller ones. Information is collected from these by a postal questionnaire (a trial using electronic forms was run in 2002) sent out under the authority of the Agricultural Statistics Act 1979 as amended by the Agriculture (Amendment) Act 1984. This requires the farmer to state what agricultural activity is happening on the land as of **June** each year.

Two sets of results are produced and published each year. Provisional estimates are published for key sections during September and final results are published for all sections in December. All estimates are produced using statistical methods, which allow for non-respondent/non-sampled holdings, making use of past data, where available. This article uses the results from September each year; and only re-releasing if DEFRA make any amendments in December. In order to ensure that individual farms are not identifiable DEFRA have suppressed certain figures.

Labour

In 2007, Herefordshire's total agricultural labour force had increased by 23% since 2000 (from a total of 9,300 in 2000 to a total of 11,451 in 2007). Comparatively, total labour figures regionally had decreased by 1% and by 6% across England.

Table 1. Farm labour numbers, percentages of types of workers and percentage change since year 2000, (2007)

	Herefordshire		West Midlands		England	
	No & %	% Change since 2000	No & %	% Change since 2000	No & %	% Change since 2000
Total labour numbers	11451	23%	47,533	-1%	361,017	-6%
% of full time farmers	20%	-11%	26%	-13%	25%	-14%
% of part time farmers	28%	8%	35%	10%	35%	13%
% of full time managers	2%	2%	2%	26%	3%	28%
% of part time managers	1%	78%	1%	126%	1%	160%
% of male full time employees	7%	-21%	8%	-32%	10%	-32%
% of male part time employees	4%	23%	5%	18%	5%	13%
% of female full time employees	1%	28%	2%	-14%	2%	-11%
% of female part time employees	2%	-12%	3%	-15%	4%	-20%
% of casual workers	34%	136%	17%	22%	12%	-9%

--- Numbers suppressed by Defra

Note: small numbers of employees can create a higher percentage change

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In Herefordshire the highest proportion of the agricultural workforce were casual workers, accounting for 34%. Casual workers only accounted for 17% in the West Midlands region and 12% in England. Part time farmers accounted for the greatest proportion of the workforce in the West Midlands and England as a whole, both 35% compared to only 28% in Herefordshire.

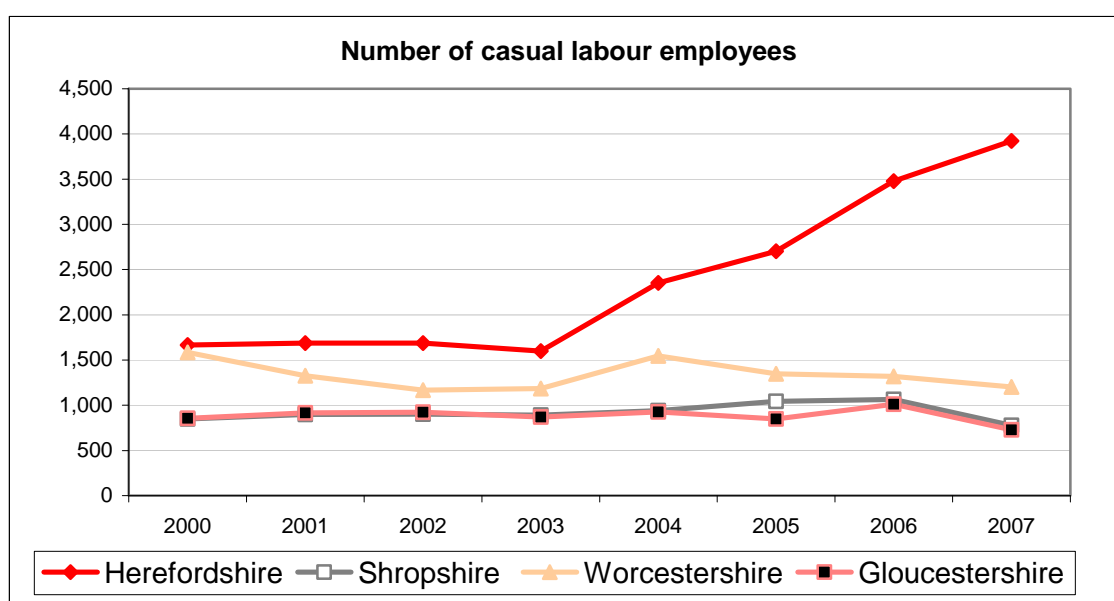
Numbers of full-time managers in Herefordshire have increased by 2% since 2000. A small increase compared to that seen regionally and nationally (26% increase in the West Midlands and 28% across England as a whole). However, the proportion of full-time managers in the agricultural labour force is small and similar across all areas. There has been a large increase in part time managers in all areas since 2000 but again they represent a small proportion (1%) of the workforce.

Casual Labour Employees

Note: Casual labour employees include - family and non-family workers who are employed for less than 20 weeks of the year, youth trainees on official schemes and Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS) workers.

As noted previously 34% of Herefordshire's agricultural labour force were employed as casual workers (3,924 people), in 2007. This was compared to just 17% of the West Midlands agricultural workforce and 12% of England's. For Herefordshire, this is was a 12% increase from the previous year and an 136% increase since 2000, far greater than the regional and national change (22% and -9% respectively).

Chart 2. Number of casual labour employees in Herefordshire and neighbouring authorities, Shropshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire

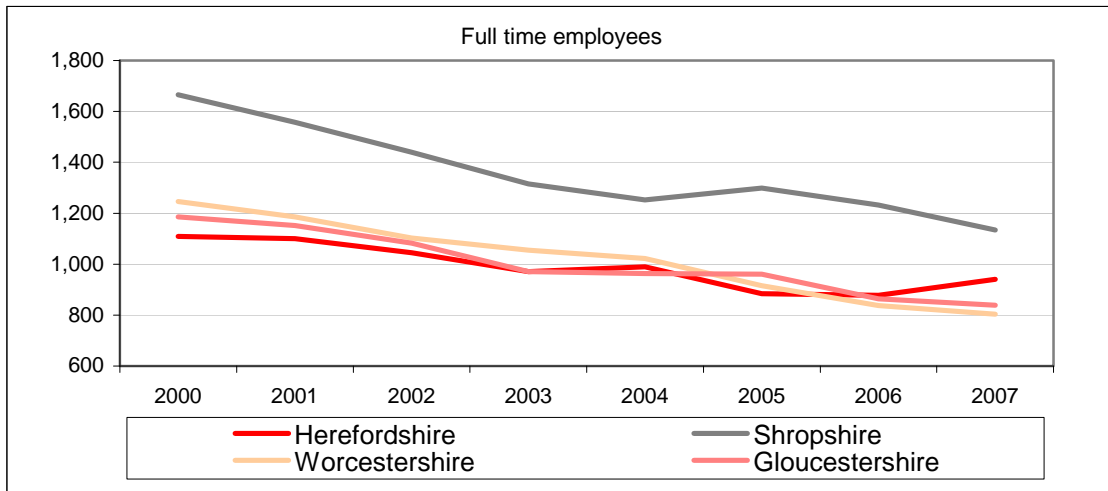


Since 2003, Herefordshire has seen a large increase in the number of casual labour employees, resulting in much larger numbers being employed in Herefordshire than in neighbouring authorities. In fact all other neighbouring authorities saw a decrease on the previous year.

Full & Part-time employees

Note: Part time employees are those who work fewer than 39 hours per week.

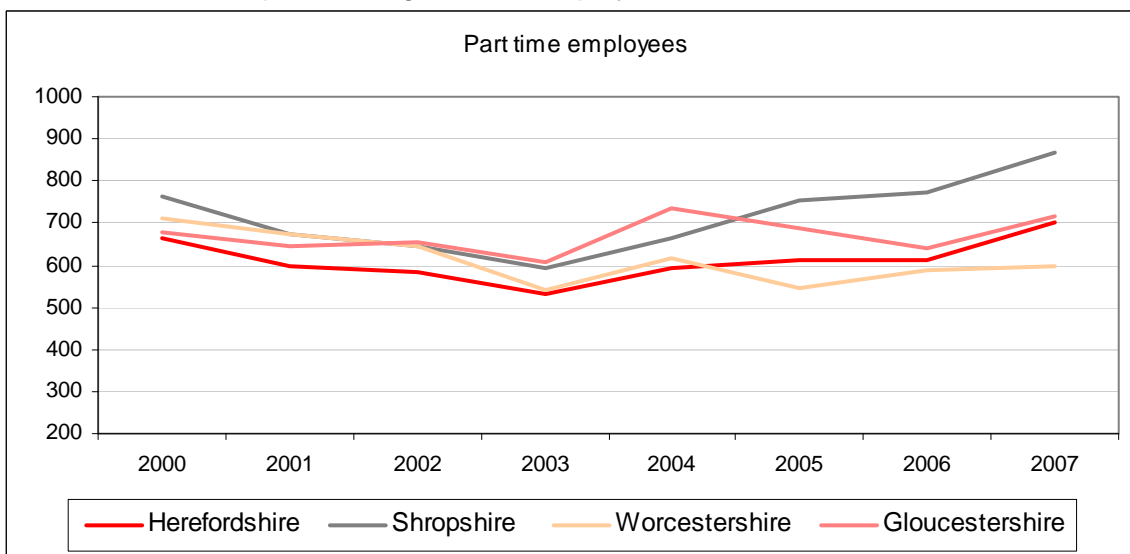
Chart 3. Number of full time agricultural employees



Since 2000 there has been a general downward trend in the number of **full-time** agricultural employees across all areas, with a 15% reduction in Herefordshire over this time period (chart 3). Despite this Herefordshire actually saw an increase of 7% between 2006 and 2007.

All areas in 2007 saw an increase in the numbers of **part-time** employees (chart 4). However the pattern was less clear in the previous three years with different areas experiencing both increases and decreases in the number of part time workers. Prior to 2003, all areas showed a downward trend. Over the whole period Herefordshire experienced a 6% increase in part time employees, compared to a 14% increase in Shropshire, 6% in Gloucestershire and a decrease of 16% in Worcestershire.

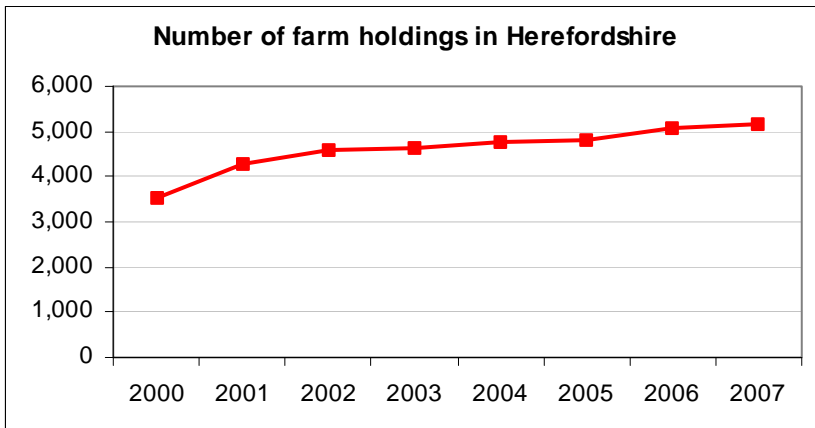
Chart 4. Number of part time agricultural employees



Land Use

In 2007 there were a total of 5,149 working farm holdings in Herefordshire with a total farmed area of approximately 180,324 hectares (ha)¹.

Chart 5. Number of farm holdings in Herefordshire

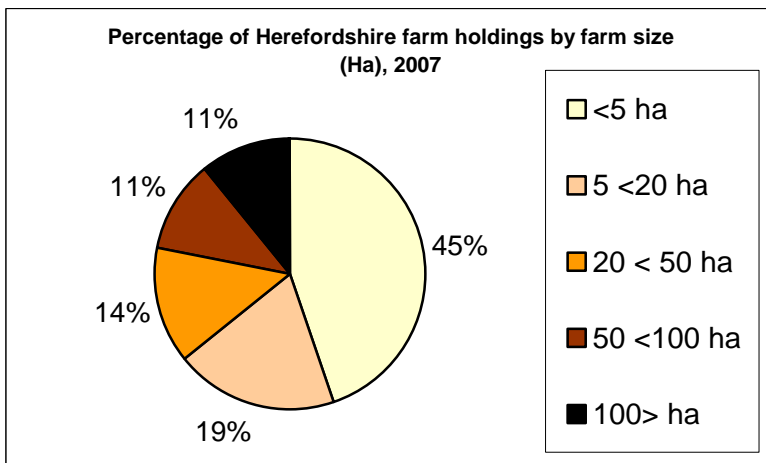


The number of farm holdings in Herefordshire has increased steadily since 2000, by 46% in total over this period.

Over the past 7 years, the total farmed area has fluctuated but overall it has increased by 2% since 2000.

In 2007 the proportion of land that was 'owned' or 'rented' showed little change from the previous year, with owned land accounting for 81% and rented land 19%, a respective increase and decrease of 1 percentage point.

Chart 6. Percentage of Herefordshire farm holdings by farm size (ha), 2007



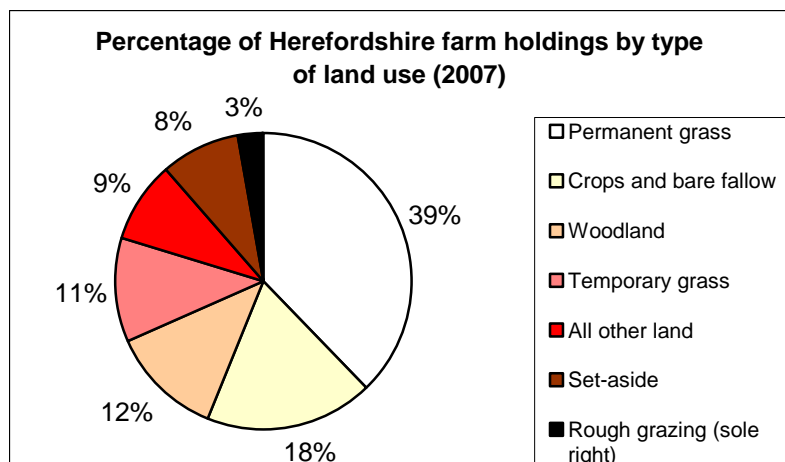
The majority of Herefordshire farms are quite small; 45% are less than 5 hectares and a further 19% are between 5 and 20 ha (2,307 and 1,001 holdings respectively). Only 11% of Herefordshire farms are 100 hectares or greater in size (554 holdings). This pattern is similar in Herefordshire's neighbouring authorities, as well as regionally and nationally, all with higher proportions of smaller farms.

Number of farm holdings by type of farm

The greatest proportion of Herefordshire's agricultural holdings (39%) are permanent grass, which accounts for 43% (77,950 ha) of the total area.

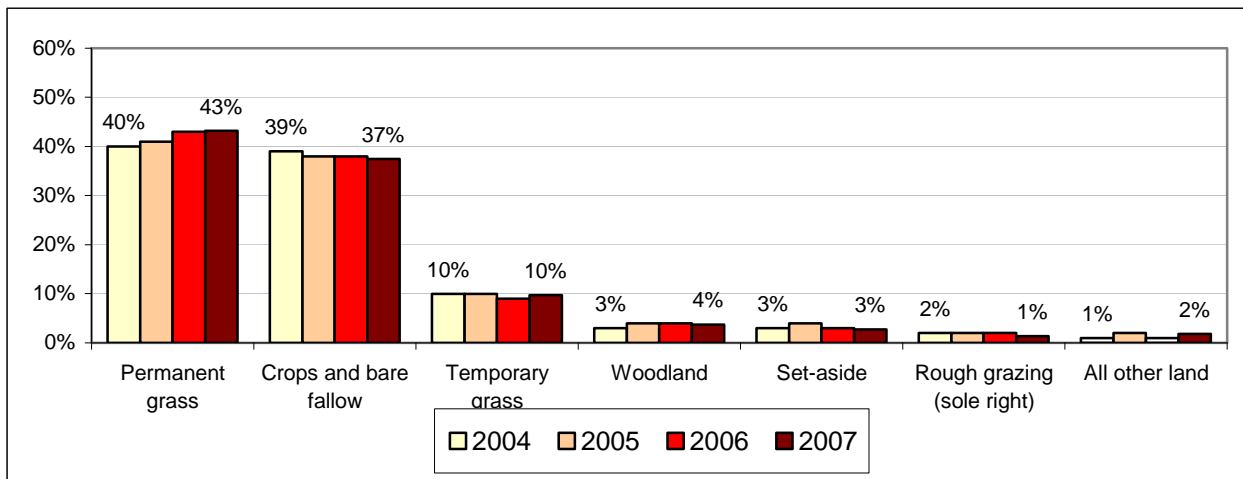
The second most predominant type of holding (18%) is crops and bare fallow, which occupies 37% (67,520 ha) of the total area.

Chart 7. Percentage of Herefordshire farm holdings by type of land use (2007)



¹ 1 hectare = 2.5 acres

Chart 8. Percentage of Herefordshire's farmed area by type of land use (2004- 2007)



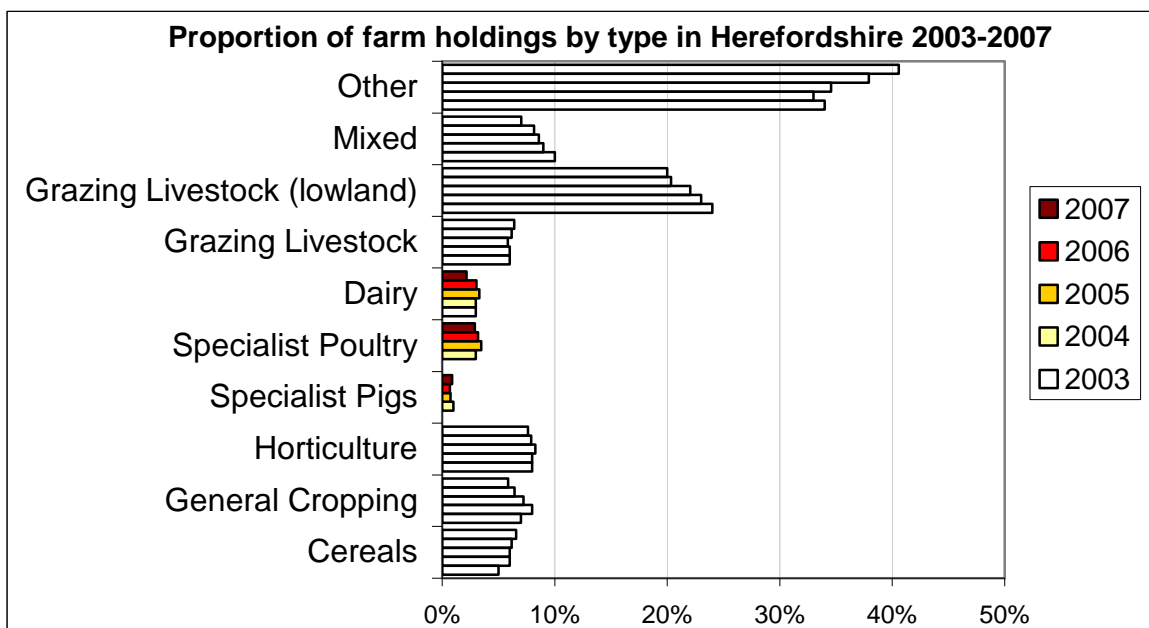
In terms of the proportion of land area used for each type of land use (chart 8), over the last few years, Herefordshire has seen little change with the exception of slight increases in the area of land used for permanent grass and a slight decrease in the area of crops and bare fallow.

Herefordshire's neighbouring authorities, Shropshire, Gloucestershire and Worcestershire, have similar land use proportions to that of Herefordshire. The greatest variation is for 'permanent grass' and 'crops and bare fallow', varying by 6 percentage points and 7 percentage points respectively. In Herefordshire 'permanent grass' (43%) accounts for slightly more than in Worcestershire (41%) and Gloucestershire (40%) but less than Shropshire (47%), whilst 'crops and bare fallow' (37%) accounts for less than in Worcestershire (40%) and Gloucestershire (38%) but more than in Shropshire (33%).

Farm Type

The largest proportion of farms in Herefordshire are classed as 'other' i.e. those that do not fit within any other agricultural classification (e.g. specialist goat). These holdings accounted for 41% in 2007, a marked increase on the proportion in 2003 (34%), but still lower than that seen in the neighbouring authorities, regionally and nationally (Chart 9 and Table 2).

Chart 9. Proportion of farm holdings by type in Herefordshire (2003-2007)



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Out of the remaining categories 'grazing livestock (lowland)' accounted for the greatest proportion in Herefordshire, although this decreased from 24% in 2004 to 20% in 2007. The proportion of farm holdings for grazing livestock is relatively low and has remained the same in Herefordshire since 2003 at 6%.

Herefordshire has a proportionately higher amount of horticultural holdings (8%) than Shropshire (2%), Gloucestershire (5%) and regionally and nationally, both 5%, but slightly lower than Worcestershire (9%).

Herefordshire has slightly higher proportions of general cropping holdings than other areas, 6% compared to Shropshire (3%), the West Midlands region (4%) and England (4%). However, this has seen a decrease since 2004.

Herefordshire and Worcestershire have lower proportions of dairy holdings accounting for only 2% and 3% respectively, compared to 5% across England and 8% in Shropshire.

'Mixed' farm holdings accounted for 7% in 2007, a decrease on 2004. This is still a greater proportion though when compared to other areas. 'Cereals' holdings on the other hand account for a lower proportion than all other areas, 7% compared to 8% in the West Midlands region and 11% Nationally.

Table 2. Proportions of farm type holdings for Herefordshire, neighbouring authorities Shropshire, Worcestershire & Gloucestershire the West Midlands region and England, 2007

	Herefordshire	Shropshire	Worcs.	Glouc.	West Mids.	England
Other	41%	44%	45%	48%	44%	45%
Grazing Livestock (lowland)	20%	18%	21%	23%	19%	16%
Horticulture	8%	2%	9%	5%	5%	4%
Cereals	7%	7%	9%	10%	8%	11%
Mixed	7%	6%	4%	5%	5%	4%
General Cropping	6%	3%	4%	1%	4%	4%
Grazing Livestock	6%	8%	0%	0%	6%	6%
Specialist Poultry	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Dairy	2%	8%	3%	4%	6%	5%
Specialist Pigs	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

Farm Incomes

To understand how farming contributes to the economy, Defra undertakes a Farm Business Survey to ascertain what income is generated from farms across England. This gives a breakdown of business farm income by farm type. The latest data is shown in an article in the August 2008 Quarterly Economic Report (QER), available on the Herefordshire Partnership QER page.

Crop areas

In 2007 37% of Herefordshire's agricultural land area was used for crops and bare fallow, the second largest type of agricultural land use in Herefordshire, after permanent grassland.

Within this category there are many different types of crops farmed in Herefordshire. Table 4 shows the area farmed for each type of crop in 2007 and previous years to show how the amount of land devoted to different crops has changed over the last few years.

Table 4. Comparison of amount of crop area (hectares) in Herefordshire over a six-year period

Crop	2001	2004	2007	% cropped land (2007)	Overall change 2001-2007
Wheat	22,968	29,320	25,850	38%	↑
Winter Barley	6,223	4,936	4,149	6%	↓
Spring Barley	4,812	2,918	2,541	4%	↓
Oats	4,834	4,353	5,202	8%	↑
Other Cereals	317	595	529	1%	↑
Total Cereals	39,153				↓
Potatoes	6,239	6,707	6,050	9%	↓
Sugar beet	1,736	1,775	1,076	2%	↓
Field beans	3,860	2,867	1,562	2%	↓
Peas for harvesting dry area	1,687	1,026	806	1%	↓
Oilseed rape	4,109	5,730	6,655	10%	↑
Linseed	90	23	---	---	↑
Root Crops, Brassicas, Fodder Beet	412	378	1,081	2%	↑
Other crops for stockfeeding	741	636	304	0*%	↓
Maize	2,757	2,497	3,182	5%	↑
Other arable crops	962	924	869	1%	↓
Bare fallow	494	825	1,977	3%	↑
Total peas & Beans	37	35	50	0*%	↑
All other veg & salad	322	398	307	0*%	↓
Total veg grown in open¹	359				↓
Under glass or plastic	18	21	49	0*%	↑
Top fruit*	4,835	3,919	3,960	6%	↓
Small fruit**	840	1,063	1,151	2%	↑
					↓
Hardy nursery stock	244	302	143	0*%	↓
Bulbs & flowers	23	24	20	0*%	↓
Total Horticulture	6,317				↓
Total crop area³	68,557	70,517	67,512	100%	↓

Note:

--- Figures suppressed by DEFRA

¹ Total veg grown in open' is sum of 'Total peas and beans' and 'All other veg & salad'.

² Total fruit is sum of 'Top fruit' and 'Small fruit'

³ 'Total crop area' excludes suppressed data

* Top fruit refers to fruit grown in orchards

** Small fruit includes strawberries, raspberries, blackcurrants, gooseberries, blackberries, wine grapes and other small fruit)

0*% indicates values that are less than 0.5% that have been rounded to zero. This is done to differentiate between low values and zero values.

↑ Increase in farmed area ↓ Decrease in farmed area

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Excluding figures for the categories that are suppressed, 57% of Herefordshire's agricultural cropping land was used for cereals, in 2007. Out of the cereals, 'wheat', accounted for the single largest proportion (38%) of total land used for cropping. This was despite the total cropping area for 'wheat' experiencing a 12% reduction between 2004 and 2007. The next largest proportions of land were used for 'potatoes' and 'oilseed rape' (accounting for 9% and 10% of the cropping land respectively).

Out of the other cereals 'winter barley' and 'spring barley' accounted for 6% and 4% respectively. 'winter Barley' and 'spring barley' saw a general trend of decrease in cropping area since 2001, showing reductions of 33% and 47% respectively. The land area of 'oats' fluctuated over the reporting period but in 2007 was 8% up on 2001. In addition there is an 'other cereals' category but this only accounted for 1% of total land area in 2007.

In general the total land used for cereals has remained fairly constant in Herefordshire, showing just a 2% decrease in 2007 on 2001.

After 'wheat', 'oilseed rape' accounted for the largest proportion of cropping area, 10% in 2007. The crop also showed a marked increase in area over the reporting period, 62% between 2001 and 2007. This proportion remained lower than most other areas, e.g. 17% in Gloucestershire, 15% across England, 12% in the West Midlands region and Worcestershire but the same as in Shropshire (10%).

The area of land used for potatoes in Herefordshire decreased by 6% between 2006 and 2007 and by 3% since 2001. 9% of Herefordshire's agricultural cropping land was used for potatoes, much higher than neighbouring authorities (between 1% and 3%), the West Midlands (5%) and England (3%).

Maize also accounted for a significant proportion of cropping land in Herefordshire, 5% in 2007. The crop also saw a general increase, 15% on 2001.

Since 2001, the area of land used as 'bare fallow' has seen a large increase (from 494 ha in 2001 to 1,977 ha in 2007, A 300% increase) however, this still only accounted for 3% of Herefordshire's agricultural cropping land used. Both regionally and nationally, bare fallow accounted for 4%.

The proportion of crop area in Herefordshire used for horticulture was 8% in 2007, a 4% reduction on 2006. Since 2001 levels of horticulture followed no clear trend year on year, but, in 2007, had shown an overall decrease of 10% on 2001. Comparatively 4% of land regionally and nationally was used for horticulture, and 9% in Worcestershire.

Herefordshire has seen an overall decline of 18%, since 2001, in the area of land used for top fruit (orchard crops such as apples and pears), although since 2005 it has shown a slight increase of 4%. Herefordshire maintains a larger proportion of land (6%) for top fruit than regional and national proportions (2% and 1% respectively).

In 2007 the area of land used for small fruit (fruit such as strawberries, blackberries and wine grapes) saw a drop of 15% on 2006, but a substantial increase since 2001 (37%). This resulted in Herefordshire having 2% of agricultural cropping land used for small fruits in 2007, compared to 1% regionally and less than 1% nationally.

Whilst the area 'under glass or plastic' occupied a small proportion of the cropping area in 2007 (less than 1%), it experienced a large increase (171%) over the period 2001 to 2007. The proportion in 2007 was greater than that for the West Midlands region and England as a whole. Out of the neighbouring authorities only Worcestershire had a greater proportion.

Livestock

In the 2007 Census, Defra made some significant changes to way it reports on livestock numbers. The most significant change was to their methodology for collecting data for cattle. Previously data was derived from questions within the survey but in 2007 Defra used the Cattle Tracing System (CTS) to ascertain stock numbers. The CTS is a computer based system to register cattle in Great Britain, and is the fourth element in a comprehensive system of cattle identification and registration. Data relating to where cattle are kept is recorded by the Government so that the animals can be traced for a variety of reasons, including animal disease. This change in methodology is in order to try and reduce the burden on farmers completing the questionnaire. However, this also means that this data is no longer comparable with previous years.

Table 5. Livestock and holding numbers by stock type, 2004-2007

	Livestock numbers			Number holdings (2007)	% all holdings***
	2004	2007	% change 2004-2007		
Dairy	#	24,507			
Beef	#	100,277			
Cattle under 1 year	#	35,613			
Total Cattle					25%
Breeding pigs	2,680	3,035	13%		
Other pigs	26,334	29,927	14%		
Total pigs	28,504				5%
Breeding ewes	325,155	293,542	-10%		
Rams ¹		7,007			
Lambs under 1 year	325,965	320,678	-2%		
Other sheep	17,352	15,371	-11%		
Total sheep	660,589	636,598	-4%	1,860	36%
Goats	1,692	1,494	-12%	99	2%
Horses ¹		4,409		906	18%
Total livestock (numbers)*	827,081				0%
Total fowl	---	7,944,710	-7%**	889	17%
Total duck	---	20,403	435%**	205	4%
Total geese	---	1,410	-22%**	158	3%
Turkey ¹		192,589		41	1%
All other birds ¹		63,961		64	1%
Total Poultry¹					19%

Note:

The 'Number of holdings' value is a count of all holdings that have that type of livestock. Therefore farms with more than one type of livestock will be double counted and that column will not sum to the number of holdings in Herefordshire.
 # Data not comparable. New methodology for 2007 using the Cattle Tracing System
¹ Category not previously reported new for 2007
 * Excludes poultry
 ** Change from 2005
 *** This is % of all holdings in Herefordshire (5,149) not just those that hold livestock
 --- Data suppressed by Defra

Out of all livestock, sheep were farmed on the greatest number of holdings within Herefordshire in 2007, 1,860 out of 5,149 (36%). This proportion was high compared to regionally and nationally, where only 27% and 23% of farm holdings were used for sheep farming respectively.

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The total number of sheep on these holdings was 636,598, a 4% reduction on the number in 2004. The number of holdings with sheep saw a reduction of 4% on the previous year. The average herd size for Herefordshire was 342, greater than for all other areas except Shropshire (365).

Cattle were farmed on 1,301 holdings (25%) in Herefordshire, a total herd of 124,784 animals in 2007. This was the same proportion as seen nationally but lower than in the West Midlands region (27%) and Shropshire (31%). The average cattle herd size for Herefordshire was 96. This was smaller than for all other areas apart from Worcestershire (82). The national average was 106.

Table 6. Average herd/flock size for all areas, 2007.

	Cattle	Pigs	Sheep	Goats	Horses	Fowls	Total Poultry
England	106	283	323	13	7	3546	3317
West Midlands Region	102	166	306	14	6	3772	3469
Herefordshire, County of	96	119	342	15	5	8936	8245
Worcestershire	82	165	272	8	6	2295	2189
Shropshire	119	208	365	10	6	4208	3905
Gloucestershire	108	81	248	36	7	3451	3073

Fowl (chicken) farming accounted for 17% of farm holdings in 2007, a total of 7,944,710 birds, a 7% reduction on the number in 2005. The average size of fowl farms in Herefordshire was significantly greater than all other areas in 2007, with average flock sizes being 8,936 compared to 4,208 in Shropshire and 3,546 nationally. This is likely to reflect a number of very large installations in Herefordshire. Ducks and geese were kept on 4% and 3% of farms respectively. Slightly lower proportions than in other areas. When comparing the number of ducks in 2007 with numbers in 2005 there was an increase of 435%, taking the total stock to 20,403.

Horses were kept on 18% of farms in Herefordshire but the total number of horses was only 4409. This is an average herd of 5 for Herefordshire, lower than both the West Midlands region (6) and England as a whole (7).

Pigs were farmed on 5% of all holdings in Herefordshire, a total herd of 32,962. This figure saw a 16% increase on that for 2004. The average herd size in 2007 was 119, low compared to all other areas except Gloucestershire, with England having an average herd size of 283.

Goats were kept on 2% (99) of holdings in 2007, a total stock of 1,494 goats. This was a 12% decrease on 2004.

For further information on the data in this article, please contact the Research Team on 01432 383634, or e-mail researchteam@herefordshire.gov.uk

OR for a copy of the full national report go to www.defra.gov.uk