

Forestry Statistics 2016

A compendium of statistics about woodland, forestry and
primary wood processing in the United Kingdom



Chapter 3: Trade

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3 Trade

Introduction

This chapter contains information about UK imports and exports of wood products, and about the level of apparent consumption estimated from data for UK production, imports and exports.

Information on imports and exports mainly comes from the Overseas Trade Statistics compiled by HM Revenue & Customs. Estimates are provided at a UK level only. International comparisons of apparent consumption are provided in the International Forestry chapter. Further information on the data sources and methodology used to compile the figures is provided in the Sources chapter.

Figures for 2015 were previously published in "UK Wood Production and Trade: 2015 Provisional Figures", released on 19 May 2016. Figures for 2015 have not been revised from those previously published. For further details on revisions, see the Trade section of the Sources chapter.

A copy of all trade tables is available to download as an Excel spreadsheet from the Tables for Download page.

Key findings

The main findings are:

UK imports:

- 6.3 million cubic metres of sawnwood in 2015, a 2% decrease from the 2014 figure;
- 3.2 million cubic metres of wood-based panels in 2015, a 1% decrease from 2014;
- 6.5 million tonnes of wood pellets in 2015, a 38% increase from 2014;
- 5.9 million tonnes of paper in 2015, unchanged from 2014.
- The total value of wood product imports in 2015 was £7.5 billion, a 5% increase from 2014; of which £4.4 billion was pulp and paper.
- Sawn softwood, particleboard, fibreboard, and paper and paperboard were overwhelmingly imported from EU countries in 2015.
- Sawn hardwood and wood pulp imports originated from a range of both EU and non-EU countries in 2015.
- The vast majority of UK imports of plywood and wood pellets in 2015 came from countries outwith the EU.

UK exports:

- The total value of wood product exports in 2015 was £1.6 billion, a 5% decrease from 2014; of which £1.4 billion was pulp and paper.

3.1 Apparent consumption of wood in the UK

Apparent consumption is the amount of timber, measured as wood raw material equivalent (WRME) underbark, used as wood and wood products by people and industries in the United Kingdom. It is calculated as total United Kingdom production plus imports, minus exports. Apparent consumption differs from actual consumption by the extent of changes in the level of stocks. It is not practical to collect information on actual consumption.

UK production of roundwood totalled 10.6 million m³ WRME underbark in 2015 (Table 3.1). A further 49.1 million m³ WRME underbark of wood and wood products were imported to the UK and 4.1 million m³ WRME underbark were exported, giving apparent consumption of 55.6 million m³ WRME underbark. This represented a 4% increase in apparent consumption from the previous year, but is still lower than the peak of 56.7 million m³ WRME underbark in 2007. These figures exclude recycled wood and recovered paper (see Table 3.3 for statistics on recovered paper).

Imports accounted for 82% of all wood (production + imports) in the UK in 2015.

Table 3.1 Apparent consumption of wood¹ in the UK, 2006-2015

Year	UK production ²	Imports	Exports	Apparent Consumption
2006	8.4	53.6	5.9	56.1
2007	9.0	54.5	6.8	56.7
2008	8.4	46.3	5.3	49.4
2009	8.6	39.5	4.2	44.0
2010	9.6	41.6	5.5	45.8
2011	10.0	40.6	5.2	45.5
2012	10.1	39.6	6.5	43.2
2013	10.8	42.2	6.2	46.8
2014	11.2	47.0	4.8	53.4
2015	10.6	49.1	4.1	55.6

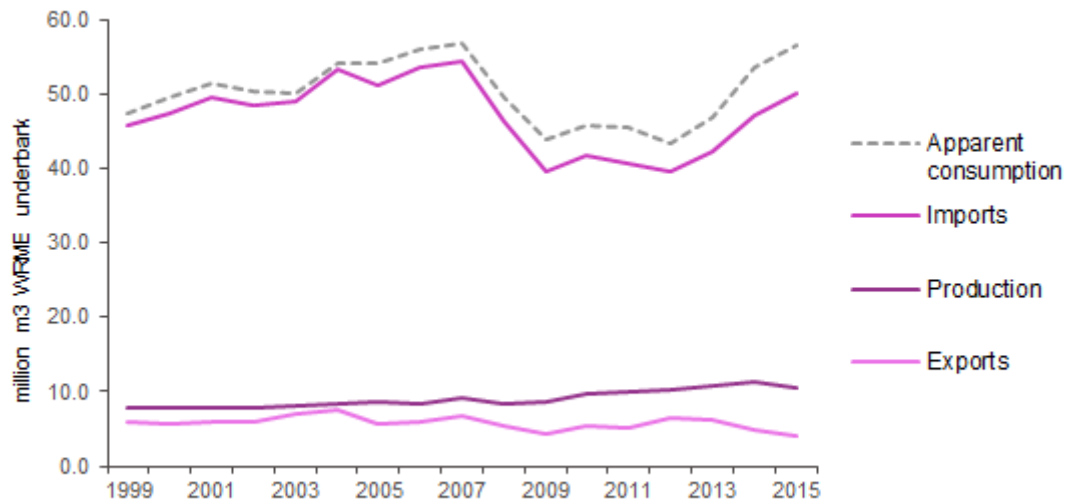
Source: industry surveys, industry associations, UK overseas trade statistics (HM Revenue & Customs) and conversion factors to Wood Raw Material Equivalent (WRME).

Notes:

1. Excludes recovered paper.

2. UK production of roundwood is estimated from deliveries to wood processing industries and others, as in tables 2.5 and 2.6.

Figure 3.1 Apparent consumption of wood¹ in the UK, 1999-2015



Source: industry surveys, industry associations, UK overseas trade statistics (HM Revenue & Customs) and conversion factors to Wood Raw Material Equivalent (WRME).

Notes:

1. Excludes recovered paper.

2. UK production of roundwood is estimated from deliveries to wood processing industries and others, as in tables 2.5 and 2.6.

3.2 Apparent consumption of wood products in the UK

UK production accounted for 36% of the UK sawnwood market, 51% of the UK wood-based panel market and 44% of the UK paper market in 2015 (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 Apparent consumption of wood products^{1,2} in the UK, 2015

Product	UK production	Imports	Exports	Apparent consumption
Sawnwood (thousand m³)				
Coniferous	3 449	5 888	167	9 170
Non-coniferous	44	435	20	459
Total	3 493	6 323	187	9 629
Wood-based panels (thousand m³)				
Veneer sheets	0	15	3	12
Plywood	0	1 468	45	1 422
Particleboard	2 324	970	167	3 127
Fibreboard	756	764	71	1 449
Total	3 080	3 217	286	6 011
Paper & paperboard (thousand tonnes)				
Graphic papers	1 053	3 384	303	4 134
Sanitary & household papers	772	244	17	999
Packaging materials	1 894	2 149	373	3 670
Other paper & paperboard	251	145	115	281
Total	3 970	5 922	808	9 084

Source: industry surveys, industry associations, UK overseas trade statistics (HM Revenue & Customs).

Notes:

1. Excludes other wood products, e.g. fuelwood and round fencing.

2. Excludes roundwood and intermediate products (e.g. sawmill products, pulp and recovered paper) to avoid double-counting.

3.3 Flow of recovered paper

UK production of recovered paper (the amount recovered from businesses and households in the UK) totalled 8.0 million tonnes in 2015 (Table 3.3). There was a 10% increase in exports of recovered paper to 4.9 million tonnes in 2015 from the previous year, resulting in a 10% reduction in apparent consumption.

Table 3.3 Flow of recovered paper, 2006-2015

Year	UK production	Imports	Exports	Apparent consumption¹
2006	8 015	140	3 996	4 159
2007	8 617	88	4 749	3 956
2008	8 768	74	4 891	3 951
2009	8 155	94	4 444	3 805
2010	8 003	115	4 388	3 730
2011	8 036	177	4 479	3 733
2012	8 099	160	4 447	3 812
2013	7 901	184	4 248	3 837
2014	8 014	136	4 436	3 714
2015	7 977	239	4 881	3 335

Source: Confederation of Paper Industries, UK overseas trade statistics (HM Revenue & Customs).

Notes:

1. Apparent consumption of recovered paper refers to use of recycled paper pulp in the UK.

3.4 UK import quantities by product

Wood imports to the UK in 2015 included 6.3 million cubic metres of sawnwood (a 2% decrease from the previous year), 3.2 million cubic metres of wood-based panels (1% decrease) and 6.5 million tonnes of wood pellets (38% increase) (Table 3.4). A total of 5.9 million tonnes of paper was imported into the UK in 2015, unchanged from 2014.

Table 3.4 UK import quantities, 2006-2015

Year	(thousand m ³)			(thousand tonnes)				Total pulp & paper
	Sawnwood	Wood-based panels	Other wood ²	Wood pellets ³	Paper	Pulp	Recovered paper	
2006	7 963	3 959	1 133	..	7 741	1 452	140	9 332
2007	8 469	3 858	1 621	..	7 890	1 427	88	9 405
2008	5 886	3 389	1 921	..	7 403	1 344	74	8 821
2009	5 240	2 500	821	45	7 018	940	94	8 052
2010	5 699	2 701	1 071	551	7 254	1 094	115	8 462
2011	4 936	2 827	985	1 015	6 887	1 009	177	8 073
2012	5 179	2 650	965	1 487	6 631	1 021	160	7 812
2013	5 488	2 964	1 267	3 389	5 929	1 100	184	7 213
2014	6 425	3 260	1 351	4 757	5 949	1 234	136	7 319
2015	6 323	3 217	1 471	6 548	5 922	1 223	239	7 384

Source: UK overseas trade statistics (HM Revenue & Customs), industry associations

Notes:

1. There are reliability concerns for some of these figures, particularly for individual products (see Sources chapter).

2. Includes roundwood, wood charcoal, chips, particles and residues. Excludes wood pellets from 2009.

3. .. Denotes data not available (wood pellets included within 'Other wood' category before 2009).

3.5 UK export quantities by product

A total of 5.7 million tonnes of pulp and paper (including recovered paper) was exported from the UK in 2015 (table 3.5). This represented a 4% increase from the previous year.

Table 3.5 UK export quantities, 2006-2015

Year	(thousand m ³)			(thousand tonnes)				
	Sawnwood	Wood-based panels	Other wood ²	Wood pellets ³	Paper	Pulp	Recovered paper	Total pulp & paper
2006	415	510	1 214	..	1 002	24	3 996	5 022
2007	346	599	1 353	..	971	24	4 749	5 743
2008	222	520	1 289	..	1 031	10	4 891	5 932
2009	203	451	657	12	896	22	4 444	5 361
2010	195	509	1 029	60	926	35	4 388	5 349
2011	162	546	1 430	38	974	32	4 479	5 485
2012	141	597	1 778	54	1 102	36	4 447	5 585
2013	167	432	1 219	106	1 119	23	4 248	5 390
2014	175	404	984	98	1 015	21	4 436	5 472
2015	187	286	987	88	808	24	4 881	5 713

Source: UK overseas trade statistics (HM Revenue & Customs), industry associations

Notes:

1. There are reliability concerns for some of these figures, particularly for individual products (see Sources chapter).
2. Includes roundwood, wood charcoal, chips, particles and residues. Excludes wood pellets from 2009.
3. .. Denotes data not available (wood pellets included within 'Other wood' category before 2009).

3.6 UK import values by product

Wood product imports in 2015 were valued at a total of £7.5 billion, a 5% increase from the level in 2014 (Table 3.6).

Pulp and paper (including recovered paper) imports were valued at £4.4 billion in 2015 (around three fifths of the total value of wood product imports). Sawnwood imports were valued at £1.3 billion in 2015, wood-based panels at £1.0 billion and wood pellets at £0.8 billion.

Table 3.6 UK import values, 2006-2015

Year	Sawn wood	Wood-based panels	Other wood ²	Wood pellets ³	Paper	Pulp	Recovered paper	Total pulp & paper	Total
									£ million
2006	1 144	926	112	..	3 599	548	9	4 156	6 338
2007	1 516	914	128	..	3 741	526	7	4 275	6 833
2008	1 085	873	158	..	3 655	608	10	4 273	6 389
2009	953	677	104	7	3 635	425	11	4 071	5 811
2010	1 199	781	110	69	3 997	593	17	4 607	6 765
2011	1 080	838	79	129	4 049	613	34	4 696	6 822
2012	1 084	791	75	185	3 727	519	21	4 266	6 402
2013	1 180	882	88	412	3 644	500	21	4 165	6 727
2014	1 420	936	82	545	3 667	509	19	4 196	7 180
2015	1 311	958	96	777	3 711	642	23	4 375	7 517

Source: UK overseas trade statistics (HM Revenue & Customs), industry associations

Notes:

1. There are reliability concerns for some of these figures, particularly for individual products (see Sources chapter).

2. Includes roundwood, wood charcoal, chips, particles and residues. Excludes wood pellets from 2009.

3. .. Denotes data not available (wood pellets included within 'Other wood' category before 2009).

3.7 UK export values by product

Wood product exports from the UK were valued at a total of £1.6 billion in 2015, a decrease of 5% from the 2014 total (Table 3.7). Total exports of wood products in 2015 comprised 90% pulp and paper (mainly paper), 5% wood-based panels, 3% sawnwood and 2% other wood.

Table 3.7 UK export values, 2006-2015

Year	Sawnwood	Wood-based panels	Other wood ²	Wood pellets ³	Paper	Pulp	Recovered paper	Total pulp & paper	Total
£ million									
2006	61	128	37	..	947	8	329	1 284	1 510
2007	70	107	40	..	1 013	7	407	1 427	1 645
2008	50	104	48	..	1 114	3	472	1 590	1 792
2009	41	104	20	2	1 010	10	342	1 362	1 530
2010	47	113	35	7	1 068	18	524	1 610	1 812
2011	41	128	50	3	1 044	11	595	1 650	1 872
2012	34	130	51	4	1 048	10	531	1 589	1 807
2013	37	109	47	5	1 017	8	494	1 519	1 717
2014	43	107	40	2	997	7	476	1 480	1 672
2015	44	75	35	1	901	7	534	1 441	1 597

Source: UK overseas trade statistics (HM Revenue & Customs), industry associations

Notes:

1. There are reliability concerns for some of these figures, particularly for individual products (see Sources chapter).
2. Includes roundwood, wood charcoal, chips, particles and residues. Excludes wood pellets from 2009.
3. .. Denotes data not available (wood pellets included within 'Other wood' category before 2009).

3.8 Origin of wood imports

Table 3.8 presents data on the source of selected wood products that have been imported into the UK in 2015.

Sawn softwood, particleboard, fibreboard, and paper and paperboard were overwhelmingly imported from EU countries in 2015 (Table 3.8):

- Sweden (45%), Latvia (16%) and Finland (14%) provided the majority of imports of sawn softwood to the UK.
- Most particleboard imports to the UK came from Germany (23%), France (21%) and Ireland (14%).
- Ireland (35%), Germany (21%) and Spain (11%) were the principal sources of fibreboard imports.
- Most paper and paperboard imports came from Germany (19%), Finland (15%) and Sweden (13%).

Sawn hardwood and wood pulp imports originated from a range of both EU and non-EU countries in 2015:

- The USA (22%) was the largest single source of sawn hardwood imports to the UK.
- Brazil (29%) and Sweden (22%) provided around one half of wood pulp imports to the UK.

The vast majority of UK imports of plywood and wood pellets came from countries outwith the EU in 2015:

- China (49%) and Brazil (19%) were the principal sources of plywood imports to the UK.
- The USA (53%) and Canada (18%) provided the majority of wood pellet imports to the UK.

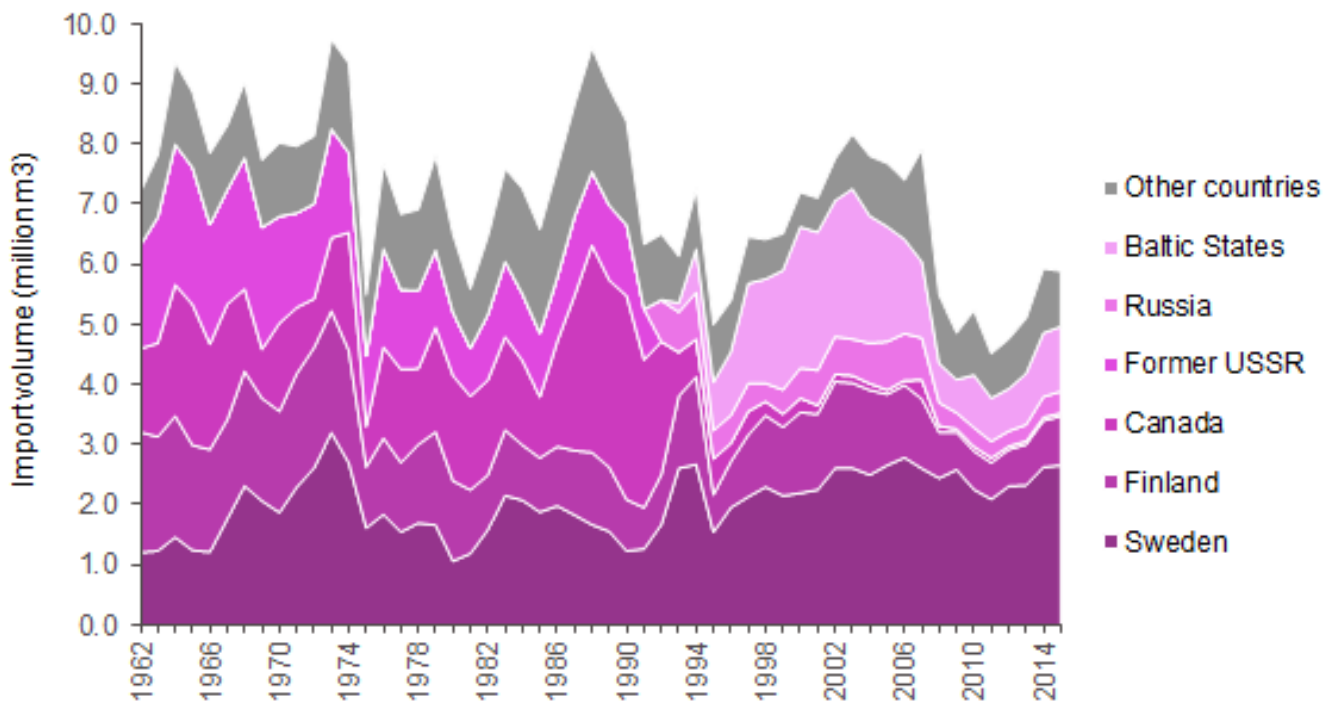
Table 3.8 Country of origin of wood imports to the UK, 2015

Source	Sawn softwood	Sawn hardwood	Plywood	Particle-board	Fibre-board	Pellets	Wood pulp	Paper and paperboard
per cent of total UK imports (volume) in each category								
Germany	5	5	0	23	21	0	2	19
Sweden	45	1	0	0	0	0	22	13
Finland	14	1	7	0	1	0	5	15
France	0	7	1	21	1	0	0	7
Italy	0	11	0	1	0	0	1	4
Latvia	16	6	1	12	4	15	0	0
Ireland	6	1	0	14	35	0	0	1
Belgium	1	1	1	12	10	0	0	3
Austria	0	1	1	1	1	0	16	2
Spain	0	0	1	3	11	0	1	1
Estonia	2	10	0	0	1	5	0	0
Other EU-28	2	11	2	11	9	7	12	10
Total EU-28	92	55	14	100	93	28	60	78
China	0	0	49	0	4	0	0	3
USA	0	22	0	0	0	53	2	3
Brazil	0	0	19	0	0	0	29	2
Canada	1	4	1	0	0	18	0	2
Russia	6	1	5	0	0	0	0	1
Malaysia	0	4	6	0	0	0	0	0
Other non-EU	1	18	6	0	2	0	9	11
Total non-EU	8	45	86	0	7	72	40	22

Source: UK overseas trade statistics (HM Revenue & Customs), industry associations.

Figure 3.2 shows the main sources of imports of sawn softwood to the UK since 1962. The total level of sawn softwood imports has fluctuated over the period, between around 5 million m³ and 10 million m³. Imports from Canada have reduced since the early 1990s; those from the Baltic States have increased between 1994 and 2003, but have reduced since then. Sweden has consistently been the principal country of origin for UK sawn softwood imports since 1993.

Figure 3.2 Country of origin of sawn softwood imports to the UK, 1962-2015



Source: FAO, UK overseas trade statistics (HM Revenue & Customs), industry associations.

Sources: Trade

Introduction

Statistics on imports and exports are based on the published overseas trade statistics for intra-EU trade and extra-EU trade produced by HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) and available at www.uktradeinfo.com

Data on apparent consumption is derived as UK production plus imports less exports.

Data Sources and Methodology

The data obtained from HMRC cover quantities (weights and volumes) and values of wood and wood products imported to and exported from the UK. Data are compiled for the following products:

- roundwood - woodfuel, industrial roundwood;
- wood charcoal;
- wood pellets;
- wood chips, particles and residues;
- sawnwood;
- wood-based panels - veneer sheets, plywood, particleboard, fibreboard;
- pulp - wood pulp, other pulp;
- recovered paper;
- paper & paperboard - graphic papers (including newsprint), sanitary & household papers, packaging materials, other paper & paperboard.

For roundwood, sawnwood and wood-based panels, a softwood/hardwood breakdown is available.

Data are also obtained by country of origin (for imports) and destination country (for exports).

For consistency with timber deliveries data, roundwood and wood chip exports figures are replaced by those compiled from companies believed to export roundwood and/or chips. For Northern Ireland, figures are provided by the Forest Service.

Where the HMRC reporting units for quantity differ from those shown in this publication, figures are adjusted using standard FAO/ECE conversion factors, which are listed in the Timber section of the Sources chapter.

The figures may also be adjusted where an apparent inconsistency in the UK trade figures cannot be resolved before the international return is required.

Historically, HMRC wood trade figures have often necessitated adjustments, following liaison with practitioners in the trade (including the Expert Group on Timber and Trade Statistics, Wood Panel Industries Federation (www.wpif.org.uk) and Confederation of Paper Industries (www.paper.org.uk)). This is partly because detailed intra-EU wood trade data is obtained through a

survey of businesses that trade above a particular value threshold. Businesses that trade below this threshold are only required to report the total value of their imports and exports. Therefore the trade data reported in this publication for individual products is based on a potentially biased survey. More information on HMRC statistics can be found at www.uktradeinfo.com/Statistics/Pages/Statistics.aspx.

The [Methodology note: UK wood imports and exports](#) sets out the data analysis methods used to produce annual estimates of UK wood imports and exports.

Quality

Detailed information on the quality of the trade statistics presented in this publication is available in the "Quality Report: UK Wood Production and Trade" at [www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/ukwptqrpt.pdf/\\$FILE/ukwptqrpt.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/ukwptqrpt.pdf/$FILE/ukwptqrpt.pdf).

Further quality information on FC Official Statistics is available at: www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-7zhk85.

Revisions

Statistics on imports and exports are subject to revision after publication if revisions are made to the overseas trade statistics produced by HMRC. Figures may also be refined to take account of expert advice from the Expert Group on Timber & Trade Statistics and trade associations on the trade in specific products.

Figures for 2015 are final; provisional figures were previously released in "UK Wood Production and Trade: 2015 provisional figures".

Information on revisions made since "Forestry Statistics 2015" are provided in "UK Wood Production and Trade: 2015 provisional figures".

Information on significant revisions to published statistics is available in the "Quality Report: UK Wood Production and Trade" at: [www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/ukwptqrpt.pdf/\\$FILE/ukwptqrpt.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/ukwptqrpt.pdf/$FILE/ukwptqrpt.pdf).

The Forestry Commission's revisions policy sets out how revisions and errors to these statistics are dealt with, and can be found at: [www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCrevisions.pdf/\\$FILE/FCrevisions.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/FCrevisions.pdf/$FILE/FCrevisions.pdf).

Further information

Most of these statistics are used to compile data that are sent to international organisations in the Joint Forest Sector Questionnaires, in some cases giving more detail than in this release. These returns are published as Official Statistics on the FC website; provisional figures in May and final figures in September/October. The statistics are used by Eurostat Forestry Statistics, UNECE Timber Bulletins, and UN/FAO Forest Product Statistics and are published on the FAOSTAT database (<http://faostat3.fao.org>).

A summary of the international statistics available from the FAOSTAT website are presented in the chapter on International Forestry. For more information, please refer to the International Forestry section of the Sources chapter.

The definitions used in this publication are consistent with the international definitions, as given in Eurostat's "Forestry in the EU and the World 2011": <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/5733109/KS-31-11-137-EN.PDF>.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (previously the UNECE Timber Committee) also collects, on an annual basis, estimates for the current year and projections for the following year of wood production, imports and exports. Results are available on the UNECE website (www.unece.org/forests/fpm/timbercommittee.html). Copies of UK returns for the UNECE Timber Forecast Questionnaire are available at www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-7aqjql.

Figures for UK imports and exports of sawn softwood have been used alongside data from other sources to assess consumption of sawn softwood in the main end-user markets in the UK. Reports are available at www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-7fgkh4.

Release schedule

Provisional trade figures for 2016 will be released on 18 May 2017 in "UK Wood Production and Trade: 2016 provisional figures".

Final trade figures for 2016 will be released on 28 September 2017 in "Forestry Statistics 2017" and "Forestry Facts & Figures 2017".