

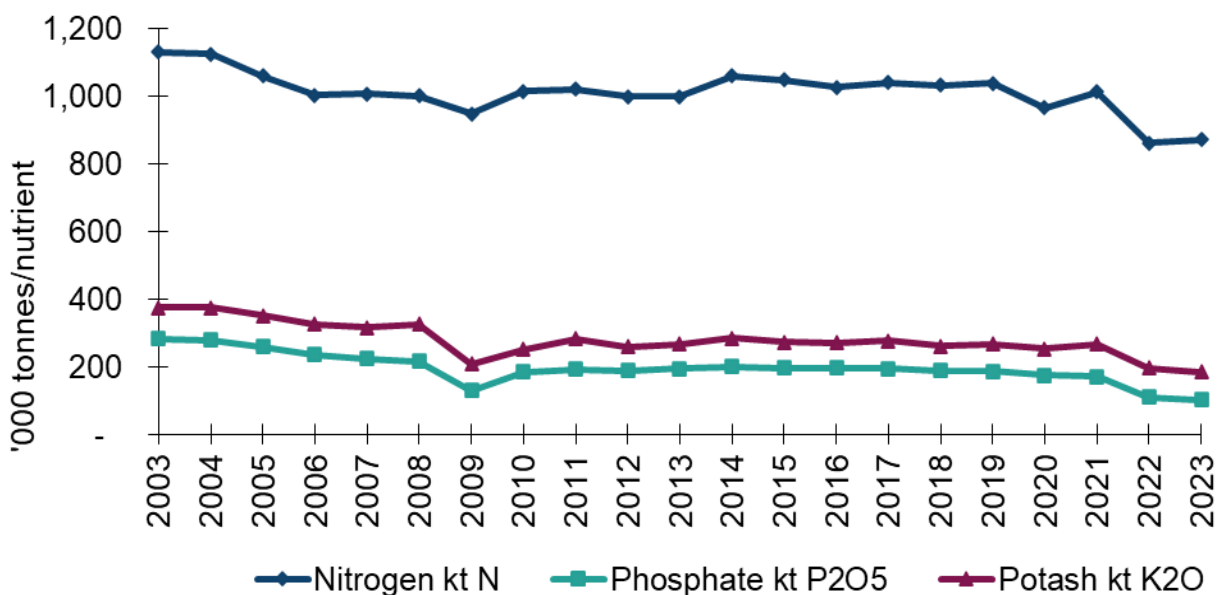
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fertiliser-usage>

A2.4 TOTAL QUANTITIES OF NITROGEN, PHOSPHATE AND POTASH USED IN THE UK, FROM 1966

Estimates of quantities of nitrogen, phosphate and potash used in the UK since 2003 are illustrated in Figure A2.7. Longer term data, since 1966, can be located in Appendix table AA1.7. These data are based on BSFP findings and trade and sales data. They are compiled by the AIC in conjunction with Defra using the methodology described in Appendix 3.2.5. Users should note that these figures relate also to the whole of the UK, whereas the other figures presented in this report relate just to Great Britain.

Total nitrogen use in the UK increased from 590 thousand tonnes in 1966 up to 1,674 thousand tonnes in 1987 before declining gradually to 1,001 thousand tonnes in 2008. The drop in 2009 was related to high fertiliser prices. Between 2010 and 2019 nitrogen use has remained relatively stable. The reduction in nitrogen use observed in 2020 was related to weather and cropping factors. From the peak in 1987, UK nitrogen use since has fallen by approximately 40%. Estimated nitrogen use in 2023 increased slightly on the previous year, to 871 thousand tonnes. 2022 was the lowest level seen since 1970, driven predominantly by supply shortage and price increases as a result of the conflict in Ukraine. This further exacerbated supply challenges that had resulted from one of the UK's main fertiliser manufacturers closing a production site in September 2021 for a period.

Figure A2.7 Quantities of major nutrients used, United Kingdom 2003 – 2023



Phosphate use in the UK has fallen since the mid-1980s but since 2007 this decline slowed. The low use of 129 thousand tonnes in 2009 was price related. Between 2010 and 2019 total phosphate use was more stable, between 184–201 thousand tonnes. Results for 2020 and 2021 appeared to show a further reduction of this nutrient, (174 thousand tonnes of phosphate was used in 2020). At this level of usage volumes are only 40% of the annual average used between 1966 and 1995. This reduction further accelerated in 2023, to an estimated 102 thousand tonnes. Increased pricing and supply challenges helped drive this movement.

Potash use in the UK was highest in the mid-1980s through to 1999, after which there has been a more sustained decline. Potash use in 2022 recorded an increased decline, following a decade of reasonable stability. This reduced further in 2023 to 184 thousand tonnes. Global price increases and reduction in supply, largely driven by the war in Ukraine, were key drivers of this decrease.

Harvest year	Nitrogen kt N				Phosphate kt P ₂ O ₅				Potash kt K ₂ O			
	England & Wales	Scotland	N Ireland	UK	England & Wales	Scotland	N Ireland	UK	England & Wales	Scotland	N Ireland	UK
1966	491	76	23	590	332	81	22	435	335	61	18	413
1967	573	85	27	685	359	79	23	460	354	61	19	434
1968	625	93	29	748	367	81	21	469	362	62	18	441
1969	639	108	35	781	362	84	22	467	363	65	19	447
1970	653	108	34	796	366	81	23	470	356	63	20	438
1971	732	119	43	894	397	84	24	504	373	65	21	459
1972	751	120	48	919	371	76	24	470	336	60	19	416
1973	759	132	56	947	373	85	25	482	333	63	21	417
1974	784	139	57	980	357	72	21	449	347	55	19	421
1975	788	143	54	984	306	69	18	393	302	59	16	377
1976	851	144	65	1,059	315	69	19	404	322	59	17	398
1977	879	146	68	1,093	316	69	21	406	330	59	20	409
1978	924	156	75	1,155	316	72	22	410	328	64	20	412
1979	941	160	85	1,186	321	73	22	416	333	65	21	419
1980	1,031	156	81	1,268	342	75	24	440	361	65	22	447
1981	1,100	159	76	1,335	344	73	24	441	367	66	21	454
1982	1,180	160	76	1,416	357	65	24	446	394	67	22	483
1983	1,227	161	82	1,470	359	65	24	448	409	68	23	500
1984	1,316	183	89	1,588	391	69	28	488	457	73	29	559
1985	1,298	186	96	1,580	375	71	23	469	441	72	28	541
1986	1,297	176	99	1,572	341	65	28	434	415	66	29	510
1987	1,370	193	111	1,674	340	65	27	432	429	70	29	528
1988	1,251	180	94	1,525	341	70	24	435	419	76	29	524
1989	1,223	193	98	1,514	334	65	26	425	420	74	29	523
1990	1,275	194	113	1,582	323	63	28	414	409	73	33	515
1991	1,224	193	98	1,515	321	61	24	406	393	71	28	492
1992	1,105	166	94	1,365	295	55	21	371	351	64	26	441
1993	968	142	109	1,219	286	50	24	360	344	57	29	430
1994	986	133	129	1,248	312	51	28	391	361	59	38	458
1995	1,064	156	128	1,348	325	53	27	405	378	64	34	476
1996	1,048	157	128	1,333	302	62	30	394	370	65	36	471
1997	1,156	172	112	1,440	325	63	24	412	405	65	31	501
1998	1,111	158	106	1,375	308	56	19	383	397	64	26	487
1999	1,015	152	117	1,284	274	50	23	347	365	59	27	451
2000	1,005	150	113	1,268	237	59	21	317	322	61	26	409
2001	876	180	106	1,162	201	57	21	279	274	69	26	369
2002	915	187	95	1,197	209	55	19	283	297	70	24	391
2003	853	170	108	1,131	203	60	19	282	283	66	26	375
2004	875	150	100	1,125	205	57	16	278	288	65	22	375
2005	834	150	77	1,061	192	55	12	259	267	67	18	352
2006	780	153	70	1,003	173	51	11	235	243	66	16	325
2007	802	126	80	1,008	169	46	9	224	241	59	17	317
2008	800	127	74	1,001	160	49	6	215	244	68	13	325
2009	767	124	57	948	91	34	4	129	148	52	8	208
2010	813	127	76	1,016	134	44	6	184	182	57	12	251
2011	824	124	74	1,022	145	42	5	192	213	59	11	283
2012	809	125	66	1,000	140	43	5	188	193	56	10	259
2013	781	139	79	999	141	46	7	194	194	60	13	267
2014	838	151	71	1,060	146	48	7	201	206	65	13	284
2015	819	155	75	1,049	142	48	6	196	196	64	12	272
2016	801	155	71	1,026	139	51	7	197	188	69	13	270
2017	806	157	78	1,041	133	54	8	195	185	77	14	276
2018	804	147	82	1,033	131	48	9	188	174	72	16	262
2019	810	150	79	1,038	132	46	7	186	182	68	14	264
2020	757	131	79	967	127	39	8	174	177	63	14	253
2021	797	135	82	1,014	118	45	8	171	180	69	17	266
2022	687	118	57	862	73	32	5	110	131	55	11	197
2023e	692	114	65	871	67	29	6	102	122	51	11	184

Note: Years are harvest, not calendar, years (e.g. 2023 refers to the 2022-23 crop year).

Data for 2023e are provisional.