

Agricultural Land Use Historical Data and the 2004 Rural/Urban Definition



Alison Wray: Farming Statistics Team, Defra York.

Julian Groom: Rural Statistics Unit, Defra, York.

Agricultural Land Use - Historic Data Availability

- Data for early years of the Census have not been preserved at holding level but parish summaries for the years 1866 – 1987 are held in hardcopy at the National Archive.
- The exception to this is the National Farm Survey which took place during World War II. In addition to Agricultural Census returns maps of all holdings at field level have been preserved as part of this survey.
- Defra holds county level data from the start of the Agricultural Census in 1866. This is currently available electronically for every 10th year from 1900.
- From 1990 holdings were grid referenced; this had lead to much more flexibility in data extraction and presentation, including the use of mapping.

The Future

- Defra has holding level data from the 1960s; at present the Farming Statistics team do not have the resources to process into a usable format but this and other records held at the National Archive have great potential for land mapping which has yet to be realised.
- Extensions to the country level historical data are already in hand and these should begin to appear on the internet later this year.
- Summaries of background information (weather, diseases, social influences on land use) are also been prepared to accompany these.

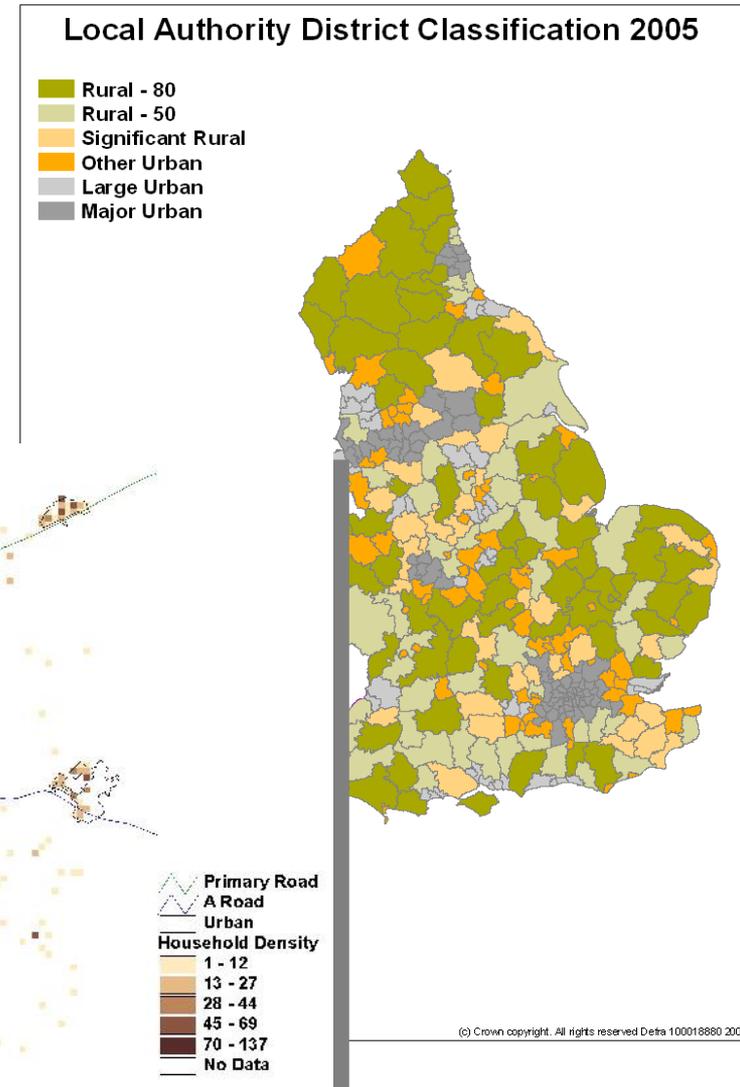
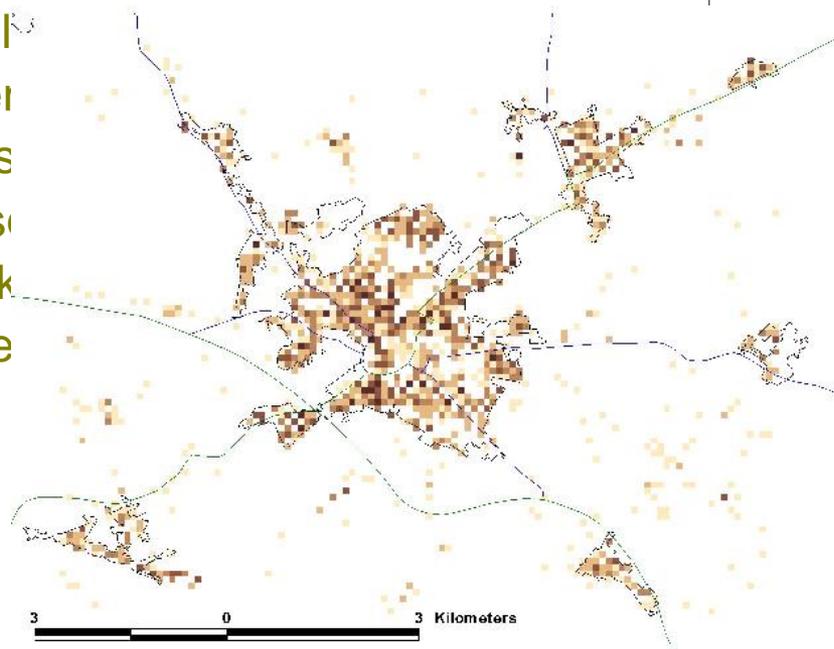
The 2004 Rural/Urban Definition

A project sponsored by Defra, the Office for National Statistics (ONS), DCLG, the Countryside Agency and the National assembly for Wales.

Julian Groom, Rural Statistics Unit, Defra, York.

The 2004 Rural/Urban Definition

- In 2002, a need was identified for a single Rural/Urban Definition, to replace several different ones (e.g. Countryside Agency, Tarling).
- England and Wales were broken down into a grid of 35 million 100 metre squares, each one being one hectare in area.
- Individual houses were mapped to the grid.
- “Residential Density” was calculated for each square, and then averaged across squares in a radius (size determined by initial density).
- These averages were used to create a “Density Profile”
- enable different areas to be classified for statistical purposes
- The hectare squares were then classified into “building block” areas, e.g. Central London



The Future ...

- For full details of the 2004 Rural/Urban Definition, visit <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/geography/nrudp.asp> (on the ONS's website).
- The Rural Statistics Unit is encouraging other government departments to apply the 2004 Definition to their own datasets. The ONS is making data broken down by the 2004 Definition available through the “Neighbourhood Statistics” part of their website.
- Possible research: has the rural or urban character of an area changed over time? Can the 2004 Definition's methodology be applied retrospectively, to see if an area has changed from being rural to urban, for example, in the past? If it is possible, when did an area's character change?
- \$64,000 Question: are the right historical data available???

How to Contact us



Please get in touch if you have any questions or would like to know more.

For farming data e-mail farming-statistics@defra.gsi.gov.uk or telephone 01904 455313

For rural data e-mail rural.sataistics@defra.gsi.gov.uk or telephone 01904 455362

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