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# Sheep

Census returns indicate that at December 2006 Ireland had just over 3.6 million sheep (3,600,715) in 35,277 flocks, an average of 102 sheep per flock. A total of 68% of flocks contain sheep numbers **below** this average.

This was a significant reduction of 10.1% on the number of sheep in Ireland in the twelve months since December 2005 (total 4,006,744 at that date). Sheep numbers have fallen in every one of the 26 counties. While the scale of the reduction varied from county to county, from a low of 2.6% in Louth to a high of 19.5% in Clare, there was no discernable regional pattern. For example, in the western counties (which are the most populous for sheep), the reduction was 3.4% in Donegal, significantly below the national figure, while it was 7.7% in Mayo and 11.7% in Galway.

The number of sheep flocks in December 2006 (35,277) has also fallen since December 2005 (37,209) by **5.2%**. Once again the number of sheep flocks was down in every county, with no particular regional pattern emerging.

Perhaps the most surprising aspect, given the significant reduction in sheep numbers, was that the national average flock size has **decreased**, from 108 sheep per flock in December 2005 to 102 sheep per flock. The number of sheep flocks with 50 sheep or under increased from 42% of the total to 44%, while the number of large flocks (over 200 sheep) fell slightly. Thus the falling numbers do not indicate any shift towards larger commercial flocks or significant consolidation in the sheep sector.

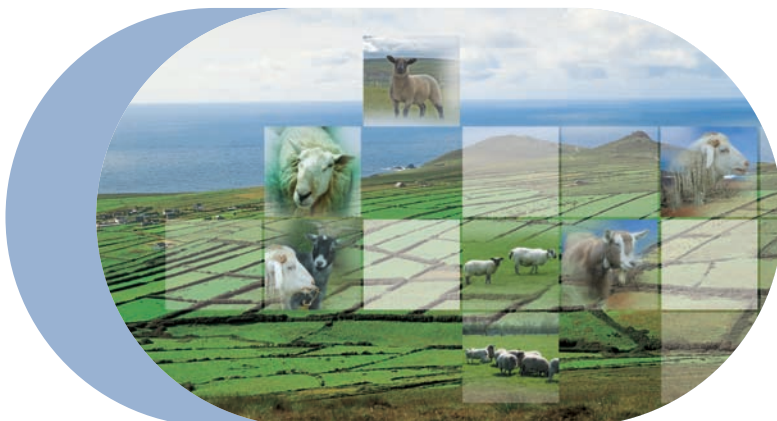
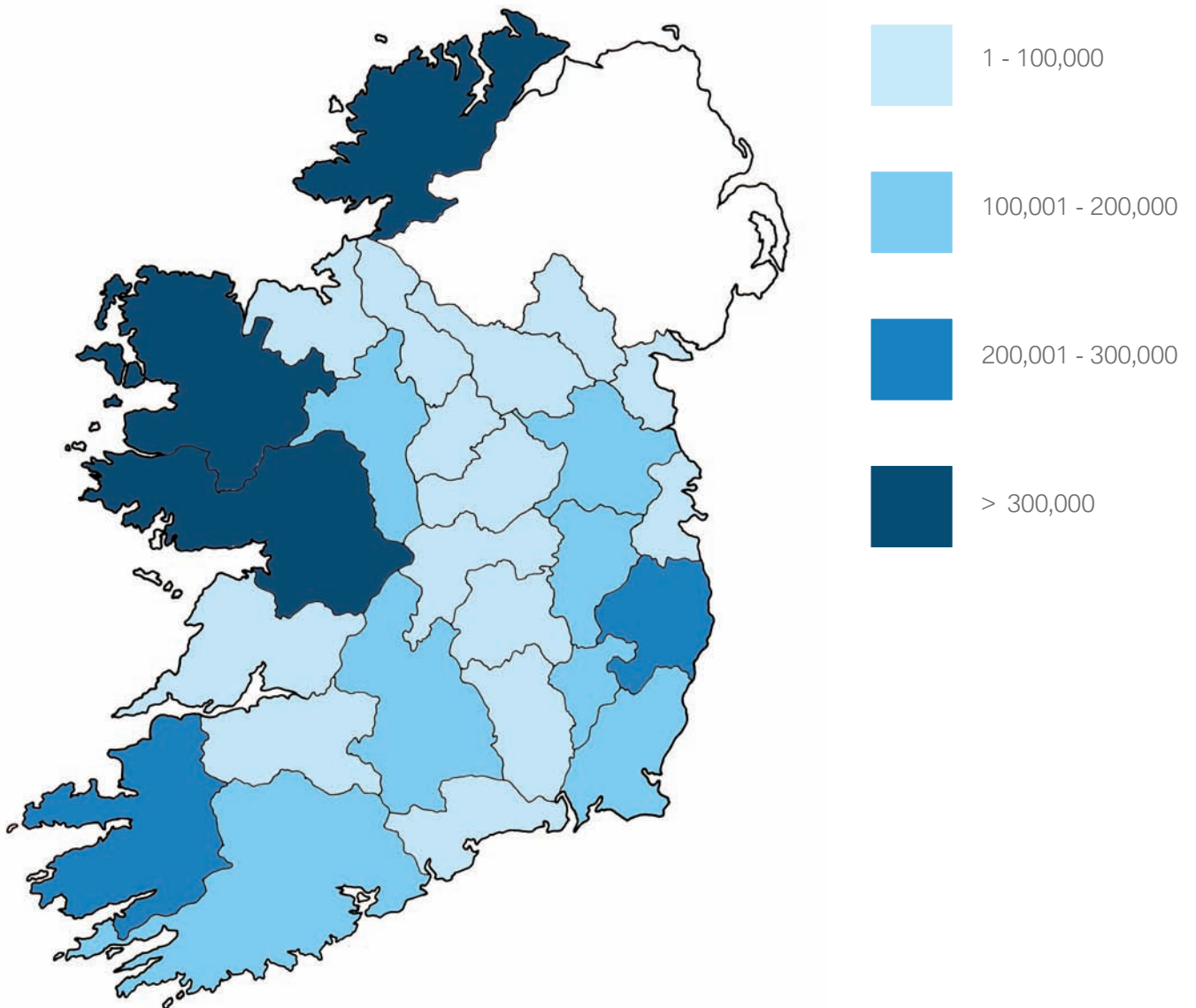


Figure 1

Total number of sheep by county



Absolute Figures  
Table A

Table A

Total  
number  
of sheep  
by county



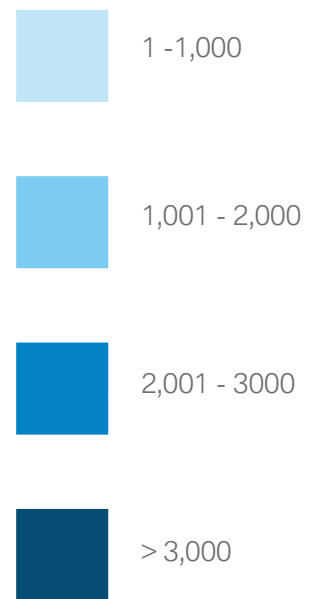
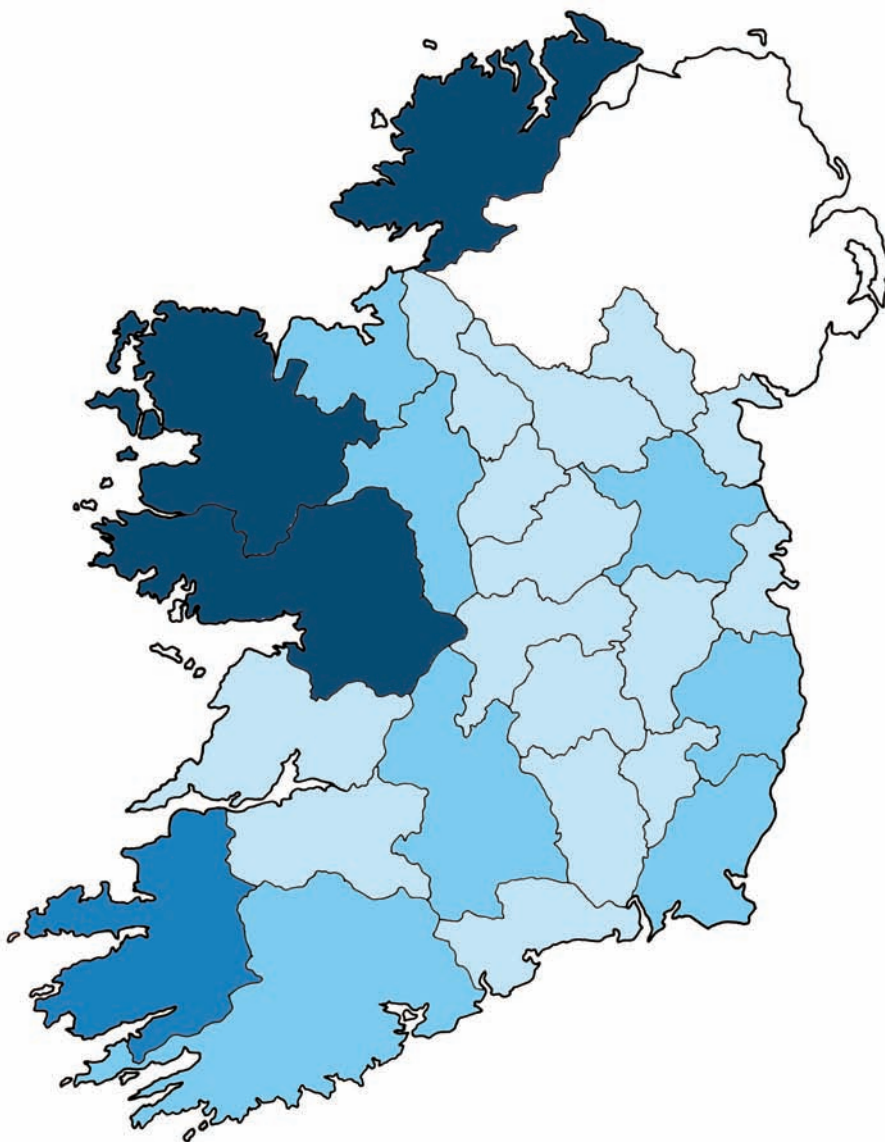
County Number of sheep

Carlow	133,965
Cavan	50,050
Clare	22,155
Cork	185,973
Donegal	392,717
Dublin	22,874
Galway	449,572
Kerry	292,665
Kildare	114,776
Kilkenny	96,196
Laois	57,619
Leitrim	85,457
Limerick	20,417
Longford	31,963
Louth	49,352
Mayo	330,155
Meath	140,894
Monaghan	30,316
Offaly	84,607
Roscommon	177,231
Sligo	98,383
Tipperary	144,617
Waterford	72,648
Westmeath	79,541
Wexford	188,392
Wicklow	248,180

**Total** **3,600,715**

Figure 2

Total number of sheep flocks by county



Absolute Figures  
Table B

Table B

Total  
number  
of sheep  
flocks  
by county



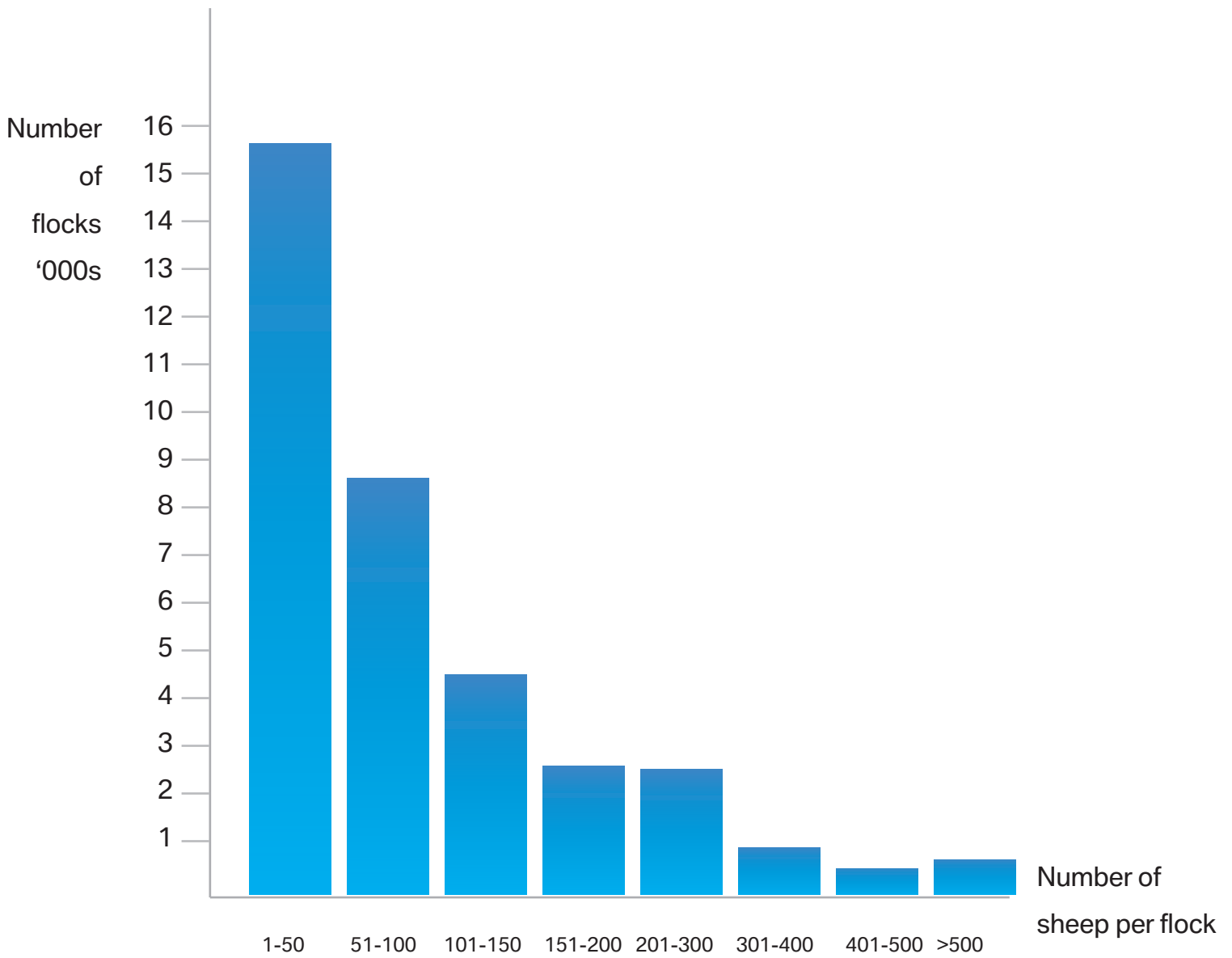
County Number of Flocks

Carlow	865
Cavan	801
Clare	642
Cork	1,906
Donegal	4,926
Dublin	193
Galway	4,707
Kerry	2,231
Kildare	656
Kilkenny	719
Laois	519
Leitrim	879
Limerick	268
Longford	447
Louth	365
Mayo	4,528
Meath	1,081
Monaghan	397
Offaly	706
Roscommon	1,927
Sligo	1,405
Tipperary	1,120
Waterford	471
Westmeath	837
Wexford	1,332
Wicklow	1,349
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,277</b>

Figure 3

Total number of sheep flocks by size of flock

Absolute figures Table c



## Table C

Total  
number of  
sheep  
flocks by  
size of flock

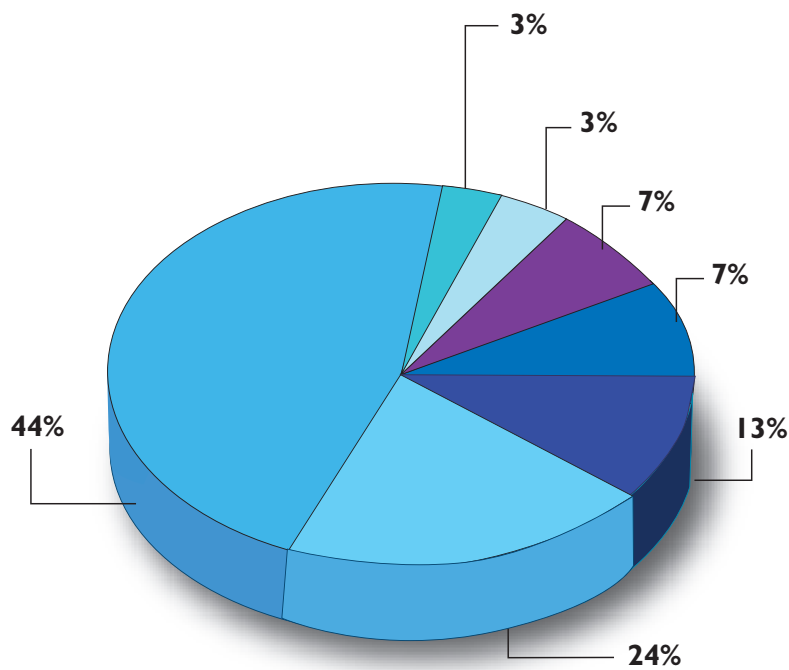


Number of sheep in flock	Number of flocks	% of total
1-50	15,417	43.7
51-100	8,479	24.0
101-150	4,442	12.6
151-200	2,500	7.1
201-300	2,347	6.7
301-400	989	2.8
401-500	454	1.3
>500	649	1.8
<b>Total flocks</b>	<b>35,277</b>	



Figure 4

Analysis of  
sheep flock  
size



Number of sheep in flock:

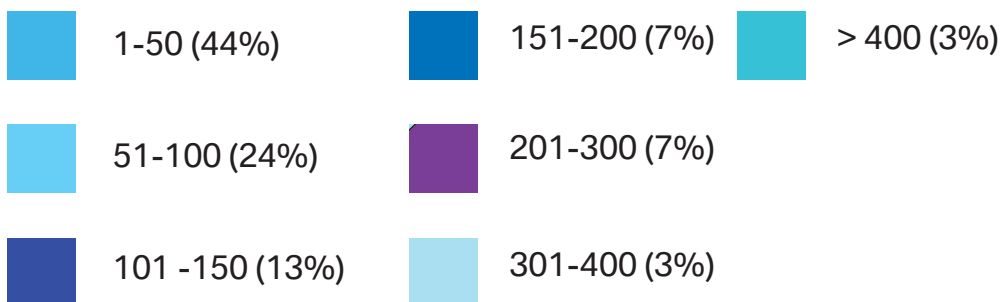
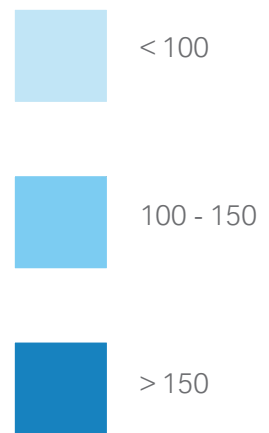
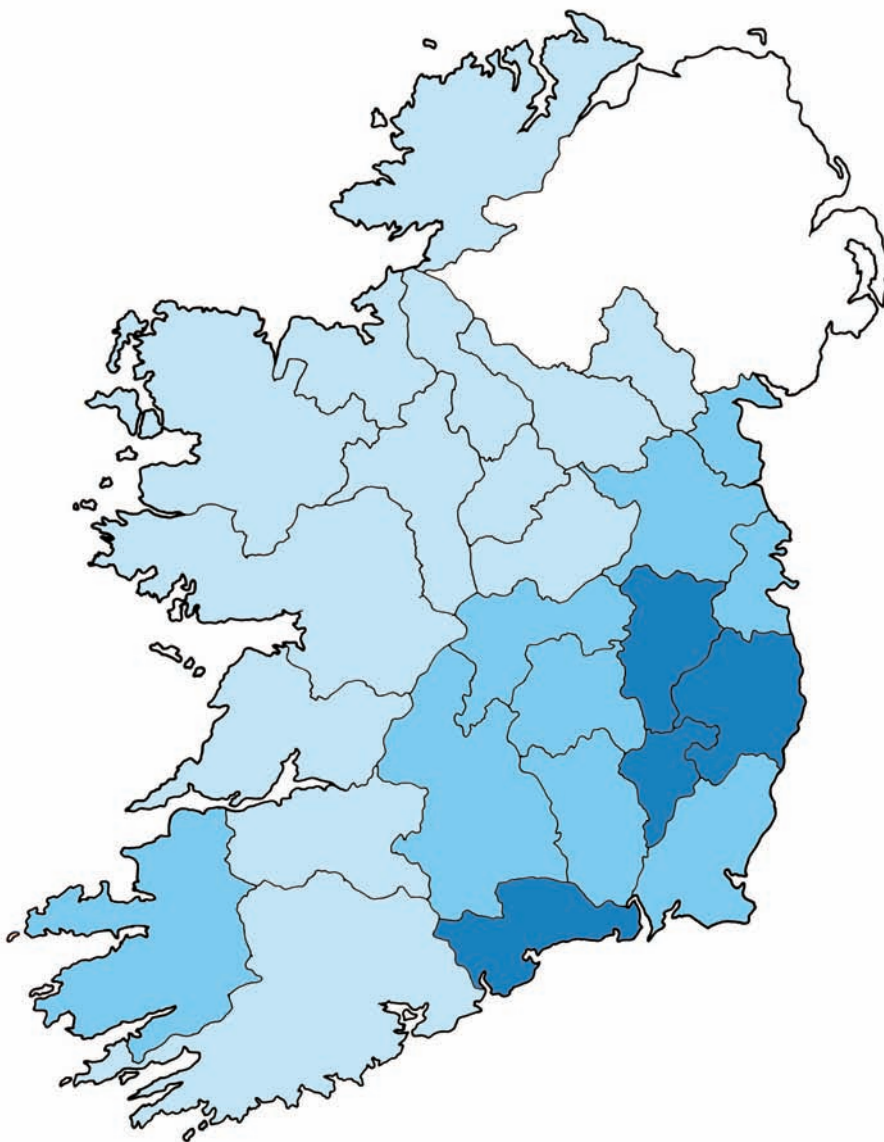


Figure 5

Average  
sheep  
flock size  
by county



Absolute Figures  
Table D

Table D

Average  
flock size  
by county



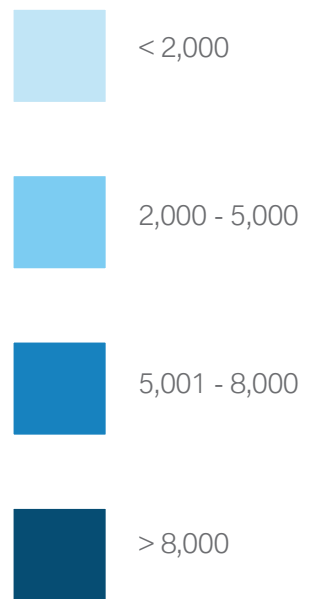
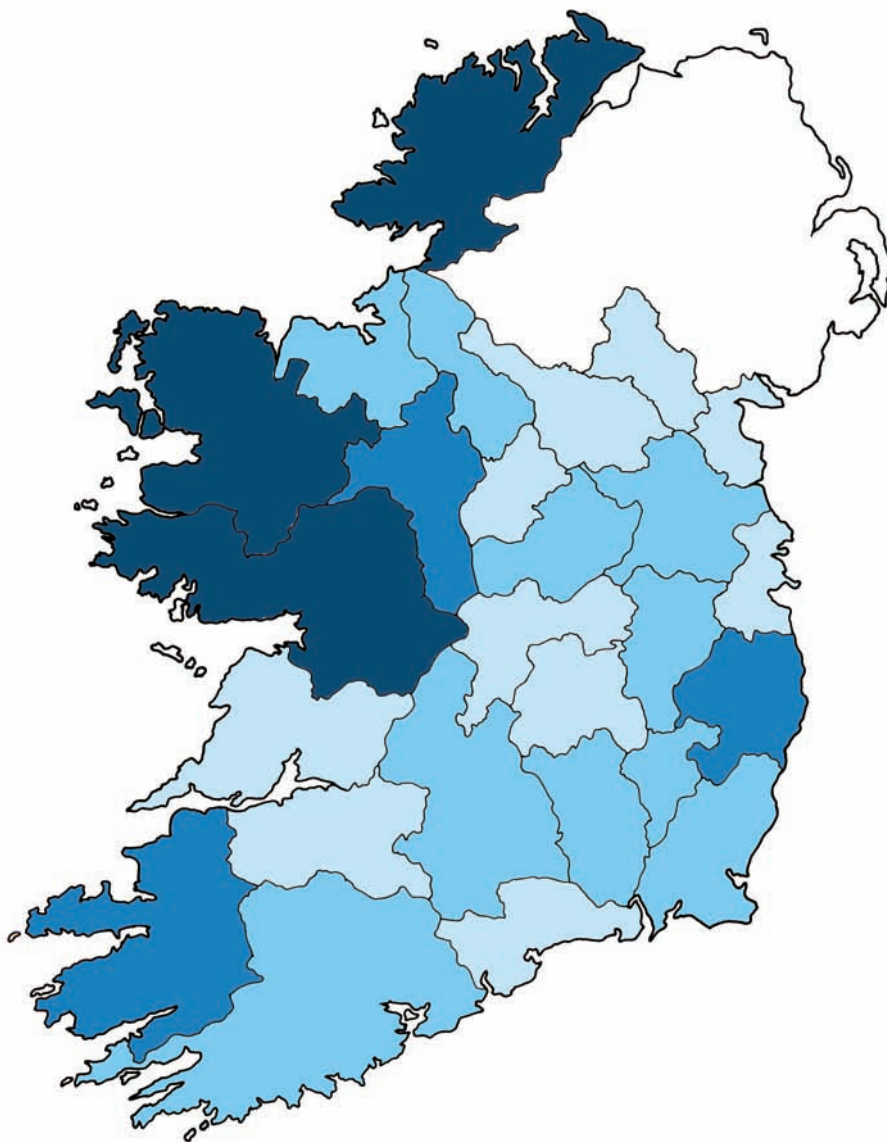
County Average Flock Size

Carlow	155
Cavan	62
Clare	35
Cork	98
Donegal	80
Dublin	119
Galway	96
Kerry	131
Kildare	175
Kilkenny	134
Laois	111
Leitrim	97
Limerick	76
Longford	72
Louth	135
Mayo	73
Meath	130
Monaghan	76
Offaly	120
Roscommon	92
Sligo	70
Tipperary	129
Waterford	154
Westmeath	95
Wexford	141
Wicklow	184

National average 102

Figure 6

Total  
number of  
rams  
by county



Absolute Figures  
Table E

Table E

Total  
number of  
rams  
by county



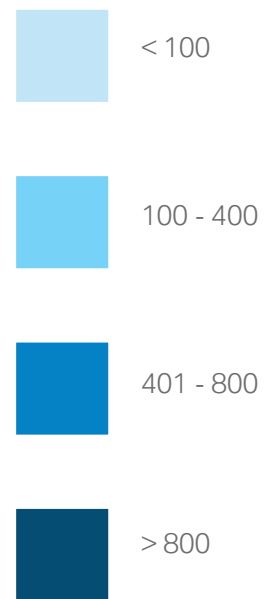
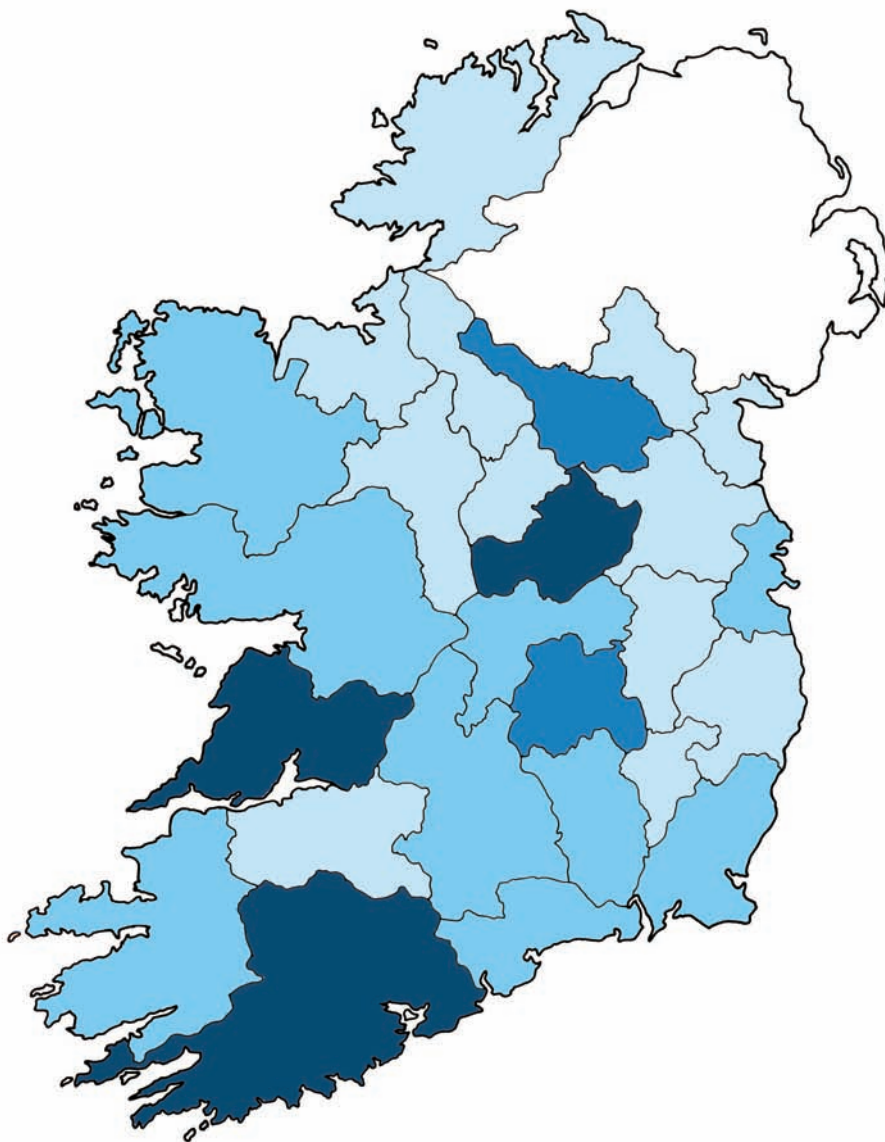
County	Number of rams
Carlow	3,250
Cavan	1,654
Clare	855
Cork	4,412
Donegal	10,646
Dublin	662
Galway	11,723
Kerry	7,014
Kildare	2,768
Kilkenny	2,341
Laois	1,372
Leitrim	2,132
Limerick	684
Longford	945
Louth	1,340
Mayo	8,459
Meath	3,842
Monaghan	978
Offaly	1,912
Roscommon	5,050
Sligo	2,732
Tipperary	3,810
Waterford	1,532
Westmeath	2,402
Wexford	4,179
Wicklow	5,549
<b>National average</b>	<b>92,243</b>





Figure 7

Total number of goats by county



Absolute Figures  
Table F

Table F

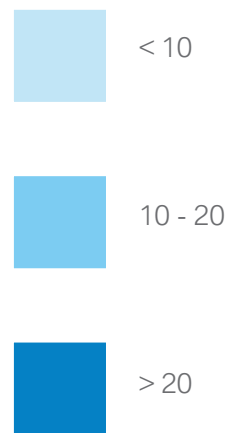
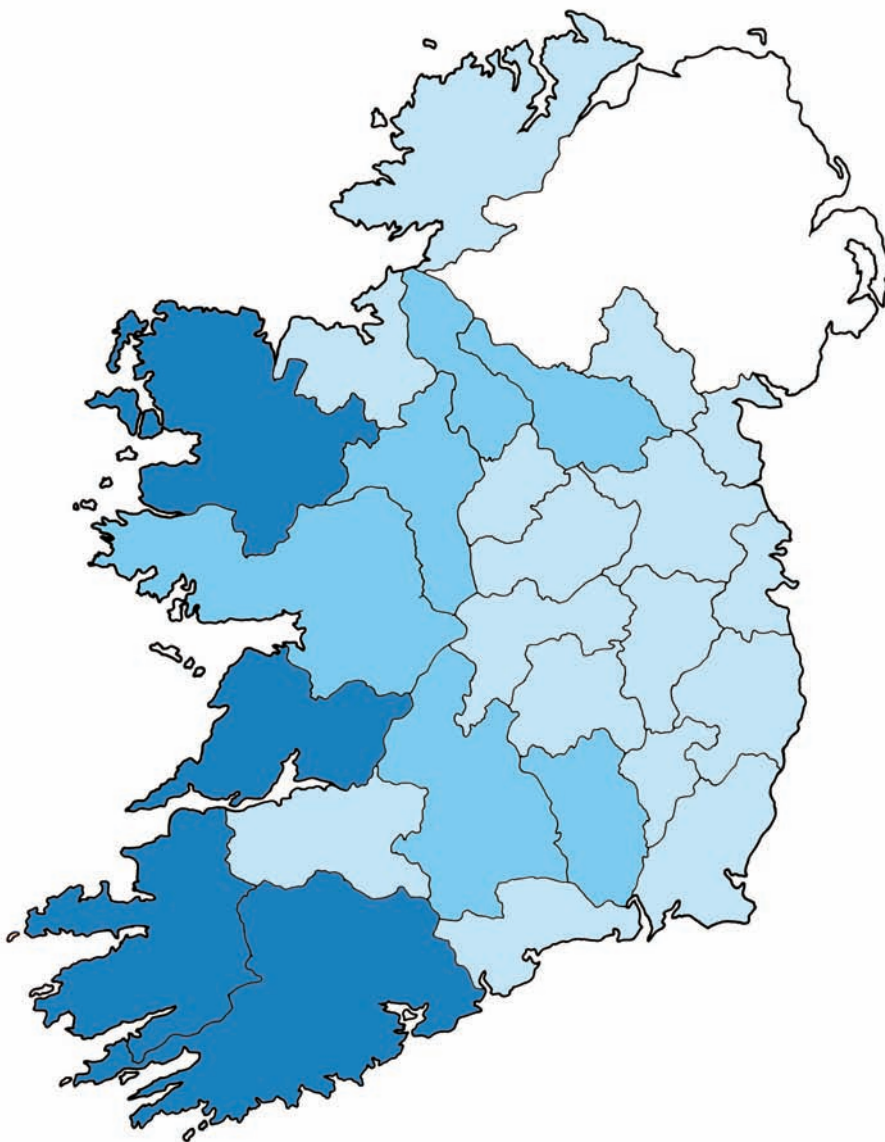
Total  
number of  
goats  
by county



County	Number of goats
Carlow	4
Cavan	561
Clare	802
Cork	977
Donegal	45
Dublin	145
Galway	202
Kerry	201
Kildare	53
Kilkenny	121
Laois	408
Leitrim	64
Limerick	39
Longford	69
Louth	21
Mayo	183
Meath	30
Monaghan	34
Offaly	283
Roscommon	73
Sligo	73
Tipperary	375
Waterford	325
Westmeath	963
Wexford	129
Wicklow	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,194</b>

Figure 8

Total  
number of  
goat  
herds  
by county



Absolute Figures  
Table G

Table G

Total  
number of  
goat herds  
by county



County	Number of herds
Carlow	1
Cavan	12
Clare	22
Cork	50
Donegal	8
Dublin	8
Galway	14
Kerry	23
Kildare	4
Kilkenny	12
Laois	7
Leitrim	10
Limerick	6
Longford	9
Louth	4
Mayo	29
Meath	6
Monaghan	4
Offaly	8
Roscommon	16
Sligo	8
Tipperary	14
Waterford	5
Westmeath	5
Wexford	7
Wicklow	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>296</b>

Table H

Total  
number of  
goat herds  
by size of  
herd



Number of goats in herd	Number of herds	% of total
1-5	187	63
6-10	45	15
11-50	44	15
51-200	9	3
201-400	10	3
> 400	1	-
Total herds	296	