



Poultry breeding in Bulgaria in 2023

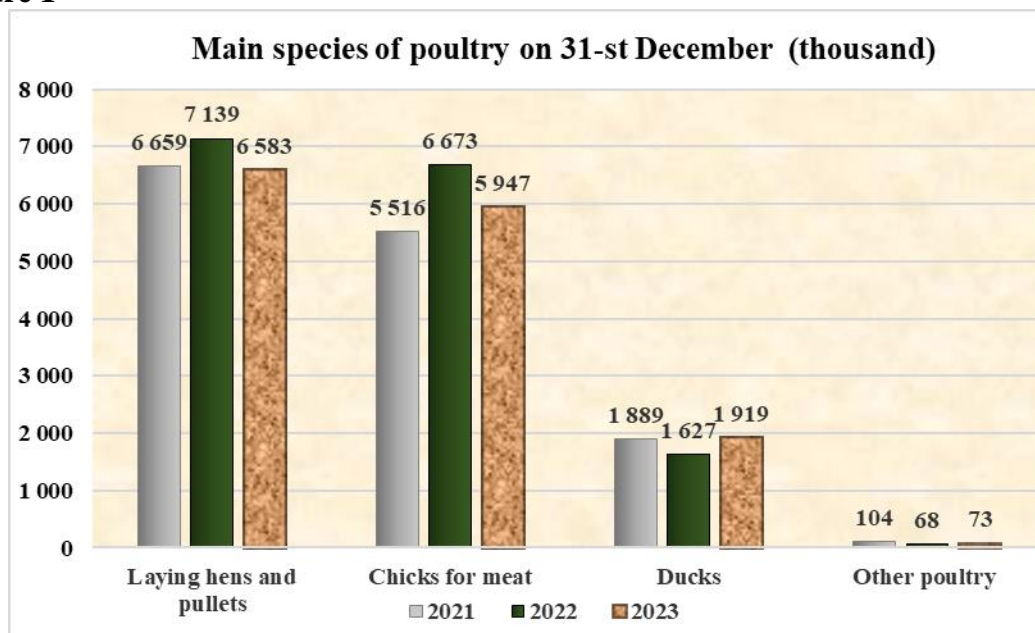
In the end of 2023, several outbreaks of (HPAI) High pathogenic avian influenza are reported, requiring the infected poultry housing and areas around the infected and contact birds being humanely destroyed to prevent the spread of the disease. The largest decrease is in the number of laying hens, which number drops to 3.699 million (-20.7%) on 31st December 2023. In order to restore the flocks of poultry, in the end of the year the number of birds in parent flocks increases 40.3% to 1.154 million, and the number of growing pullets increases 4.8% to 1.730 million. In comparison to 2022 the total number of laying hens and growing pullets decreases 7.8% to 6.583 million (Table 1).

The number of poultry farms raising laying hens and growing pullets decreases to 14 343 farms in the end of the 2023, which is 15.9% less than 2022 (Table 2).

The number of broilers intended to be fattened on 31st December 2023 is 10.9% less than 2022 (Table 3). In 2023, 50.9 million broilers are slaughtered (+1.3%) and 91.0 thousand tons meat is produced, 0.4% more than 2022.

The number of turkeys increases almost twice compared to 2022 (15 thousand). The ducks are 1.919 thousand (+18.0%). In 2023, 7.3 million ducks are slaughtered (+17.5%). The total number of domestic poultry decreases (-6.4%) according to 31st December 2022 to 14.5 million. The production of eggs in Bulgaria decreases 0.3% in 2023 compared to 2022. The total production of eggs is 1.397 billion eggs, of which 1.383 billion from hens (-0.3%), but the number of eggs for human consumption increases 0.8%, while the number of the eggs for breeding decreases 6.5%.

Figure 1



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostatistics Department, Poultry breeding in Bulgaria in 2023

Results and analyses

**Main species of poultry in Bulgaria on 31st December 2023
by statistical regions (NUTS2)**

Table 1

(thousand heads)

Statistical region	Hens and Pullets	Broilers	Chickens total	Turkeys	Ducks	Other poultry	Total poultry	Change 2023/2022
Bulgaria	6 583.1	5 947.1	12 530.2	15.0	1 919.2	57.6	14 522.0	-6.4%
<i>Severna and Yugoiztochna Bulgaria</i>	<i>5 240.5</i>	<i>5 946.8</i>	<i>11 187.3</i>	<i>5.1</i>	<i>1 005.7</i>	<i>15.4</i>	<i>12 213.5</i>	-6.9%
Severozapaden	c	c	1 340.5	1.4	336.3	2.1	1 680.3	2.3%
Severen tsentralen	1 963.9	2 644.5	4 608.4	0.4	215.0	0.8	4 824.6	-13.6%
Severoiztochen	1 606.0	1 427.2	3 033.2	0.4	83.3	1.1	3 118.0	-11.3%
Yugoiztochen	c	c	2 205.2	2.9	371.1	11.4	2 590.6	9.3%
<i>Yuzhna and Yuzhna centralna Bulgaria</i>	<i>1 342.6</i>	<i>0.3</i>	<i>1 342.9</i>	<i>9.9</i>	<i>913.5</i>	<i>42.2</i>	<i>2 308.5</i>	-3.6%
Yugozapaden	c	c	287.7	1.5	3.8	34.9	327.9	-13.7%
Yuzhen tsentralen	c	c	1 055.2	8.4	909.7	7.3	1 980.6	-1.7%
Change 2023/2022	-7.8%	-10.9%	-9.3%	87.5%	18.0%	-4.0%	-6.4%	

c - confidential data

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostistics Department, Poultry breeding in Bulgaria in 2023

In the end of 2023 farms the laying hens and pullets are 15.9% less than in 2022. The number of small farms with 1 to 99 heads decreases (-15.9%), and the number of poultry in them decreases as well by 10.6% (Table 2). Poultry farms raising 10 thousand and more laying hens and pullets are 63, and the number of poultry birds in them is 6 155 thousand (-8.0%).

On 31st December 2023 the number of laying hens is 3 699 thousand – 20.7% less than 2022, laying hens of parent flocks are 1 154 thousand (+40.3%). The number of pullets in the end of 2023 is 1 730 thousand, which is an increase of 4.8% compared to 2022.

The laying turkeys are 5.4 thousand – 18.8% less than 2022. The number of turkeys for fattening on 31.12.2023 is 9.6 thousand.

In the end of 2023 the laying ducks are 108.7 thousand (+12.4%).

In 2023 there is a decrease of the number of quails by 10.6%. The number of laying birds decreases 15.4% to 35.4 thousand.

Table 2

Laying hens and pullets farms according to the number of poultry on 31st December 2023

Number of poultry per farm	Farms		Laying hens and pullets	
	Number	Change 2023/2022	Thousand heads	Change 2023/2022
1 ÷ 99	14 180	-15.9%	211	-10.6%
100 ÷ 9 999	100	-18.0%	217	2.8%
10 000 ÷ 99 999	45	0.0%	1 559	0.9%
100 000 and more	18	-10.0%	4 596	-10.7%
Total:	14 343	-15.9%	6 583	-7.8%

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostistics department, Poultry breeding in Bulgaria in 2023

The number of farms raising broilers decreases 13.0% on 31st December 2023 compared to 2022. Poultry farms with 200 to 10 000 birds decreases 6.3%, but the number of poultry raised in them increases by 6.3% (Table 3). The number of poultry farms with 10 thousand and more chicken broilers is 76 – 10.6% less compared to the end of 2022, and the amount of poultry birds raised in them decreases by 11.0% to 5 878 thousand.

Table 3

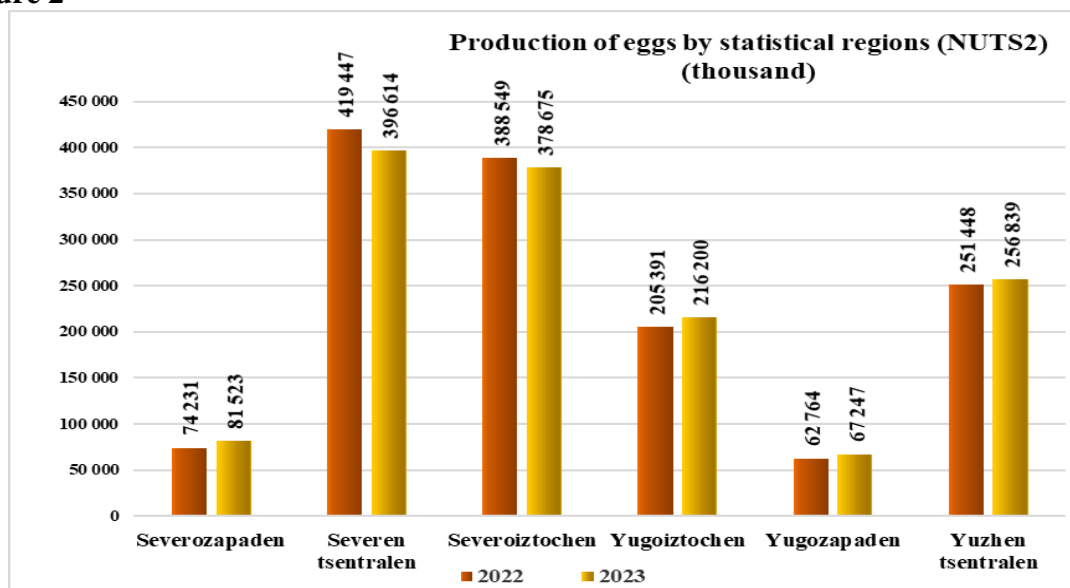
Distribution of poultry farms and broilers raised according to the number of poultry per farm on 31st December 2023

Number of poultry per farm	Farms		Broilers	
	Number	Change 2023/2022	Thousand heads	Change 2023/2022
1 ÷ 199	109	-15.5%	2	0.0%
200 ÷ 9 999	15	-6.3%	67	6.3%
10 000 ÷ 99 999	65	-8.5%	2 376	-14.6%
100 000 and more	11	-21.4%	3 502	-8.5%
Total:	200	-13.0%	5 947	-10.9%

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostatics department, Poultry breeding in Bulgaria in 2023

Production of eggs in 2023

The eggs produced in Bulgaria in 2023 are 1 397 098 thousand – 0.3% less than in the previous year. Eggs from hens are 1 382 642 thousand (-0.3%) – 1 183 764 thousand are eggs for human consumption (0.8% more than 2022), the for breeding decrease 6.5% to 198 878 thousand.

Figure 2

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostatics department, Poultry breeding in Bulgaria in 2023

Eggs from hens are almost 99.0% of all eggs produced in 2023, quail eggs are 0.5% and duck eggs are 0.5%. Eggs for human consumption are 84.7% of all eggs.

Quail eggs are 6.6 million or 9.6% less than 2022. Duck eggs are 7.6 millions (+0.5%).

Table 4

Production of eggs in 2023 by statistical regions (thousand)

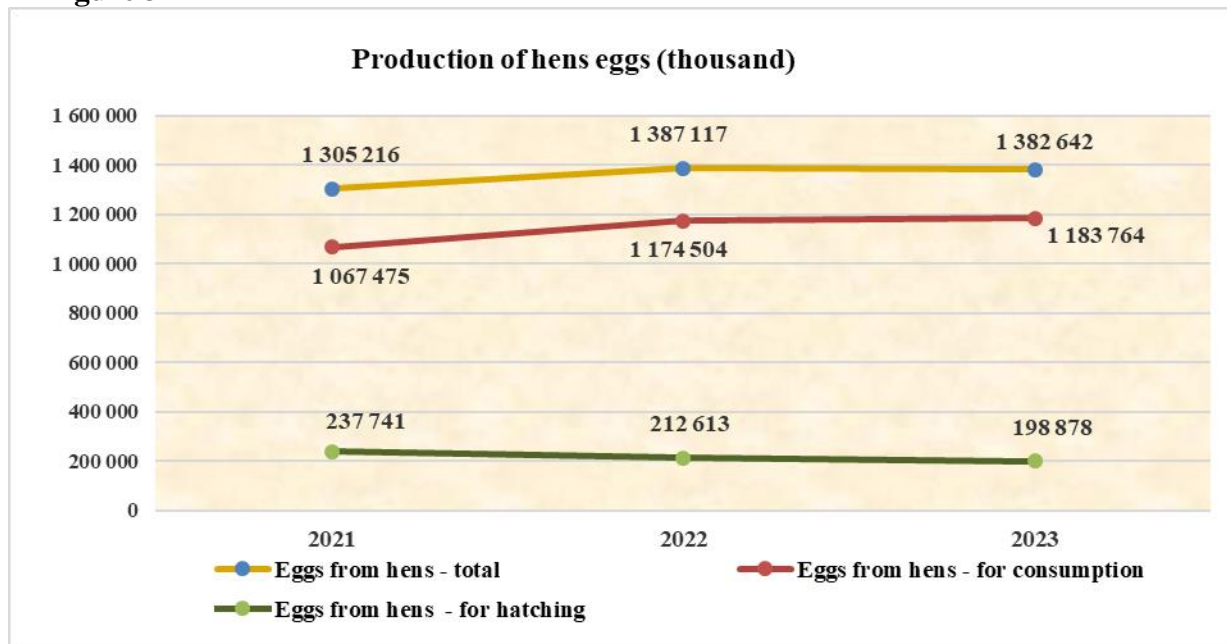
Statistical regions	Eggs from hens		Eggs from other poultry	Total
	Total	of which for human consumption		
Bulgaria	1 382 642	1 183 764	14 456	1 397 098
<i>Severna and Yugoiztochna Bulgaria</i>	<i>1 065 408</i>	<i>872 711</i>	<i>7 604</i>	<i>1 073 012</i>
Severozapaden	81 242	75 219	281	81 523
Severen tsentralen	395 211	286 722	1 403	396 614
Severoiztochen	378 631	345 375	44	378 675
Yugoiztochen	210 324	165 395	5 876	216 200
<i>Yuzhna and Yuzhna centralna Bulgaria</i>	<i>317 234</i>	<i>311 053</i>	<i>6 852</i>	<i>324 086</i>
Yugozapaden	63 102	57 033	4 145	67 247
Yuzhen tsentralen	254 132	254 020	2 707	256 839

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostatics department, Poultry breeding in Bulgaria in 2023

By statistical region, the leader in egg production is Severen tsentralen region (28.4%), followed by Severoiztochen region – 27.1% and Yuzhen tsentralen region – 18.4%. The first place in eggs from hens produced for human consumption takes the Severoiztochen region – 29.2%, followed by Severen tsentralen region – 24.2% and Yuzhen tsentralen region – 21.5%. Of the produced 205 092 thousand eggs for breeding 97.0% are eggs from hens and 3.0% from ducks. The highest quantity of produced eggs for breeding is in Severen tsentralen region (52.9%) and in Yugoiztochen region – 23.7% from the total egg production.

Production of hens eggs

Figure 3



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostistics department, Poultry breeding in Bulgaria in 2023

The total weight of eggs produced in 2023 is 84 849 tons, or 1.1% more than 2022. The average weight of eggs from hens is 60.8 grams, quails eggs – 12.8 grams, ducks eggs – 85.5 grams.

Table 5

Weight of eggs produced in 2023

Type of eggs	Total eggs (thousand)	Average egg weight (grams)	Total egg weight (tons)
From hens	1 382 642	60.8	84 092
incl. for hatching	198 878		
- for meat	186 093		
- for laying hens	9 610		
- mixed	3 175		
From turkeys	159	82.8	13
From ducks	7 591	85.5	649
From geese	46	154.6	7
From quails	6 639	12.8	85
From ostriches	1	1 484.8	2
From guinea fowl	20	40.2	1
Total eggs:	1 397 098	///	84 849

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostistics department, Poultry breeding in Bulgaria in 2023

Poultry meat production in 2023

The number of slaughtered poultry in 2023 is 61.7 million and the meat produced – 122 thousand tons. The increase is 1.7% compared to 2022.

According to the preliminary data, poultry meat production in slaughterhouses in 2023 is 1.4% more than in 2022, as the meat produced from chickens increases 0.9% and the meat produced from ducks increases 12.7%. 28.6% more poultry are slaughtered on farms, and meat produced is 43.4% more than 2022.

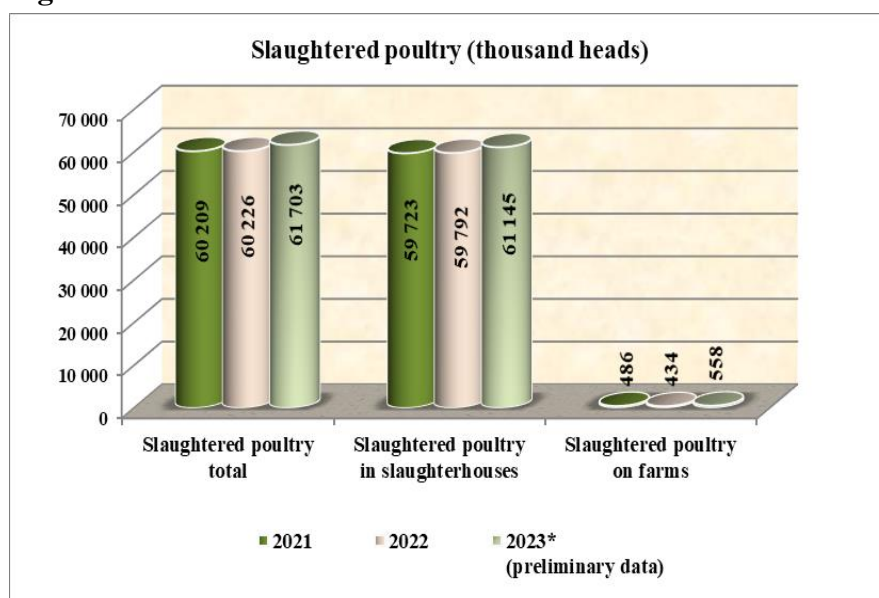
Table 6

Poultry meat production on farms - 2023

Poultry species	Slaughtered poultry on farms	Total live weight	Carcass weight
	(thousand)	(tons)	(tons)
Chicken	503	1 401	1 050
Ducks	15	110	79
Other poultry species	40	82	64
Total	558	1 593	1 193

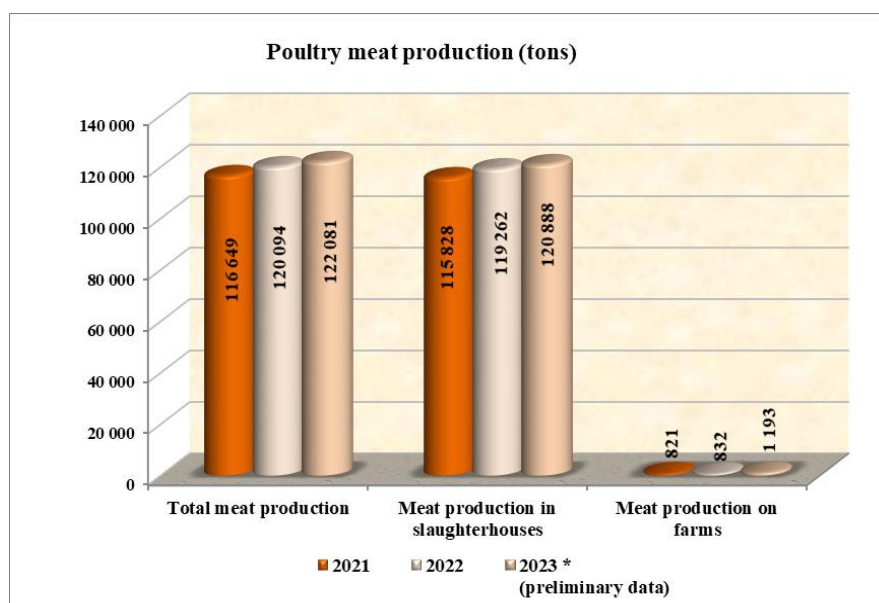
Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostatics department, Poultry breeding in Bulgaria in 2023

Figure 5



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostatics department, Poultry breeding in Bulgaria in 2023

Figure 5



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostatics department, Poultry breeding in Bulgaria in 2023

Activity of hatcheries in Bulgaria – 2023

Table 7

Poultry species	Hatcheries (number)	Eggs for hatching (thousand)	Chicks hatched (thousand heads)	Share of total number of eggs placed (%)
Hens, of which:	78	108 629	82 759	87.89%
– for meat	15	97 930	78 262	79.23%
– for laying hens	59	9 618	3 685	7.78%
– mixed	12	1 081	812	0.88%
Turkeys	28	41	31	0.03%
Ducks	12	14 881	8 100	12.04%
Other poultry	14	45	36	0.04%
Total	96	123 596	90 926	100.00%

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostatics department, Poultry breeding in Bulgaria in 2023

The eggs placed for incubation are 123.6 million, of which 87.9% are from hens. 97.9 million eggs (79.2% of all eggs) are placed for the production of broiler chickens, 9.6 million eggs are placed for the production of laying hens, and 14.9 million eggs are placed for ducks. The chicks hatched in 2023 are almost 91 million in total, of which 78.3 million are chicks from specialized hybrids for meat production, 8.1 million ducks mainly for foie gras production and 3.7 million sexed female chicks for laying hens.

Table 8

Main species of poultry in Bulgaria on 31 st December 2024								(thousand)
Year	Laying hens and Pullets	Broilers	Chickens total	Turkeys	Ducks	Geese	Other poultry	Poultry total
2014	6 815	6 155	12 970	45	1 517	21	56	14 609
2015	6 980	7 278	14 258	28	1 229	16	69	15 600
2016	7 158	5 290	12 448	32	1 128	17	75	13 700
2017	6 898	5 966	12 864	30	1 666	16	180	14 756
2018	6 951	6 921	13 872	35	1 408	13	191	15 519
2019	7 107	6 635	13 742	23	1 573	36	191	15 565
2020	7 062	5 349	12 411	21	1 360	8	164	13 964
2021	6 659	5 517	12 176	16	1 889	4	83	14 168
2022	7 139	6 673	13 812	8	1 627	5	55	15 507
2023	6 583	5 947	12 530	15	1 919	9	49	14 522

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostatics department, Poultry breeding in Bulgaria in 2023

The purpose of the survey is to determine:

- Poultry bird number by type and species on 31st December, raised in poultry farms (chickens, ducks, turkeys, geese, quails, ostriches and guinea fowls);
- Production of eggs for human consumption and for hatching by type – for laying hens, for meat or mixed;
- Realisation of cull laying hens and poultry for fattening – submitted for slaughtering in slaughterhouses, slaughtered on farms, sale of live poultry;
- Activity of hatcheries – the number of eggs placed for hatching and chicks hatched.

The survey information is used for analyses and programs in the sector and for informed decision-making in the implementation of agrarian policy in poultry farming. The legal framework in Bulgaria on the bases of which the statistical survey is conducted is the National Statistical Program. The results of the conducted survey correspond to the requirements of Regulation (EC) No.617/2008 and the gentleman's agreement between the member states and Eurostat for statistical data on the number of stock laying hens and production of eggs for human consumption.

Scope of the survey: The results cover the number of poultry birds by species – chickens, broilers, turkeys, ducks, geese, etc., raised in poultry farms of different size located in the country and the production of eggs.

Definitions for eggs, chicks and domestic poultry birds by species, of the scope in statistics:

1. **Eggs for hatching** – poultry eggs for hatching means poultry eggs falling within subheadings 0407 11 and 0407 19 of the Combined Nomenclature intended for the production of chicks, classified according to species, category and type and identified in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 617/2008, produced in the Community or imported from third countries.

2. **Chicks** – live farmyard poultry the weight of which does not exceed 185 grams, either produced in the Community or imported from third countries and falling within subheadings 0105 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 of the Combined Nomenclature, of the following categories:

a) **Utility chicks:** chicks of one of the following types:

- Chicks for meat (table type chicks): chicks intended to be fattened and slaughtered before reaching sexual maturity;
- Laying chicks: chicks intended to be raised with a view to the production of eggs for consumption;
- Dual-purpose chicks: chicks intended either for laying and for the meat (mixed).

b) **Parent stock chicks:** chicks intended for the production of utility birds.

3. **Hatchery** – an establishment for incubating eggs, hatching and supplying chicks.

4. Poultry species:

- Roosters, hens, chickens (*Gallus gallus*)
- Turkeys (*Meleagris spp.*)
- Ducks (*Anas spp.*, *Cairina moschata*)
- Geese (*Anser anser domesticus*)
- Guinea fowls (*Numida meleagris domesticus*)
- Other poultry: ostriches, quails

The survey questionnaire includes farm administrative information, number of poultry on 31st December, production of eggs, submitted fattened poultry for slaughter in a slaughterhouse and slaughtering on the farm, eggs placed for hatching and chicks in 2023.

Confidentiality – the national confidentiality rules are defined in the Statistics Act. According to Art. 25 individual statistical data as well as statistical information that summarizes data for less than three statistical units or for an aggregate in which the relative share of the value of a studied parameter of one unit is over 85 percent of the total value of this parameter for all units of the population cannot be disclosed or provided. Individual data obtained for the purposes of statistical survey cannot be used as evidence before executive and judicial authorities.

Accessibility and transparency – the data on number of poultry, production of eggs, meat production and activity of hatcheries is available for users on the Ministry of Agriculture and Food website: <http://www.mzh.government.bg/bg/statistika-i-analizi/izsledvane-zhivotnovdstvo/danni/>, according to the deadline established in the National Statistical Program.

Main results are published in the Results and Analysis series newsletter. The data are published in the Statistical Reference Book (Agrostatistics Department) and the Statistical Yearbook (NSI), and also transmitted to Eurostat. Additional information, beyond the published one, for all characteristics is available and provided upon request observing the requirements of the Statistics Act.

The sample of poultry farms, included for surveying covers 1 788 poultry farms and is elaborated on the basis of the results of the Agricultural census'2020. New holdings established after 2020 are added to the survey list. Farms rearing at least 100 laying hens or at least 200 broilers or at least 100 other poultry (turkeys + geese + ducks + other poultry) or at least 1 ostrich are exhaustively surveyed.

The survey is carried out by experts on agricultural statistics in the regional offices at the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the municipal Agriculture Services.

- **Severozapaden:** Vidin, Vratsa, Montana, Lovech, Pleven;
- **Severen tsentralen:** Veliko Tarnovo, Gabrovo, Ruse, Silistra, Razgrad;
- **Severoiztochen:** Varna, Dobrich, Targovishte, Shoumen;
- **Yugoiztochen:** Burgas, Sliven, Stara Zagora, Yambol;
- **Yugozapaden:** Blagoevgrad, Kyustendil, Pernik, Sofia-cap., Sofia region;
- **Yuzhen tsentralen:** Kardzhali, Pazardzhik, Plovdiv, Smolyan, Haskovo.

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