

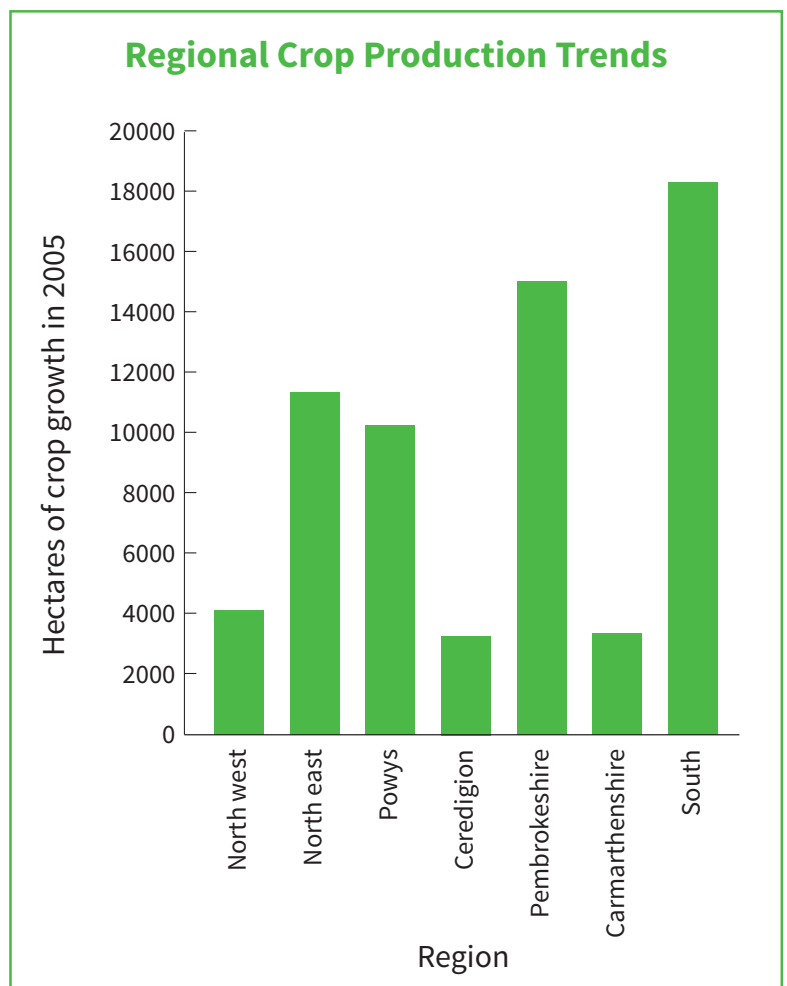
Farming in Wales and regional crop production trends

Arable farms are largely confined to the drier lowlands and are not numerous. Arable farming is most likely along the south coast and in isolated pockets in the north. However, crops grown for animal feed form part of a cropping programme or rotation on many farms, with one or more crops frequently forming part of the grassland-reseeding programme. Cereals are grown in the lowlands of the south and south-west coasts, northwest Wales, north-east Powys and lowland Clwyd. An increasing proportion is harvested as a whole crop for silage rather than being combined for grain. Root crops were grown in south Powys and parts of Clwyd.



Cereals grown for wholecrop.

Region	Hectares of crops grown - 2005 (Defra, 2006)	% of total agricultural area
North west	4,145	1.7
North east	11,356	5.7
Powys	10,270	2.7
Ceredigion	3,299	2.3
Pembrokeshire	15,040	12.1
Carmarthenshire	3,353	1.8
South	18,324	10.1



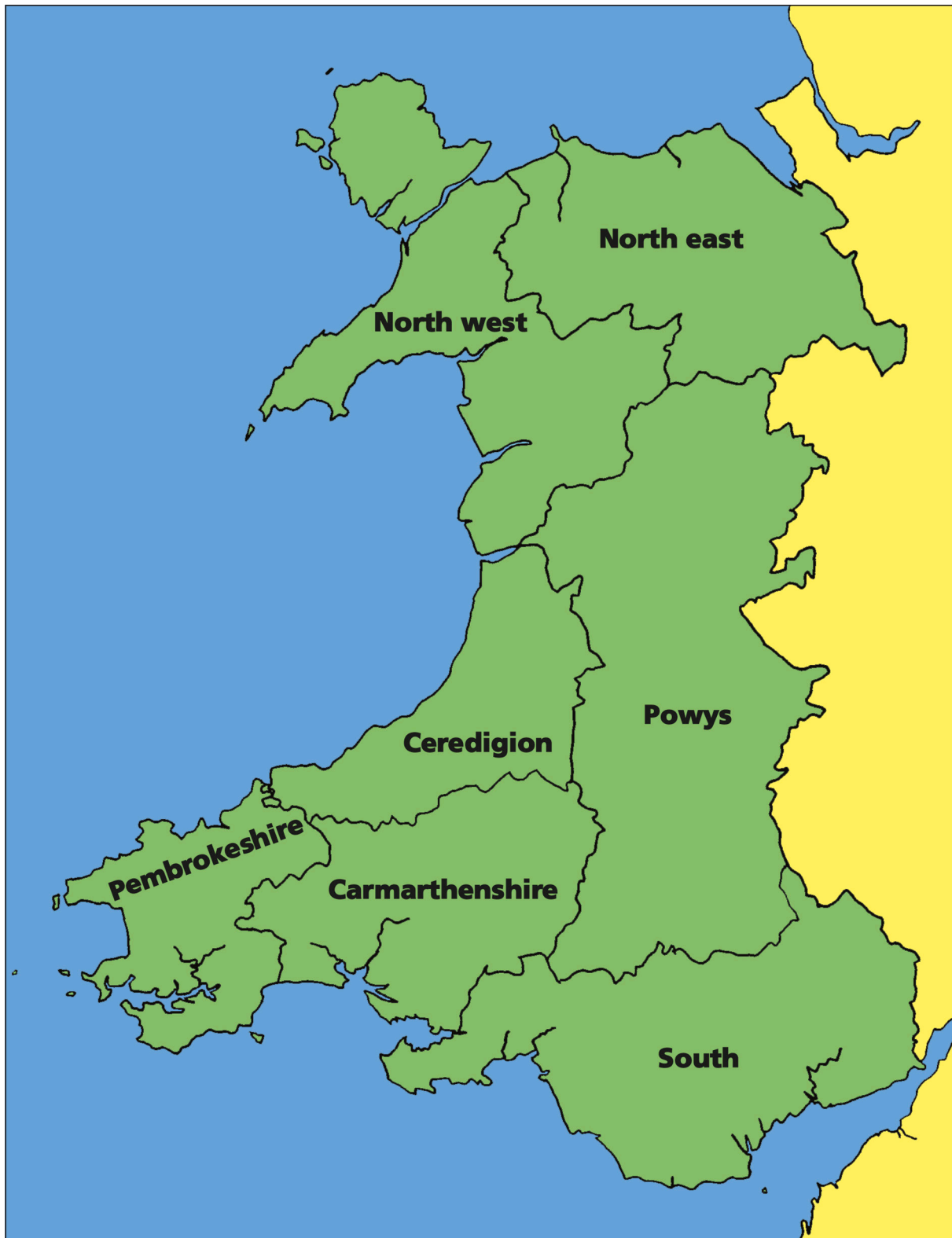


Wheat grown on a mixed farm in Carmarthenshire.



Forages grown for winter feeding of cattle.

Agricultural Regions in Wales



Reasons for the decline in crop production in Wales

1. Uncertainty of the weather:
 - Wet springs can lead to difficulty in establishing crops;
 - Wet summers can result in crop diseases and delay crop development;
 - Wet autumns can result in difficult harvests.
2. Soil and relief – marginal soils for cultivation, crop growth and harvesting –
 - Drainage;
 - Soil depth and/or stone content;
 - Steepness;
 - Low fertility.



Wet springs in west Wales.



Stony soils.

3. Historically lower costs of bought-in feeds making it uneconomic to grow crops for livestock feed.
4. Changes in farming practice – simplification and specialisation leading to all-grass rather than mixed farming systems.

Possible reasons for increased interest in crops

1. Cost of alternative feeds – high prices for cereals and other commodities.
2. Lack of availability of GM-free home produced protein feeds.
3. Value of by-products e.g. straw.
4. Organic farming – the need for crop rotations and the greater emphasis on self sufficiency.
5. Agri-environment schemes, e.g. Tir Gofal, and the value of cereal stubbles and brassica crops in particular for wildlife.



Straw bales near Monmouthshire.



Cereal stubble.