How were they impacted?

- 37% of rural and 43% of urban firms said that they had mainly experienced negative effects - suggesting rural businesses, overall, were slightly less affected.

- 38% of rural firms said that they had experienced both positive and negative effects - the most common response from rural businesses.

How did they perform?

- 25% said turnover increased
- 27% said it stayed the same
- 42% said it decreased

However rural firms were more likely than urban firms to have generated a profit or surplus.

66% rural firms

61% urban firms

How much did they access external advice and other support?

31% accessed this

Of these:

- 34% consulted an accountant
- 19% had consulted a business network
- 10% engaged a business advisor or mentor

How did they show resilience and adapt?

The pandemic encouraged firms to implement risk management strategies and prompted enormous market innovation amongst rural businesses.

How much did they take up government support?

79% of rural firms accessed at least one form of support

Less than 5% said the support helped create new products or services or pivot to a new business plan.

What are their objectives and ambitions?

Many (24%) wish to build a national and international business.

The State of Rural Enterprise Report – No 1, January 2022 - presents findings of a survey of 4,055 businesses across the North East, the West Midlands and the South West regions of England. This report focuses principally on non-farm rural businesses. To see the full report, visit www.nicre.co.uk