



Press release

Statistics Netherlands

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Organic farming surging ahead

Between 1996 and 1998 the area devoted to organic farming in the Netherlands grew by 5,000 hectares to nearly 20,000 hectares, nearly 1% of the total agricultural land area. According to figures from Statistics Netherlands organic livestock farming increased the most strongly, while horticulture under glass hardly grew at all. The province of Flevoland has devoted the relatively largest area to organic farming: 5% of its total farming area.

Dairy farming doubled

Organic farming has been growing strongly in recent years. Between 1986 and 1996 the area used for organic farming increased by an average 1,000 hectares a year, to a total of nearly 20,000 hectares in 1998, 1% of the total agricultural land area. In 1998 there were over 700 organic farms, up from 550 in 1996.

The strong increase in this type of farming in the last years has mainly been caused by the switch of a large number of dairy farmers to organic methods. The number of dairy cows kept on organic farms nearly doubled between 1996 and 1998 to 9,000; this is 0.6% of dairy cows, according to Statistics Netherlands. Organic pig farming is much less common. Only just over 9,000 of the 13.5 million pigs were kept organically. The area of organically grown arable crops rose by 2,000 hectares to 7,000 hectares. The area of organic crops grown under glass hardly increased at all.

Netherlands not a leader in Europe

With its 1% of total agricultural land area used for organic farming, the Netherlands is certainly not one of the European leaders in this field. Other countries such as Austria (10%), Switzerland (6.5%), Sweden (3.5%), Denmark (2.5%) and Germany (2%) are ahead as far as areas are concerned.

Within the Netherlands the province of Flevoland has devoted most land to organic farming with 5,000 hectares. Relatively speaking, too, Flevoland is top of the provincial list with 5% of the total agricultural land area, Noord-Holland is second with 1.5%.

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