



Press release

Statistics Netherlands

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Record number of chickens in the Netherlands

The number of chickens in the Netherlands reached a new record in April this year. The 9% increase since April last year brought the number to over 100 million, the highest number ever, according to Statistics Netherlands. There were also more pigs and veal calves than last year. The number of dairy cows and calving cows remained about the same according to the Agriculture Survey 1999.

Over 100 million chickens

In April this year there were 108 million chickens in the Netherlands, nearly 9 million more than one year previously. The number of broilers rose by 13% to 55 million, while the number of laying hens was 6% up at 44 million. In addition to the increase in the number of chickens there was also a rise in the number of building permits granted to poultry farmers: 367 in the period April 1998 to March 1999, 58 more than in the preceding twelve months.

Half of the increase in the number of chickens was caused by expansion on farms which kept chickens in the preceding year, according to Statistics Netherlands. Farms keeping chickens for the first time accounted for 12 million extra birds, introduced mainly on arable and cattle farms. Farms ceasing to keep chickens accounted for a reduction of -8 million birds.

The number of chickens rose most strongly in the province of Limburg, where it increased by 2.2 million. There are now some 18 million chickens in this province. In the provinces Noord-Brabant and Gelderland, where most chickens are kept, numbers increased by 4% to 30 million and 21 million respectively.

Pig stock up by half a million

The recovery of the pig stock following the swine fever epidemic in 1997 continued into this year. In the summer of 1997 there were only 11.4 million pigs in the Netherlands. By April 1998 the number had grown

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to 13.4 million and one year later to 14 million, according to Statistics Netherlands' figures.

The increase in pig numbers has taken place mainly in the provinces hit hardest by the epidemic. In Noord-Brabant there were 16% more pigs than in April 1998 (5.8 million), while in Limburg the pig stock grew by 5% to 1.9 million.

Increase in the number of veal calves

The number of veal calves in the Netherlands rose by 7% between April 1998 and April 1999, to a record of 760 thousand, of which 640 thousand are kept for white meat, 30 thousand more than in the year before. The number of calves reared for pink meat rose more strongly by 19% to 120 thousand.

Since the introduction of milk quotas in 1983 the number of dairy and calving cows fell continuously for a number of years. In 1998 and 1999 the number remains stable at 1.6 million.

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