



Press release

Statistics Netherlands

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Well-filled order portfolios for the Dutch manufacturing industry

The Dutch manufacturing industry received more orders in March than in February this year. The index on the order position is therefore higher than in February. Producers increased production in March and with it the degree of utilisation of their machinery and equipment's production capacity. A further increase in productivity is expected for the months to come. Producer confidence, the mood indicator of the entrepreneurs in manufacturing saw a slight increase in March.

Improved order position

Demand for manufactured products increased further in March. The index on the order position, showing the amount of work in store, was 103.4 in March. This is a 1% increase on February, which itself had a record high since November 1995. The entrepreneurs expressed favourable opinions on the size of their order portfolio.

High degree of capacity utilisation

The manufacturers increased production in March as well as the degree of capacity utilisation. In March the utilisation of production capacity was 84.7% up 0.2 percentage points on December 1999. This constitutes the third increase in a row, following September and December 1999. The high degree of capacity utilisation does not mean a shortage of production capacity according to the producers. Companies experiencing problems in production name a shortage of labour as the main cause. Producers also feel that insufficient demand for manufactured products has become less of a problem.

More producer confidence

Producer confidence increased slightly in March to 6.6. It is the third monthly increase in succession. The increase in producer confidence is due to more positive sentiments about the order position and the stocks. Producers expect an increase in industrial production and a further increase in selling prices.

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Producer confidence / Producentenvertrouwen

	Jan	Feb	Mrt	Apr	Mei	Juni	Juli	Aug	Sep	Okt	Nov	Dec
1996	-0.3	0.4	0.8	0.7	0.1	0.6	2.5	1.5	0.8	2.4	1.0	3.5
1997	3.7	3.7	3.4	4.7	3.9	6.2	6.5	7.1	6.6	6.4	7.2	4.5
1998	5.3	5.3	5.8	5.2	5.3	5.4	4.0	4.8	1.5	1.3	0.2	0.2
1999	0.6	-1.0	0.6	1.2	1.5	2.3	1.4	4.2	7.1	6.9	6.1	5.2
2000	5.3	6.4	6.6									

Source/Bron: Statistics Netherlands/CBS