



# Press release

Statistics Netherlands

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## ***Organic farming claims 10% more land***

The area of land used for organic farming increased by nearly 10% between 1998 and 1999. The increase was mainly for grassland; the area used to grow organic crops fell in the same period. Statistics Netherlands 1999 survey of organic farming revealed that 21,500 hectares of land were maintained or cultivated using organic methods in 1999. This is just over 1% of the total area of agricultural land.

### ***Dairy farmers take the lead***

The increase in organic farming in the Netherlands is largely the consequence of a number of dairy farmers changing over to organic methods. Farmers with grazing livestock account for 60% of organic land use, mainly grassland for grazing cows, sheep and goats. In 1999 10,400 dairy cows were kept according to organic methods, 0.6% of the total Dutch dairy herd. Relatively speaking, the numbers of goats (8.5%) and sheep (1.2%) on organic farms are larger.

### ***Fewer organic arable crops***

The area of arable crops on organically cultivated land was 5% less in 1999 than in 1998. This was partly caused by the wet autumn of 1998, which hampered the sowing of winter cereals.

Horticultural crops grown organically under glass claimed 72% more land area in 1999, while the area of open ground devoted to organic horticultural crops increased by 18%.

### ***Largest number of organic farmers in Gelderland***

There were 786 organic farms in the Netherlands in 1999, of which 131 in the province of Gelderland. Although the number of organic farmers in Gelderland is much larger than that in other provinces, this province does not have the largest area of organic farmland. This honour goes to Flevoland, where over

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Statistics Netherlands  
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5% of land is devoted to organic methods, five times the national average.

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