



Press release

Statistics Netherlands

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Cattle and pigs dwindling in number

Cattle and pigs were again reduced in number in the year 2000. By the end of last year cattle numbers were down by 5% and pigs by 2% on the same period in 1999, according to the latest figures by Statistics Netherlands.

Cattle developments

In 1984 the number of cattle in the Netherlands reached its peak at 5.4 million heads. In the next few years numbers were falling fast, reaching 4.5 million heads in 1988. This was mainly due to the introduction of the quota system for milk.

Then followed a period with slight fluctuations, but on the whole numbers didn't go down until January 1996. There was a change in the composition, however. In 1984 some 46% consisted of dairy cows and 17% of beef cattle. In 1996 the number of dairy cows was down to 38% and the number of beef cattle up to 27%.

Between 1997 and late 1999 cattle numbers fell by over 2% a year, on average.

In November 2000 the number was down to 3.9 million heads, 5% less than in 1999. The reduction was greater for young breeding animals and other breeding cattle, namely 8% during this period.

Pigs

Between 1984 and 1987 the number of pigs increased at an average rate of some 7% a year. By 1987 there were 14 million. This period was followed by a stable period until 1996, in which the number of pigs stayed around 14 million.

After the outbreak of hog fever epidemic in February 1997, numbers went down to 11.4 million in December 1997. A year later the number of pigs was up again to 13.4 million. Since December 1998 the number has been falling at a rate of 2% per year. In December 2000 there were 12.8 million pigs in total. When December 1999 and December 2000 are compared, we see that the number of breeding sows went down 4% more than the number of other kinds of pigs.

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