



Statistics Netherlands

Press release

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Fewer and fewer farms

The number of farms fell by 3 percent between 1 April 2001 and 1 April 2002. On average, 62 farms a week stopped doing business according to Statistics Netherlands' agricultural survey 2002. This decrease continues the longer term trend: between 1993 and 2002 the number of farms has fallen by about 25 percent, or 30,000 farms. The number of farms in the intensive livestock sector in particular has dropped relatively sharply. The number of pig farms, for example, has more than halved.

Farms becoming bigger on average

The decrease in the number of farms is accompanied by an increase in the average area of those remaining in business. Between 1 April 2001 and 1 April 2002 this rose by 1 hectare. In 1993 the average farm area was 17 hectares, 5 less than the present level. This increase in scale is also noticeable in the increase in the number of animals per farm in the last ten years. On average, the number of dairy and calving cows rose by one third to 56 cows per farm. The number of pigs rose by three-quarters to nearly 1,000 animals per farm.

Economic significance declining

Between 1993 and 2002 the economic significance of the agricultural sector in the Netherlands has risen by about 5 percent. After 2000, however, it fell by the same percentage. The average economic significance per farm rose by one third in the period 1993-2000; between 1 April 2001 and 1 April 2002 it grew by 2 percent per farm.

Labour volume down

Total labour volume in agriculture fell by about 4 percent between 1 April 2001 and 1 April 2002. In the period 1993-2002, however, the decrease in labour volume was less than the decrease in the number of farms. Labour volume decreased by 13 percent, the number of farms fell by 25 percent. The composition of the labour volume has changed significantly between 1993 and 2002. The share of non-family members has increased among regular workers and the labour volume of casual workers has nearly doubled.

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