



# Press release

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## ***Fewer cows and pigs***

In 2002, the number of cattle and pigs fell slightly by 2 and 3 percent respectively. At the end of the year, there were 3.8 million heads of cattle and 11.2 million pigs in the Netherlands. The steady decrease in cattle means that the current number is the same as 37 years ago. The decrease in pigs went by fits and starts in recent years. Figures by Statistics Netherlands show that 18 years ago there were also 11.2 million pigs.

### ***Fewer cows***

At the end of 2002, there were 3.8 million heads of cattle, 2 percent, i.e. 61 thousand, less than in the year before. In 2000, the number fell by 60 thousand. From 1991, the number of cattle has been falling by approximately 2 percent each year.

In 1965, there were also 3.8 million heads of cattle and from then on the number gradually increased to reach 5.4 million heads in 1984. There is a striking difference in the number of dairy cows; 1.7 million in 1965 and 1.5 million in 2002, mainly due to the introduction of the quota system for milk in 1984 and a higher milk production per cow. In the period 1984 - 1988, the number of cattle declined by an average 4 percent per year, whereas the number of dairy cows fell by 6 percent per year.

Last year, the number of dairy cows remained stable, breeding cattle fell slightly by 2 percent, beef cattle by 3 percent. The number of beef bulls noticeably decreased by 21 percent, young beef cattle increased by 2 percent.

### ***Fewer pigs as well***

In December 2002, there were 11.2 million pigs, a decrease by 3 percent, i.e. over 360 thousand, compared to the previous year. A more substantial decrease by 10 percent was observed in 2000. The outbreak of swine fever in 1997 and the government's pursuit to reduce the number of pigs caused it to fluctuate in recent years. Until 1997 the number of pigs rose, whereas in 1997 decline set in.

In 1984, the number of pigs was the same as in 2002, 12 percent of all pigs were breeding sows, today 10 percent.

Last year, the number of breeding sows was reduced slightly by 2 percent. The number of sows put to the boar stabilised. Consequently, the number of pigs is not expected to change dramatically in the near future.

For further information please contact the press office.

Tel. +31 70 337 58 16

Fax +31 70 337 59 71

E-mail: [persdienst@cbs.nl](mailto:persdienst@cbs.nl)