



# Press release

PB03-151  
15 August 2003  
9:30 AM

## ***Fewer farm animals***

The number of pigs, cows and sheep in the Netherlands fell again in the twelve months to April this year. On 1 April 2003 there were 10.7 million pigs, nearly 1 million fewer than twelve months previously. The number of cattle fell by quarter of a million to 3.6 million, and the number of sheep is also decreasing. Goats are the exception to this overall picture, their numbers are increasing steadily.

Areas of arable crops have hardly changed form 2002, according to the provisional results of Statistics Netherlands' agriculture survey.

## ***A quarter fewer pigs than in 1995***

The number of pigs in the Netherlands has dropped by about 25 percent since the 14.4 million in 1995. The number rose to over 15 million in 1997, but in that year there was an outbreak of swine fever and since then the number of pigs has continued to fall. Government schemes to buy up pigs and manure legislation played a part in this development. The number of pigs is now back at the level of the beginning of the eighties.

## ***Cattle continue to decrease***

The introduction of the milk quota system has been a main factor in the reduction in cattle numbers. Because of the increased milk production per animal it is possible to fulfil these quota's with fewer animals. The number has fallen from 4.7 million in 1995 to 3.6 million in 2003. The decrease has been observed for nearly all categories of cattle. One of the most notable exceptions is the substantial increase in the number of calves reared for pink veal. In 1995 these numbered nearly 86 thousand, in 2003 nearly 150 thousand, an increase of more than 70 percent. The number has remained stable in the last few years.

## ***Fewer sheep, more goats***

There were nearly 1.1 million sheep in 2003, a decrease of nearly 100 thousand compared with last year. The number of sheep has fallen by more than a third since 1995.

The number of goats has tripled since 1995 to nearly 270 thousand. Last year the goat population grew by 5 percent

### ***Arable farming stable***

The provisional results of the agriculture survey 2003 show that at overall, there are hardly any noticeable changes in crop areas. One exception is the total area of consumption potatoes, which shrank by more than 6 percent compared with 2002, to 72 thousand hectares.