



Press release

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Manufacturers' sentiment unchanged

Producers' confidence, the sentiment indicator for the manufacturing industry, is at about the same level in August as in July. Producers' confidence dropped sharply at the beginning of this year and since February the indicator has been hovering around the -7 mark. Statistics Netherlands' business sentiment survey further shows that manufacturers expect production to remain at around the same level in the period August- October.

Confidence remains low

Producers' confidence has hardly changed in August 2003. Following a slight increase in confidence to -7.4 in July this year, it reached -7.0 in August. The components making up producers' confidence also hardly changed. Opinions on stocks of finished products and on new orders are slightly more optimistic. Just as last month, manufacturers foresee hardly any change in production in the next three months. Companies making semi-manufactured products are less sombre about the coming three months and expect production to increase slightly.

Orders down again

The index for the new orders received by the Dutch manufacturing industry has fallen further in August, to 91.2. This is the lowest value of the index since it started in 1989. New orders have been falling since the beginning of 2003. In the sector of semi-manufactured products new orders dropped sharply in July but have not fallen further. Manufacturers in this sector view their position less negatively than in previous months. Producers of consumer goods saw orders fall again in August, especially export orders. The investment goods sector also received fewer orders, although because stocks of finished products diminished slightly, these companies are slightly more optimistic.