



Statistics in focus

AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

THEME 5 – 17/2003

Contents

Table 1 – All holdings with cattle	2
Table 2a – Holdings with dairy cows	4
Table 2b – Specialist cattle holdings "dairying"	4
Table 3 – Specialist cattle holdings "rearing and fattening" and "dairying, rearing and fattening"	6

Structure of agricultural holdings in the EU

Cattle farming

Results obtained from the Community survey 1999-2000 on the structure of agricultural holdings.

In EU-15, the 59 million Livestock Units (LSU) of the cattle population are distributed over 1.5 million agricultural holdings. The average cattle herd is thus 39 LSU per holding.

Half of the cattle holdings have an area less than 20 ha and each of these has fewer than 20 LSU of cattle. Together they contain 9% the cattle in the EU.

The cattle herds of fewer than 5 LSU remain relatively frequent in Spain (33% of the holdings with cattle), Italy (38%), Greece (46%) and especially Portugal (72%).

On the other hand, in Denmark, the Benelux countries and the United Kingdom, approximately 20% of the cattle herds have more than 100 LSU.

As many as 60% of cattle farms (i.e. 0.9 million holdings) are located in less-favoured farming areas.

* * *

The 20.6 million dairy cows in EU-15 are distributed over 730 000 farms. The herds with fewer than 10 cows still represent 2/3 of the dairy herds in Greece, Austria and Portugal, and half of the dairy herds in Spain and Italy.

On the other hand, 12% of the Danish dairy herds and 25% of the British dairy herds have more than 100 dairy cows.

63% of the farms are so-called "specialist dairying" farms (463 000), because they obtain from dairy production more than 2/3 of their gross margin.

"Specialist dairying" holdings contain 74% of the dairy cows in EU-15. These specialised holdings generally have

- fewer than 10 dairy cows in Germany, France and the United Kingdom,
- more than 50 dairy cows in Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands,
- up to 50 dairy cows in the other Member States.

* * *

A further 400 000 holdings are "specialist cattle rearing and fattening" or "cattle – dairying, rearing and fattening combined". These farms are relatively unintensive in manpower (1.1 work units per holding, against 1.7 work units in the "specialist dairying" holdings). They are comparatively numerous in Ireland and Belgium where they represent 1/2 and 1/4 of the farms respectively.



Table 1 – All holdings with cattle

	EU-15	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL
Number of holdings (1000)	1 528	38	24	238	28	188	282	124
- of which, in less favoured areas (1000)	899	7	0	154	21	146	140	77
Labour force (1000 AWU)	2 287	44	31	376	42	272	437	151
- AWU per holding	1.5	1.2	1.3	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.6	1.2
Agricultural area (1000 ha)	61 190	1 110	1 226	11 452	272	5 632	16 789	4 004
- ha per holding	40	29	51	48	10	30	60	32
Number of cattle (1000 LSU)	59 020	2 121	1 343	10 639	464	4 481	14 636	5 146
- LSU per holding	39	55	56	45	16	24	52	41
Number of dairy cows (1000)	20 579	616	640	4 765	154	1 242	4 193	1 177
Number of other cows (1000)	11 952	540	122	788	111	1 780	4 314	1 187
Distribution of holdings by AA class (%)								
- under 5 ha	21	15	1	8	47	43	9	7
- 5 to 20 ha	31	31	28	35	42	35	15	35
- 20 to 50 ha	26	37	33	35	9	11	29	40
- 50 to 100 ha	14	14	26	16	1	5	30	15
- 100 ha and over	8	2	12	6	0	6	17	3
Distribution of holdings by size of cattle herd (%)								
- under 5 LSU	22	11	15	13	46	33	12	9
- 5 to 20 LSU	28	21	27	29	32	35	19	32
- 20 to 50 LSU	24	24	18	30	13	21	26	31
- 50 to 100 LSU	16	28	20	20	6	7	29	19
- 100 LSU and over	9	16	20	9	2	4	14	9
Distribution of cattle LSU by size of cattle herd (%)								
- under 5 LSU	1	1	1	1	6	3	1	1
- 5 to 20 LSU	8	4	5	7	20	16	4	9
- 20 to 50 LSU	20	15	10	22	26	27	17	24
- 50 to 100 LSU	30	36	27	31	26	21	40	32
- 100 LSU and over	40	44	56	39	22	32	38	34
Distribution of holdings by farm type FT (%)								
- specialist dairying - FT 41	30	23	36	39	25	7	26	21
- specialist cattle - rearing and fattening - FT 42	23	29	3	8	29	8	28	58
- cattle – dairying, rearing and fattening combined - FT 43	4	9	0	4	5	3	4	3
- sheep, goats and other grazing livestock - FT 44	9	2	3	5	8	13	6	13
- mixed livestock holdings - FT 7	6	8	4	7	12	8	7	0
- mixed crops-livestock - FT 8	12	16	22	22	12	24	16	3
- other holdings	14	11	32	16	10	38	13	1

I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	
173	2	48	101	102	30	34	115	Number of holdings (1000)
98	2	0	83	70	27	24	50	- of which, in less favoured areas (1000)
276	3	80	109	180	54	44	187	Labour force (1000 AWU)
1.6	1.7	1.7	1.1	1.8	1.8	1.3	1.6	- AWU per holding
3 227	121	1 268	1 653	1 813	961	1 760	9 902	Agricultural area (1000 ha)
19	64	27	16	18	32	52	86	- ha per holding
4 526	149	3 007	1 564	1 029	748	1 220	7 946	Number of cattle (1000 LSU)
26	79	63	16	10	25	36	69	- LSU per holding
1 895	45	1 650	697	356	364	449	2 335	Number of dairy cows (1000)
446	32	91	176	341	28	165	1 829	Number of other cows (1000)
								Distribution of holdings by AA class (%)
34	3	12	20	70	3	2	7	- under 5 ha
42	11	34	55	21	30	26	21	- 5 to 20 ha
16	25	45	22	5	52	36	27	- 20 to 50 ha
5	47	9	2	2	14	24	23	- 50 to 100 ha
2	14	1	1	3	2	11	22	- 100 ha and over
								Distribution of holdings by size of cattle herd (%)
38	5	8	23	72	7	12	9	- under 5 LSU
33	11	18	49	17	38	33	22	- 5 to 20 LSU
17	18	21	26	7	48	30	24	- 20 to 50 LSU
7	36	34	2	3	7	18	21	- 50 to 100 LSU
5	30	19	0	2	1	6	23	- 100 LSU and over
								Distribution of cattle LSU by size of cattle herd (%) (%)
3	0	0	4	13	1	1	0	- under 5 LSU
13	2	3	36	16	20	11	4	- 5 to 20 LSU
20	8	12	50	21	58	27	12	- 20 to 50 LSU
20	34	40	9	19	18	35	22	- 50 to 100 LSU
43	56	45	1	30	3	26	62	- 100 LSU and over
								Distribution of holdings by farm type FT (%)
31	48	56	47	14	72	38	22	- specialist dairying - FT 41
10	15	8	13	9	11	15	29	- specialist cattle - rearing and fattening - FT 42
1	9	3	17	2	4	1	1	- cattle - dairying, rearing and fattening combined - FT 43
7	2	17	4	7	1	2	26	- sheep, goats and other grazing livestock - FT 44
6	6	6	6	19	1	2	1	- mixed livestock holdings - FT 7
16	15	5	8	18	8	24	8	- mixed crops-livestock - FT 8
29	5	7	4	31	3	19	12	- other holdings

Table 2a – Holdings with dairy cows

	EU-15	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL
Number of holdings (1000)	730	18	11	153	12	78	128	32
Number of dairy cows (1000)	20 579	616	640	4 765	154	1 242	4 193	1 177
- dairy cow per holding	28	34	57	31	13	16	33	37

Table 2b – Specialist cattle holdings “dairying”

Number of holdings (1000)	463	9	9	92	2	47	75	26
- of which, in less favoured areas (1000)	268	2	0	66	1	35	31	12
Labour force (1000 AWU)	787	12	15	147	3	80	131	42
- AWU per holding	1.7	1.3	1.8	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.6
Agricultural area (1000 ha)	16 189	283	560	3 345	12	551	4 131	1 125
- ha per holding	35	32	65	36	6	12	55	43
Number of dairy cows (1000)	15 263	378	542	2 945	69	997	2 624	1 067
- dairy cow per holding	33	43	63	32	34	21	35	41
Distribution of holdings by AA class (%)								
- under 5 ha	12	4	1	4	61	32	3	2
- 5 to 20 ha	30	24	7	32	35	54	8	15
- 20 to 50 ha	34	57	34	43	4	11	40	53
- 50 to 100 ha	18	15	43	18	0	2	39	27
- 100 ha and over	5	1	15	4	0	1	10	4
Distribution of holdings by number of dairy cows (%)								
- 1 to 9 dairy cows	21	6	1	33	23	14	57	6
- 10 to 19 dairy cows	20	11	5	30	50	22	32	13
- 20 to 49 dairy cows	39	48	78	30	26	47	11	53
- 50 to 99 dairy cows	16	32	14	5	1	15	0	25
- 100 dairy cows and over	4	3	1	2	0	2	0	4
Distribution of dairy cows by number of dairy cows (%)								
- 1 to 9 dairy cows	3	1	0	7	9	3	28	1
- 10 to 19 dairy cows	9	4	2	20	45	10	43	5
- 20 to 49 dairy cows	37	39	70	41	43	46	27	44
- 50 to 99 dairy cows	32	48	23	16	2	30	2	39
- 100 dairy cows and over	18	8	4	16	0	11	0	12

I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	
82	1	35	77	33	24	14	32	Number of holdings (1000)
1 895 23	45 37	1 650 47	697 9	356 11	364 15	449 32	2 335 73	Number of dairy cows (1000) - dairy cow per holding
55 33	1 1	27 0	48 41	14 8	22 19	13 9	25 9	Number of holdings (1000) - of which, in less favoured areas (1000)
106 2.0	2 1.9	51 1.9	53 1.1	27 1.9	41 1.9	23 1.8	53 2.1	Labour force (1000 AWU) - AWU per holding
1 057 19	66 72	875 33	729 15	154 11	675 31	829 65	1 798 72	Agricultural area (1000 ha) - ha per holding
1 616 30	35 38	1 481 55	483 10	287 20	343 16	420 33	1 976 79	Number of dairy cows (1000) - dairy cow per holding
29	0	1	22	45	3	1	2	Distribution of holdings by AA class(%) - under 5 ha
45	1	21	58	42	27	9	7	- 5 to 20 ha
18	21	64	18	10	56	37	32	- 20 to 50 ha
5	65	12	1	2	13	38	38	- 50 to 100 ha
2	13	1	1	1	1	15	21	- 100 ha and over
3	1	2	7	8	26	42	37	Distribution of holdings by number of dairy cows (%) - 1 to 9 dairy cows
5	4	5	12	22	19	22	20	- 10 to 19 dairy cows
26	36	40	62	54	33	27	26	- 20 to 49 dairy cows
39	46	46	18	14	17	7	11	- 50 to 99 dairy cows
27	13	7	1	2	6	2	6	- 100 dairy cows and over
0	0	0	1	1	4	9	6	Distribution of dairy cows by number of dairy cows (%) - 1 to 9 dairy cows
1	1	1	5	10	7	15	9	- 10 to 19 dairy cows
12	21	26	58	52	30	40	27	- 20 to 49 dairy cows
36	50	56	32	27	33	22	25	- 50 to 99 dairy cows
51	28	16	3	10	26	14	33	- 100 dairy cows and over

Table 3 – Specialist cattle holdings “rearing and fattening” and “dairying, rearing and fattening”

	EU-15	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL
Number of holdings (1000)	387	15	1	27	3	63	90	76
- of which, in less favoured areas (1000)	263	5	0	19	2	53	56	52
Labour force (1000 AWU)	439	14	1	26	5	77	109	80
- AWU per holding	1.1	0.9	0.7	1.0	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.1
Agricultural area (1000 ha)	12 274	347	16	736	22	1 827	4 493	1 925
- ha per holding	32	23	20	28	7	29	50	25
Number of cattle (1000 LSU)	15 093	881	33	1 044	140	1 794	4 932	2 418
- LSU per holding	39	59	42	39	44	29	55	32
Distribution of holdings by AA class(%)								
- under 5 ha	22	26	8	17	71	41	15	9
- 5 to 20 ha	36	34	70	44	23	36	21	44
- 20 to 50 ha	24	26	14	27	4	11	24	36
- 50 to 100 ha	12	13	6	9	1	6	26	9
- 100 ha and over	6	2	3	3	1	6	14	2
Distribution of holdings by size of cattle herd (%)								
- 1 to 9 LSU	14	11	0	9	13	22	12	10
- 10 to 19 LSU	36	27	40	41	26	44	24	39
- 20 to 49 LSU	26	21	40	28	29	21	22	33
- 50 to 99 LSU	15	21	12	15	22	8	25	13
- 100 LSU and over	9	20	8	8	10	5	17	5
Distribution of cattle LSU by size of cattle herd (%)								
- 1 to 9 LSU	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	1
- 10 to 19 LSU	10	5	13	12	7	17	5	14
- 20 to 49 LSU	21	12	29	23	22	23	13	33
- 50 to 99 LSU	26	25	19	26	35	20	33	28
- 100 LSU and over	41	57	40	39	35	38	48	23

I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	
19	0	5	31	12	4	5	35	Number of holdings (1000)
13	0	0	26	9	4	4	19	- of which, in less favoured areas (1000)
24	1	6	33	17	6	5	35	Labour force (1000 AWU)
1.3	1.5	1.3	1.1	1.4	1.4	0.9	1.0	- AWU per holding
379	25	52	526	340	121	167	1 297	Agricultural area (1000 ha)
20	57	11	17	29	27	31	37	- ha per holding
828	35	406	538	225	115	154	1 551	Number of cattle (1000 LSU)
43	78	83	18	19	26	29	44	- LSU per holding
								Distribution of holdings by AA class(%)
39	6	40	18	59	8	4	12	- under 5 ha
36	21	45	55	24	41	46	38	- 5 to 20 ha
16	24	13	25	8	38	36	31	- 20 to 50 ha
5	31	2	2	3	11	11	13	- 50 to 100 ha
3	18	0	1	5	2	4	6	- 100 ha and over
								Distribution of holdings by size of cattle herd (%)
23	6	1	18	44	12	4	10	- 1 to 9 LSU
36	15	30	49	38	42	50	34	- 10 to 19 LSU
22	24	27	30	11	34	34	30	- 20 to 49 LSU
10	24	17	3	4	10	10	16	- 50 to 99 LSU
9	31	26	0	4	2	3	10	- 100 LSU and over
								Distribution of cattle LSU by size of cattle herd (%)
1	0	0	3	6	1	0	1	- 1 to 9 LSU
9	3	4	32	20	20	21	9	- 10 to 19 LSU
16	10	10	52	17	42	37	22	- 20 to 49 LSU
16	23	14	12	13	27	23	26	- 50 to 99 LSU
57	64	71	1	43	10	18	42	- 100 LSU and over

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