

CHANGES IN ANNUAL MILK YIELD

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Introduction

Eurostat has expanded its statistical data base (NewCronos) to include information on dairy cows' average milk yield. The data series currently includes information for the period 1973-1997, but will be updated when information on the most recent year becomes available. The new data series in NewCronos is being compiled to meet the administrative need for comparable data in a field which is extensively regulated.

Milk production virtually unchanged since 1980

In 1997 there were in Europe (EU-15) some 21.5 million dairy cows producing approximately 120 million tonnes of milk in all, or an annual yield of around 5 500 kg per cow.

Total milk production in EU-10 rose comparatively steeply up to the mid-1980s, but since the milk quota system was introduced in 1984, production has fallen slightly.

Six kilograms more milk per cow per day

The annual milk yield per dairy cow has risen sharply over the past 20 years. There are various reasons for this tendency towards greater efficiency, including improved feeding methods and the breeding of high-yielding cattle strains. In the period 1975 to 1997, the average annual milk yield per dairy cow in EU-9 thus rose by almost 1 900 kg, or approximately 50%.

Almost half of this increase was in the period up to the introduction of the milk quota system in 1984, a clear indication of the importance of biological and technical developments when it comes to efficient milk production.

The introduction of the milk quota system in 1984 has nevertheless supported the tendency for increase in the yearly milk yield.

Over the past 22 years there has been a noticeable difference in the milk yield from one EU country to another. In 1997 the annual yield per cow was around 6 700 kg in Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands, for example, compared with a typical yield of around 4 100 kg for Greece or Ireland.

In France, efficiency gains over the past 22 years have been quite impressive, with a yield up by a good 74% since 1975.

Method

Since the start of the 1970s, the Member States have carried out co-ordinated livestock censuses based on common, harmonised classifications and definitions. Information on dairy cows is collected every May/June and November/December, and average dairy cow numbers are calculated on the basis of these half-yearly results. The average annual milk yield per cow is then calculated from a comparison with the annual milk production of dairy cows.

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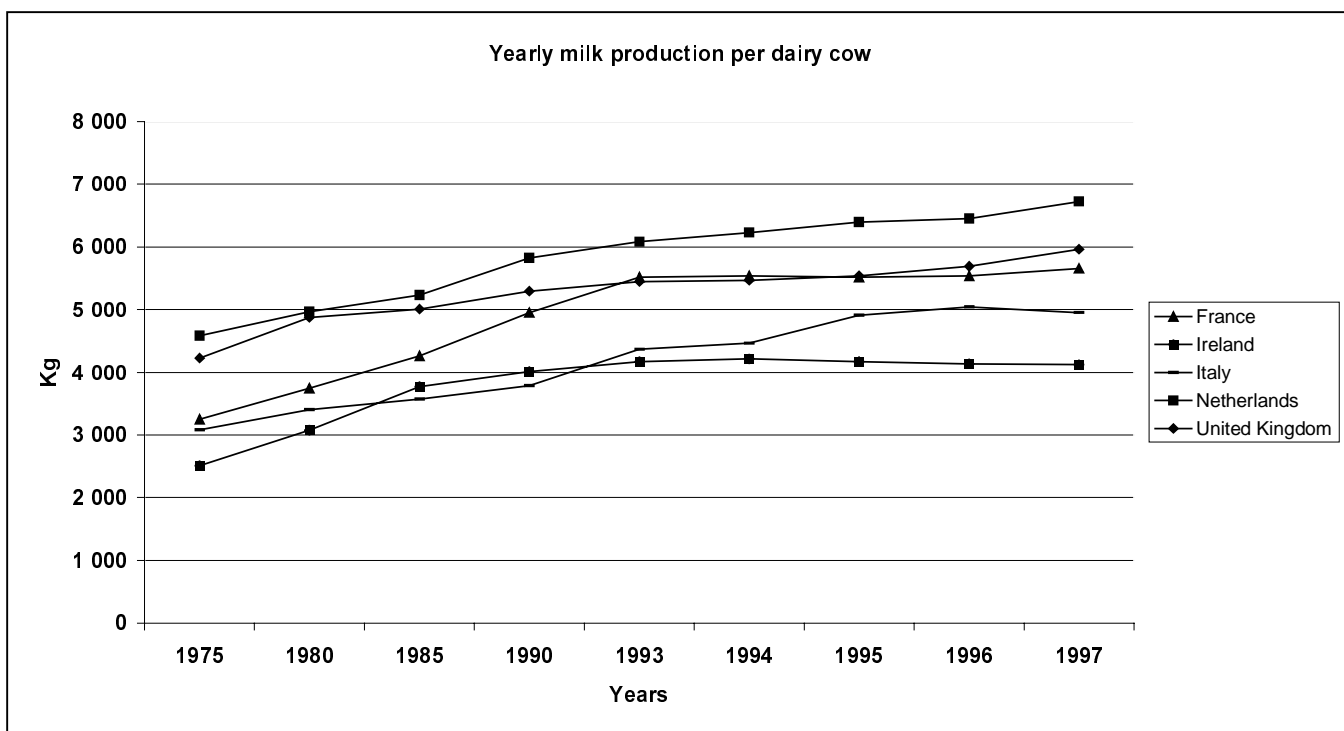
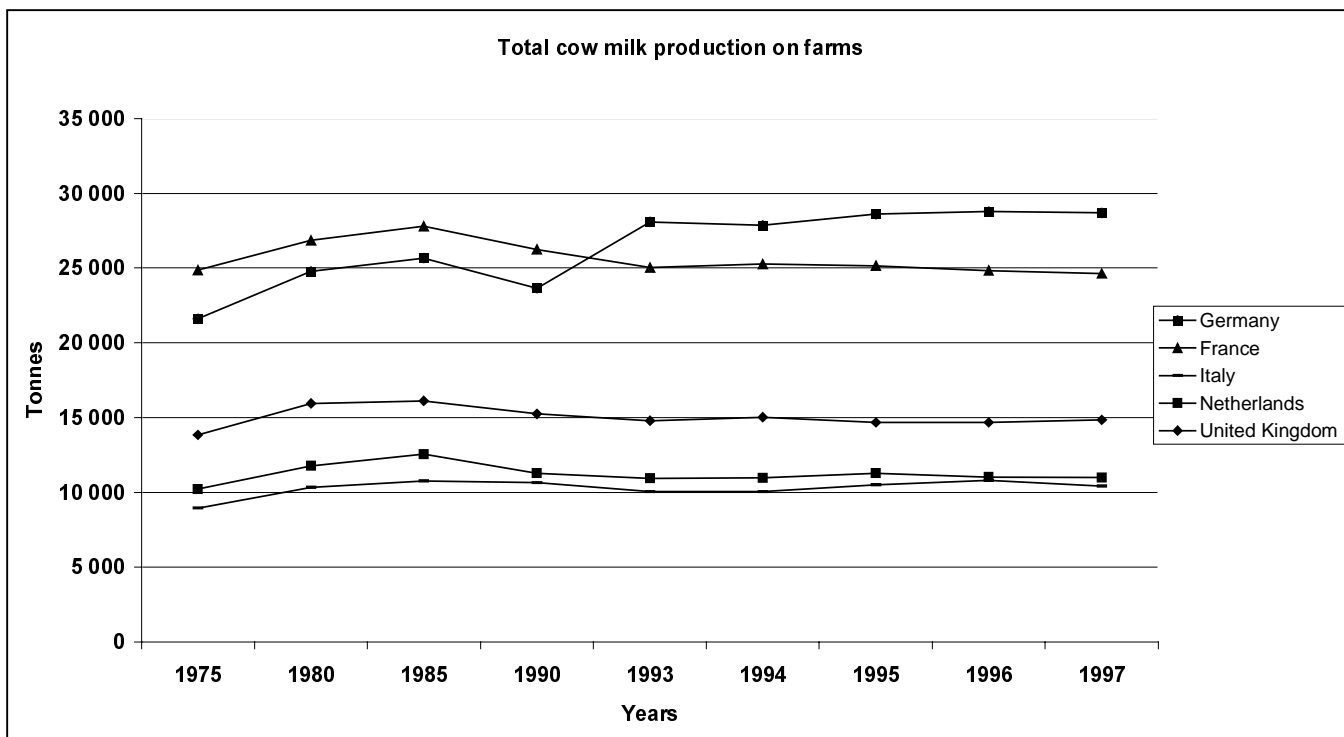
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Dairy cows are defined in the present statistics as cows intended solely or mainly for the production of milk for consumption and/or for the manufacture of dairy products. They include cull dairy cows (regardless of whether or not they are fattened between final milking and slaughtering). The fact that cull cows are included may mean that the milk yield figures differ from calculations in which cull dairy cows are not counted as dairy cows.

The information from the individual Member States is aggregated to describe changes in the EU overall. In this connection, EU-15 is defined as all countries which are currently members of the EU. EU-12 = EU-15 excluding Finland, Sweden and Austria, EU-10 = EU-12 excluding Spain and Portugal and EU-9 = EU-10 excluding Greece.



Yearly milk production per dairy cow

	1975	1980	1985	1990	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
EU-15	-	-	-	-	5 209	5 234	5 382	5 440	5 435
EU-12	-	-	-	-	5 174	5 220	5 376	5 430	5 311
EU-10	-	-	4 460	4 855	5 106	5 212	5 327	5 379	5 446
EU-9	3 669	4 153	4 473	4 874	5 276	5 323	5 448	5 531	5 597
België/Belgique	3 653	3 853	3 920	4 729	4 729	4 817	4 911	5 240	5 089
Danmark	4 447	4 873	5 580	6 229	6 549	6 564	6 593	6 584	6 688 0
Deutschland	4 011	4 542	4 684	4 919	5 308	5 319	5 457	5 531	5 639 0
Ellada	-	-	2 969	3 162	3 574	4 217	4 243	4 017	4 083 *
Espana	-	-	-	3 498	4 254	4 162	4 802	4 671	4 723 *
France	3 249	3 745	4 265	4 953	5 518	5 536	5 520	5 537	5 653
Ireland	2 513	3 075	3 771	4 009	4 172	4 214	4 171	4 135	4 122 *
Italia	3 084	3 405	3 571	3 788	4 366	4 467	4 913	5 043	4 951
Luxembourg	3 481	3 958	4 310	4 914	5 311	5 291	5 529	5 560	5 549 *
Nederland	4 579	4 963	5 232	5 825	6 079	6 231	6 398	6 453	6 722 *
Österreich	-	-	-	-	3 940	4 008	4 246	4 359	4 521
Portugal	-	-	-	3 904	3 763	3 949	4 292	4 409	4 554
Finland	-	-	-	-	5 789	6 025	6 122	5 993	6 168
Sverige	-	-	-	-	6 385	6 761	6 781	7 009	7 109
United Kingdom	4 224	4 874	5 010	5 297	5 449	5 466	5 537	5 692	5 961

Total cow milk production on farms

	1975	1980	1985	1990	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
EU-15	-	-	-	-	119 803	119 936	121 318	120 922	120 295
EU-12	-	-	-	109 180	110 724	110 730	112 398	112 201	111 466
EU-10	92 584	104 238	108 566	101 879	103 266	103 600	104 673	104 511	103 733
EU-9	91 874	103 570	107 903	101 163	102 519	102 831	103 909	103 770	102 983
België/Belgique	3 621	3 763	3 796	3 610	3 329	3 344	3 375	3 416	3 213
Danmark	4 918	5 117	5 099	4 742	4 661	4 641	4 673	4 630	4 568
Deutschland	21 604	24 779	25 674	23 672	28 098	27 866	28 607	28 779	28 702
Ellada	710	668	663	716	747	769	764	741	750 *
Espana	-	-	-	5 753	6 030	5 656	6 150	6 084	6 100 *
France	24 855	26 867	27 790	26 254	25 049	25 285	25 158	24 832	24 644
Ireland	3 591	4 709	5 823	5 396	5 324	5 402	5 352	5 354	5 330 *
Italia	8 960	10 335	10 753	10 663	10 035	10 055	10 497	10 799	10 414
Luxembourg	248	270	301	290	268	262	269	266	260 *
Nederland	10 221	11 785	12 550	11 285	10 951	10 963	11 295	11 013	11 000 *
Österreich	-	-	-	3 350	3 270	3 278	3 148	3 034	3 090
Portugal	-	-	-	1 548	1 428	1 474	1 575	1 606	1 633
Finland	-	-	-	2 811	2 457	2 507	2 468	2 371	2 405
Sverige	-	-	-	3 508	3 352	3 421	3 304	3 316	3 334
United Kingdom	13 856	15 945	16 117	15 251	14 804	15 013	14 683	14 681	14 852

- non available

* provisional or estimated data

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New Cronos Theme 5
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