

Press release

Cow numbers and Dairy Herds decrease within Scotland.

The 1st. of January 2020 dairy herd statistics for Scotland, released by the Scottish Dairy Cattle Association, show a decrease in cow numbers and Dairy Herds with a net loss of 12 herds and 1048 less cows compared to January 2019.

The average herd size continues to rise and now stands at 203, up 2 on the year, the highest on record, with the total milking cows at 178,490.

In Scotland there are now 879 dairy herds compared to 5735 herds when records began in 1903. There was a total of 27 lost herds and 15 new dairies, either new set-ups or farms being bought and restarting dairying. Aberdeen lost 2 herds whilst Lanarkshire and Wigtownshire showed a net loss of 3 and 4 respectively. Ayrshire saw a net increase of 3 dairy herds over the year.

Cows, officially milk recorded remain over 70% of the population with the average herd size of 215 cows but there has been a sizable increase in somatic cell count monitoring and disease testing especially for Johnes, following the introduction of the National Johnes Management Plan, with milk buyers, farmers and industry partners all realising the financial benefits of improving milk quality and disease awareness. More and more herds are using the milk test for pregnancy checks which incurs no stress to the cows and is giving good results.

Commenting Janette Mathie, the secretary of the SDCA said:

“2019 saw a lot of uncertainty for some dairy farmers within Scotland but many others have made the commitment to make dairying their future and for the generations that follow.

END

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