

Press release

Cow numbers and Dairy Herds decrease again within Scotland.

The 1st. of January 2021 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 36 herds and 2152 less cows compared to January 2020.

The average herd size continues to rise and now stands at 209, up 6 on the year, with the total milking cows at 176,338.

In Scotland there are now 843 dairy herds, nearly 7,000 less than 50 years ago. There was a total of 46 lost herds and 10 new dairy herds.

Aberdeen, not surprisingly, saw the biggest loss with 11 herds going out of milk production. Wigtonshire had a net loss of 6 herds and Lanarkshire a net loss of 5 herds. Dumfriesshire & Kirkcudbrightshire increased cow numbers by 731 & 244 respectively, despite 1 less herd for Dumfriesshire and 2 less for Kirkcudbrightshire.

Cows officially milk recorded have risen to 73% of the dairy cow population with an average herd size of 224 cows. There is also an increase in herds somatic cell count monitoring and disease testing with farmers, milk buyers, and industry partners all realising the financial benefits of improving milk quality and disease awareness. Milk test for pregnancy is also increasing in popularity as it incurs no stress to the cows and is giving good results.

Commenting Janette Mathie, the secretary of the SDCA said:

“The first wave of the pandemic saw demand for milk drop overnight, resulting in a decrease in farm gate prices for some dairy farmers, but resilience has been strong and there is still commitment within Scottish farmers and their families to continue dairy farming along with new dairies due to start milk production in 2021.”

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