

# **SCOTTISH DAIRY CATTLE ASSOCIATION**

Representing the Dairy Cattle Industry of Scotland

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## **Press Release**

### **Scottish Dairy Farms Continue to Reduce in Number**

In the first six months of 2020 Scotland saw a net loss of 17 dairy herds and cow numbers also decreased by 1,031. The total dairy units are currently 862 with a total number of cows of 177,459 making the average herd size now 206 cows, an increase of 3.

The areas suffering the greatest herd losses were Wigtownshire and Ayrshire, which each lost 5 dairy herds and Lanarkshire lost 4. There is still a degree of confidence with new dairies starting up and previous herds resuming milking in Dumfriesshire, Stirlingshire, Lanarkshire, and Wigtownshire.

Although the number of milk recorded herds also decreased, the total number of cows increased by 732, to a total 129,069, with 73% of the Scottish dairy cows now being officially milk recorded. The majority of the remaining cows are tested for somatic cell counts and milk composites several times per year, and also disease tested and/or pregnancy diagnosed through milk samples. The average size of milk recorded herds increased by 7 to 222 cows per herd.

Commenting on the latest figures Janette Mathie, Secretary for the Scottish Dairy Cattle Association who maintain the data base, said ' The last few months have been difficult for milk processors and producers alike, with demand for milk and dairy products cut overnight. Steps are now being taken, through the Defra Dairy Contract Consultation, to try and negotiate contracts which are fair to all parties concerned.

Fewer dairy farms and larger herds has been a trend for some years and indications are that this will continue. Large herds, especially, are utilising the tools available to them such as milk recording, to aid on-farm management decisions and improve the health of the Scottish dairy herd'.

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