

Fewer dairy herds but more cows.

The six month dairy herd statistics for Scotland to the end of June released by the Scottish Dairy Cattle Association not surprisingly show a reduction in the number of milking herds but an actual increase in total cow numbers.

In Scotland there are now only 924 dairy herds the lowest number since records began in 1903 and a reduction of 33 since January this year but in the last six months cow numbers have increased by 2622 to 175928 to make it the highest total since 1997 and average size of herd at 191 is also the highest in history.

Dairy herds that are officially milk recorded have increased by 102 to 649, partly due to EU financial incentives but also due to milk buyers and farmers realising the financial benefits of improving milk quality and lowering somatic cell counts as well as many other high tech benefits such as pregnancy checking and disease testing.

Janette Mathie the secretary of the SDCA commented 'The next six months will be interesting as we know of a number herds coming out of milk production but we also know of some completely new herds starting up before the end of the year. I think the trend of less herds and more cows per herd will continue.'

Ayrshire continues to be the largest dairying county with 222 farms and 34440 milking cows closely followed by Dumfriesshire with 154 herds and 32185 cows. The largest average herd sizes are Berwickshire at 568 followed by Roxburgh at 399.

End.

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