

Dairy Farms reduce Dairy Cows increase.

The Scottish Dairy herd analysis produced by the SDCA for 1st. January 2016 compared to 1st. January 2015 show surprising results. The net number of dairy farms has decreased by 27 to 974 the lowest in history despite 7 new dairy farms starting business but 34 ceasing to milk cows. While this result is not unexpected with the present disastrous farm gate prices the surprising fact is that the total dairy cow population has increased by 2552 to 175835 and to a record average herd size of 180 milking cows.

The south west of Scotland recorded the greatest increase in cow numbers with Kirkcudbrightshire increasing by 2790 cows with the same number of herds and Wigtownshire increasing by 2078 cows with one less herd.

Other counties which had increased numbers of cows were Angus, Ayrshire, Berwickshire, Lanarkshire, Roxburghshire and Stirlingshire. Counties showing a very slight decrease in cow numbers were Argyllshire, Dumfries-shire, Fife, Kintyre, and Renfrewshire.

Commenting on the results Janette Mathie, secretary of the SDCA said 'The impact of the poor milk price has not yet had a full effect as many of the increased cow numbers are the result of long term planning when prices were at a realistic level. Last autumn was good which meant cows were out at grass longer and there is plenty of silage in the pits. Dairy farmers have cut costs where they can but they do face a tough financial future.'

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