

Statistics in focus

AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

THEME 5 – 8/2000

AGRICULTURE

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Survey of sheep and goat populations in

November/December 1999 and production forecasts for 2000

Francis Weiler, Robert Poschacher

Sheep population and sheep production decline in 2000

After marked year-on-year increases in the sheep population in the European Union (EU-15) for late 1995/96 and 1996/97 (1.5 % and 2.9 % respectively), the 1997/98 year-on-year comparison showed a slight fall of 180.000 head (-0.2 %). The November/December survey 1999 shows a greater decline, namely of -2.3 % to 96.411 million animals. Sheep breeding is concentrated in five of the Member States, UK, E, I, F and EL¹, which together account for 86.3 % of the population, the two leading countries being the UK and E, with 30.8 % and 24.8 % respectively. With the exception of I (+1.9 %), comparisons of the 1998 and 1999 figures in countries with a sheep population over 500.000 show declines ranging from -11.4 % (NL) to -0.6 % (F). B increased sheep stocks by 37.7 % in 1999, but it has to be taken into consideration that B has a very low sheep livestock (160.000). When looking at the breakdown of categories one sees a different development in the two biggest sheep producing countries (UK and E): While the population of "ewes and lambs put to the ram" declined in UK by -2.2 %, this category increased in E by 1.2 %.

When looking at the production forecasts it can be noted that the sheep production in 2000 will decline by -1.4 % to 69.973 million animals. This is mainly due to the reduction of the production in UK (-1.9 %) and E (-0.7 %). But also F and EL will reduce their production in 2000 by -1.5 % and -0.7 % respectively. From the big sheep producing countries only I will raise its production by 1.0 % to 5.745 million animals.

Goat population and –production continue to fall

Following a 250.000 head increase in the EU-15 goat population between the end of 1996 and 1997, numbers fell by 311.000 animals from 1997 to 1998 (-2.5 %) and continued to decline by 374.000 heads (-3.1 %) to 11.612 millions in 1999. This is due to the development in the two biggest goat producing countries EL and E which reduced their goat population by -4.1 % and -5.1 % respectively. These two countries hold 68.3 % of the EU-15 population.

The Gross Indigenous Production (GIP) of goats shows a decline since 1997. In 2000 it will amount 8.24 millions which means a decline by -3.6 % compared to 1999. The reduction is especially high in E which will reduce its production by -11.4 % to 1.65 million animals. EL, the greatest goat producer in the EU-15, will reduce its production by -1.3 % to 4.47 million heads. Only A will raise its production by 3.4 %.

¹ Abbreviations used for the names of the Member States: B = Belgium, DK = Denmark, D = Germany, EL = Greece, E = Spain, F = France, IRL = Ireland, I = Italy, L = Luxembourg, NL = Netherlands, A = Austria, P = Portugal, FIN = Finland, S = Sweden, UK = United Kingdom.



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For information on methodology:

Robert Poschacher, Eurostat/F2, L-2920 Luxembourg, Tel. (352) 4301 35042, Fax (352) 4301 37318,

e-mail: robert.poschacher@cec.eu.int

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