

Farm Structure in the Netherlands

58% of Dutch farms are under 20ha.



This Statistics in Focus is part of a series of country-specific publications on the results of the Farm Structure Survey (FSS) 2007. It provides a brief but nevertheless comprehensive insight into the farm structure in the Netherlands.

76 700 agricultural holdings were recorded in the Netherlands in the 2007 Farm Structure Survey (6% less than in 2005). This drop is accompanied by a decrease in the utilised agricultural area (-2%). There is a decline in the number of small farms together with an increase in the number of large ones.

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In the Netherlands, all the surveyed farms are larger than the European Size Unit (ESU) and cover about 99% of the total of the Standard Gross Margin (SGM) of the country's agricultural activities. See the methodological notes for more information on the concept of ESU and SGM.

In 2007, about **76 700 agricultural holdings** had an economic size of at least 1 ESU, compared with 81 800 in 2005.

They use about **1.91 million ha of utilised agricultural area (UAA)**, a decrease of 2% compared with 2005; this represents an average of 25 ha per holding (compared with 24 ha in 2005);

These holdings employed **165 100 AWUs** (annual work units), the equivalent of 165 100 people working full time; (5% less than 2005). The average area per AWU is 12.7 ha (more 0.5 ha than in 2005);

They had **6.4 million livestock units (LSU)** in 2007, slightly more (0.4%) than in 2005. The average number of livestock units per holding rose from 78 to 84 in the Netherlands.

Amongst these **76 700** agricultural holdings:

24% made use of less than one AWU, while another 34% made use of 2 or more AWUs;

14% used less than 2 ha, while 15% used 50 ha or more;

59 % of Dutch farms specialise in livestock;

25% of the holdings specialised in dairy farming;

23% specialised in sheep, goats and other grazing livestock;

13% of the holdings were engaged in general field cropping.

Amongst the sole holders:

5% were women in 2007 (less 2% than in 2005);

44% were aged 55 or more and 4% were younger than 35 years;

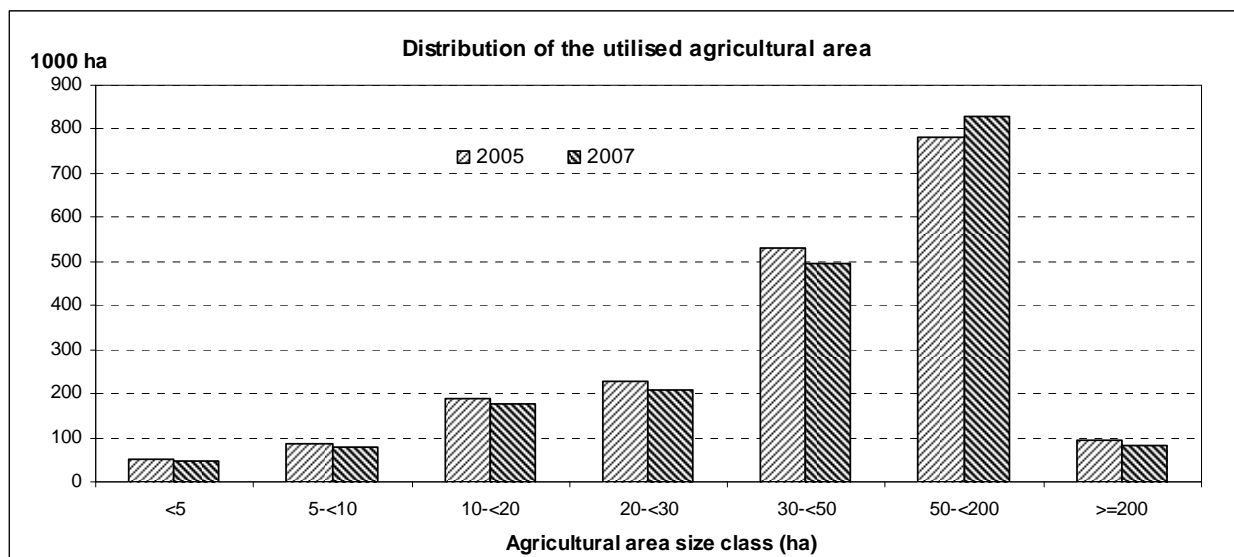
27% of the sole holders had another gainful activity in 2007 (compared with 24% in 2005);

In the Netherlands in 2007, 59% of the agricultural area was farmed by its owners.

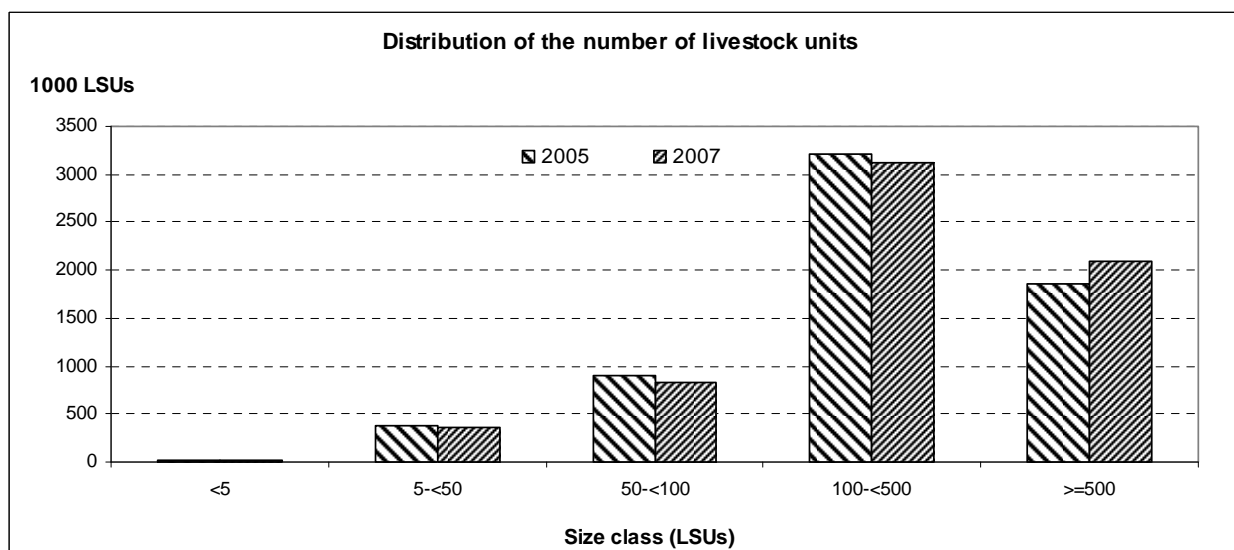
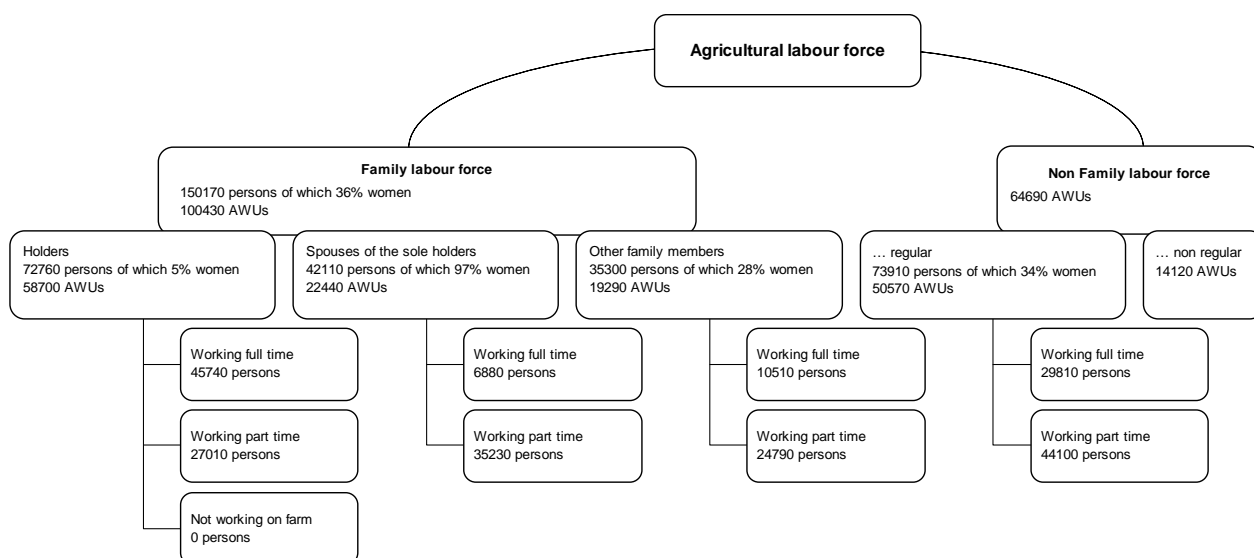
The family labour force has decreased by 8% from 2005 to 2007.

The irrigated area increased 117% from 2005 to 2007. The percentage of irrigated land is in 2007 10.6% of the UAA, compared to 5.8% in 2005. The number of farms that used irrigation on their crops at least once a year also doubled, and represent 19% of the total number of agricultural holdings (compared with 11% in the 2005 survey).

The total SGM for the Netherlands in 2007 was 8.5 million ESU.



Description of the labour force in the Netherlands



*LSUs = Livestock Unit

Size of the farms	Agricultural area (ha)				All farms	Livestock (LSU*)				
	<20	20-<50	50-<100	>=100		0	>0-<50	50-<100	>=100	
Total labour force										
1000 annual work units	93.7	42.0	22.0	7.5	165.1	79.5	27.4	19.0	39.1	
Family labour force										
1000 persons	76.7	45.8	22.7	5.0	150.2	42.7	40.3	24.1	43.1	
1000 annual work units	46.8	32.9	16.9	3.8	100.4	28.2	22.6	17.4	32.3	
Non-family labour regularly employed										
1000 persons	54.6	9.6	6.0	3.8	73.9	54.6	6.9	2.7	9.7	
1000 annual work units	37.4	6.4	3.9	2.9	50.6	39.0	4.0	1.4	6.1	
Non regular non family labour force										
1000 annual work units	9.5	2.7	1.2	0.7	14.1	12.3	0.8	0.2	0.7	
Holding managers	1000	44.6	21.0	9.2	2.0	76.7	23.7	23.8	11.0	18.3
- women	(%)	7.4	2.9	2.1	2.4	5.4	5.5	8.6	3.0	2.5
- part-time:	(%)									
- under 50 %	(%)	29.5	5.5	3.2	4.2	19.1	21.7	34.6	4.6	4.5
- 50 % and over	(%)	23.3	12.3	7.6	8.2	18.0	17.1	29.2	10.0	9.5
Sole/main holders	1000	41.6	20.4	9.0	1.8	72.8	21.2	23.2	10.9	17.6
- women	(%)	7.5	2.8	2.0	2.4	5.4	5.8	8.5	2.8	2.4
-distribution by age	(%)									
- under 35 years		3.8	3.8	4.3	4.0	3.9	4.9	2.5	3.6	4.8
- from 35 to 44 years		19.7	27.4	29.6	24.9	23.2	23.9	13.8	27.8	32.0
- from 45 to 54 years		26.0	32.0	31.2	31.2	28.5	27.9	23.6	33.7	32.3
- from 55 to 64 years		26.5	25.3	26.4	30.3	26.2	27.2	28.5	24.4	23.3
- 65 years and over		24.0	11.5	8.4	9.5	18.2	16.2	31.7	10.5	7.7
- part-time:	(%)									
- under 50 %	(%)	31.6	5.7	3.3	4.7	20.2	24.2	35.5	4.6	4.7
- 50 % and over	(%)	25.0	12.6	7.8	9.1	19.0	19.1	29.9	10.2	9.9
- with another gainful activity ¹	(%)	31.7	21.3	15.7	14.8	26.5	23.8	38.8	23.0	16.3
- as a main occupation		18.8	4.2	1.8	1.7	12.3	12.0	23.2	4.4	3.4
- as a subsidiary occupation		13.0	17.1	13.9	13.0	14.2	11.8	15.6	18.5	12.9
Spouse of sole holder	1000	20.7	13.8	6.4	1.2	42.1	10.9	10.7	7.4	13.2
- women	(%)	94.7	98.5	99.0	99.3	96.7	96.6	93.5	98.3	98.5
-distribution by age	(%)									
- under 35 years		5.5	6.3	6.7	5.1	5.9	6.1	3.6	6.0	7.7
- from 35 to 54 years		56.7	65.3	65.7	61.1	61.0	61.0	48.9	66.8	67.7
- 55 years and over		37.8	28.4	27.7	33.8	33.0	33.0	47.5	27.1	24.7
- part-time:	(%)									
- under 50 %	(%)	52.0	43.3	39.9	38.6	46.9	46.9	63.9	44.8	34.3
- 50 % and over	(%)	32.4	40.7	41.7	40.8	36.8	35.8	26.2	40.9	43.8
- with another gainful activity	(%)	35.1	47.7	47.7	46.3	41.5	34.1	43.8	51.3	40.2
Other members of the holder's family working on the holding	1000	14.4	11.5	7.4	2.0	35.3	10.7	6.5	5.8	12.3
- women	(%)	33.4	25.3	23.5	21.7	28.0	31.8	31.4	24.7	24.5
- part-time:	(%)									
- under 50 %	(%)	59.1	51.5	42.6	31.9	51.6	52.3	66.0	52.3	43.1
- 50 % and over	(%)	17.3	21.4	18.0	14.4	18.6	16.0	18.3	22.7	19.1
- with another gainful activity	(%)	27.5	28.0	21.8	16.0	25.8	20.4	38.4	30.0	22.0

*LSU = Livestock unit

¹ Only holders who are also farm managers

":" not available

"0" less than a half of the unit or nil

Size of the farms		Agricultural area (ha)				All farms	Livestock (LSU)			
		<20	20-<50	50-<100	>=100		0	>0-<50	50-<100	>=100
Holdings										
- total number	1000	44.6	21.0	9.2	2.0	76.7	23.7	23.8	11.0	18.3
- by legal personality of the holder	(%)									
- sole holder		91.8	95.7	94.7	85.9	93.0	87.3	96.4	96.9	93.8
- legal person		6.7	2.6	2.8	10.3	5.2	10.5	2.6	1.3	4.0
- group holders		1.5	1.7	2.6	3.8	1.8	2.2	1.0	1.7	2.2
- by employed labour force	(%)									
- under 1 AWU		38.1	7.0	2.3	2.8	24.4	26.9	46.8	4.7	3.9
- from 1 to less than 2 AWU		35.6	57.4	42.4	19.7	42.0	31.6	40.5	63.7	44.1
- from 2 to less than 3 AWU		12.0	26.7	38.0	33.6	19.7	14.0	8.7	26.6	37.0
- 3 AWU and over		14.3	9.0	17.3	43.9	14.0	27.4	3.9	5.0	15.1
- by economic size	(%)									
- from 1 to less than 8 ESU		19.2	0	0	0	11.1	11.2	24.7	0	0
- from 8 to less than 16 ESU		20.0	0.1	0	0	11.7	10.6	26.3	1.6	0
- from 16 to less than 40 ESU		22.2	13.7	0.1	0	16.7	16.3	29.2	10.8	4.3
- from 40 to less than 100 ESU		17.3	48.8	15.7	1.3	25.3	22.8	15.3	61.3	20.1
- 100 ESU and over		21.3	37.3	84.2	98.7	35.2	39.1	4.4	26.3	75.6
- by type of farming (top 5 + 'other')	(%)									
... specialist dairy farming		4.5	53.3	55.9	28.2	24.6	0	9.3	70.3	48.9
... sheep, goats and other grazing livestock		33.1	10.9	5.0	8.3	23.0	4.8	61.3	12.4	3.2
... general field cropping		8.8	15.0	24.6	43.7	13.3	33.5	8.7	0.8	0.8
... specialist horticulture		18.2	3.0	2.3	3.5	11.8	35.0	2.9	0.4	0.3
... specialist granivores		11.7	2.4	0.5	0.3	7.5	0	0.6	3.2	28.8
Other types of farming		23.6	15.4	11.6	16.1	19.7	26.7	17.3	12.9	18.0
- by farming methods	(%)									
- organic farming		1.0	1.9	2.4	4.0	1.5	1.4	1.3	2.4	1.5
- irrigating		14.3	24.2	24.0	27.2	18.5	27.0	10.1	16.8	19.4
- with crops under glass		16.1	0.8	0.5	0.6	9.7	29.0	2.0	0.2	0.2
- with another gainful activity than agricultural production:	(%)									
Tourism		2.3	3.9	3.3	4.2	2.9	2.0	3.6	4.3	2.4
Handicraft		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Processing of farm products		0.5	1.4	1.5	1.8	0.9	0.6	0.7	1.7	1.0
Wood processing		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aquaculture		0	0	0	0.2	0	0	0	0	0
Renewable energy production		0.5	4.2	6.8	5.8	2.4	0.6	0.6	4.8	5.6
Contractual work		1.3	4.0	5.6	11.0	2.8	3.4	2.2	3.2	2.5
Other gainful activities n.a.e		9.4	19.1	23.0	24.6	14.1	8.9	14.8	21.5	15.3

*LSU = Livestock unit

":" not available

"0" less than a half of the unit or nil

Size of the farms	Agricultural area (ha)				All farms	Livestock (LSU)				
	<20	20-<50	50-<100	>=100		0	>0-<50	50-<100	>=100	
Area	(1000 ha)									
Total area of agricultural holdings	352.3	750.3	639.3	332.9	2074.8	545.0	348.0	392.3	789.6	
· H. Other area	50.9	48.7	28.7	32.1	160.5	49.3	32.0	29.6	49.5	
Wooded area	2.6	2.6	2.2	1.1	8.5	3.3	3.2	0.7	1.3	
· Agricultural area	301.4	701.6	610.6	300.8	1914.3	495.7	316.0	362.6	740.0	
- D. Arable land	143.7	349.1	351.3	215.2	1059.2	443.7	147.7	124.2	343.7	
Cereals	33.4	61.0	71.7	56.4	222.5	130.4	41.0	10.1	41.0	
<i>Common wheat and spelt</i>	14.1	37.2	50.1	39.9	141.3	89.8	26.9	5.4	19.2	
<i>Durum wheat</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Rye</i>	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.9	2.8	0.9	0.7	0.6	0.6	
<i>Barley</i>	6.5	12.9	14.5	12.1	46.0	29.2	8.5	2.3	6.0	
<i>Oats</i>	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	1.7	1.0	0.4	0.1	0.2	
<i>Grain maize</i>	10.6	8.4	5.0	2.5	26.5	8.2	3.6	1.2	13.5	
Dried pulses	0.3	1.0	0.9	0.3	2.5	1.3	0.7	0.2	0.3	
Root crops	15.1	55.9	92.0	76.5	239.5	153.3	36.0	11.0	39.3	
<i>Potatoes</i>	7.2	32.9	62.3	54.9	157.2	102.8	22.7	6.9	24.8	
<i>Sugar beet</i>	7.8	22.9	29.7	21.6	82.0	50.4	13.2	4.1	14.4	
<i>Fodder root</i>	0.1	0.1	0.1	0	0.3	0	0.1	0.1	0.1	
Industrial crops	1.1	3.0	3.7	2.8	10.6	6.6	2.4	0.4	1.2	
<i>Tobacco</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Hops</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Cotton</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Rape and turnip</i>	0.5	0.7	0.9	1.3	3.4	2.0	0.7	0.1	0.6	
<i>Sunflower</i>	0.1	0.1	0.2	0	0.4	0.2	0.2	0	0	
<i>Soya</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Fresh vegetables, melons, strawberry	13.3	22.3	27.8	19.7	83.1	60.9	9.9	2.6	9.7	
<i>outside</i>	9.3	21.8	27.8	19.7	78.5	56.6	9.7	2.6	9.7	
<i>under glass</i>	4.1	0.5	0	0	4.6	4.4	0.2	0	0	
Flower and ornamental plants	13.3	9.2	6.5	3.8	32.8	29.3	1.6	0.4	1.5	
<i>outside</i>	8.1	9.1	6.4	3.8	27.5	24.2	1.4	0.4	1.5	
<i>under glass</i>	5.2	0.1	0	0	5.3	5.1	0.2	0	0	
Forage plants	62.0	185.4	132.7	43.1	423.1	34.6	48.5	97.2	242.8	
Fallow land	2.0	4.1	6.1	4.8	17.1	9.2	2.5	1.2	4.1	
- E. Kitchen garden	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	
- F. Permanent pasture and meadows	139.3	342.8	255.3	83.3	820.7	22.5	165.9	237.8	394.6	
- G. Permanent crops	18.4	9.7	3.9	2.3	34.4	29.5	2.4	0.7	1.8	
Fruit and berry plantation	10.6	5.9	2.0	0.5	19.0	16.4	1.5	0.3	0.8	
Citrus plantation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Olive trees	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Vineyard	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Ratios										
Agricultural area per holding	(ha)	6.8	33.4	66.3	154.3	24.9	20.9	13.3	32.9	40.5
Agricultural area...	(%)									
... own farmed		66.6	59.8	57.2	50.4	58.6	53.1	60.9	60.0	60.5
... in less favoured or mountain area		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
... organic farmed		1.1	1.7	2.1	4.0	2.1	1.9	2.1	2.9	1.7
... irrigated		10.4	12.6	9.4	8.4	10.6	16.6	6.7	8.2	9.4

*LSU = Livestock unit

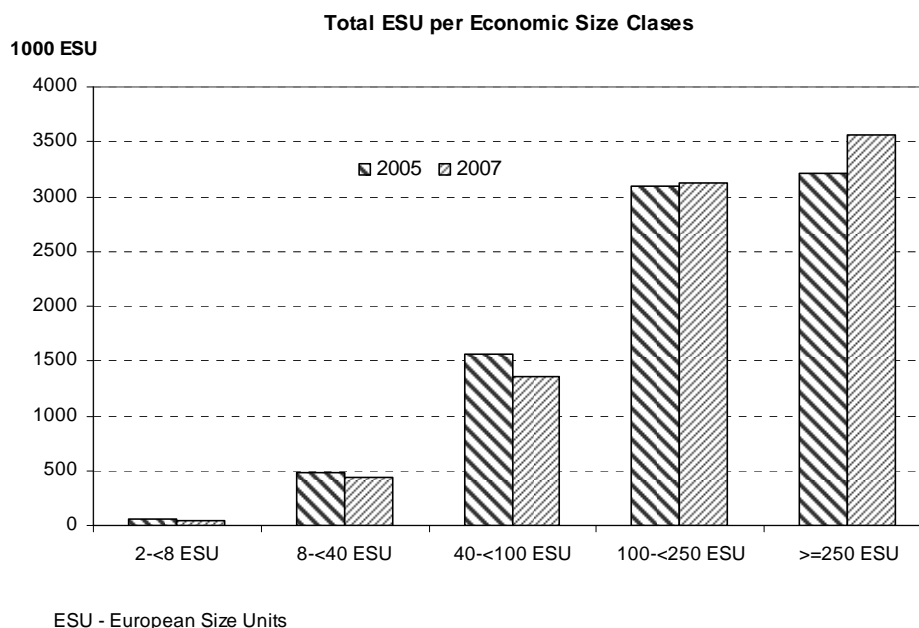
":" not available

"0" less than a half of the unit or nil

Size of the farms	Agricultural area (ha)				All farms	Livestock (LSU)			
	<20	20-<50	50-<100	>=100		0	>0-<50	50-<100	>=100
Total livestock (1000 LSU)	3078.7	1949.4	1083.8	303.4	6415.2	0	384.7	829.4	5201.2
of which grazing (%)	19.7	63.7	78.9	72.5	45.6	:	95.8	91.5	34.5
Grazing livestock (1000 heads)									
Equidae	93.5	26.0	10.6	3.4	133.5	0	83.0	27.5	23.0
Bovine animals	885.8	1549.1	1045.3	282.6	3762.8	0	343.9	893.7	2525.2
Under 1 year	659.9	481.3	267.3	93.5	1501.9	0	109.8	235.4	1156.7
From 1 to less than 2 years	82.8	273.7	192.9	49.5	598.9	0	88.1	167.9	342.9
Dairy cows	85.4	720.8	541.6	120.5	1468.3	0	81.6	440.3	946.4
Other cows	37.3	29.0	13.3	9.3	88.8	0	43.1	21.4	24.3
Other bovine animals 2 years and older	20.4	44.4	30.3	9.8	104.9	0	21.2	28.8	54.9
Sheep	576.2	455.7	252.2	85.2	1369.3	0	591.4	332.4	445.5
Goats	198.6	98.6	23.5	3.4	324.0	0	32.6	108.2	183.2
Granivores									
Pigs (1000 heads)	7982.6	2710.8	724.0	245.2	11662.7	0	57.7	257.9	11347.1
Piglets < 20 kg	3419.6	1065.4	267.4	85.0	4837.4	0	17.1	77.4	4742.9
Breeding sows	815.4	251.0	58.9	19.5	1144.8	0	2.8	18.0	1124.0
Other pigs	3747.6	1394.4	397.7	140.8	5680.5	0	37.8	162.5	5480.2
Poultry (million heads)	72.7	11.9	7.9	3.2	95.7	0	0.2	0.9	94.6
Broilers	29.6	5.1	6.3	2.4	43.4	0	0	0.4	42.9
Laying hens	40.8	6.5	1.4	0.7	49.4	0	0.1	0.5	48.8
Other poultry	2.3	0.3	0.3	0.1	3.0	0	0	0	2.9
Rabbits, breeding females (1000 heads)	46.4	2.9	0	0.1	49.4	0	45.7	3.2	0.5
Beehives (1000)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Average size of herds* (head/holding)									
Equidae (head/holding)	8.6	7.4	7.1	11.9	8.3	:	7.8	12.2	7.1
Cattle (head/holding)	68.8	101.9	167.2	304.8	106.7	:	26.7	89.9	202.6
Dairy cows (head/holding)	16.9	55.5	94.3	163.1	59.9	:	15.1	50.9	90.4
Other cows (head/holding)	7.6	13.0	17.5	42.2	11.0	:	8.2	15.6	16.6
Sheep (head/holding)	73.9	115.5	144.6	259.0	99.1	:	74.4	127.1	137.1
Goats (head/holding)	86.3	78.2	44.8	40.4	77.7	:	15.3	116.7	164.5
Pigs (head/holding)	1410.9	1131.4	1321.2	2724.8	1341.8	:	87.6	243.8	1626.6
Breeding sows (head/holding)	329.6	278.9	280.4	672.8	316.9	:	17.4	75.1	349.8
Other pigs > 20 kg (head/holding)	676.8	587.9	733.8	1599.5	665.2	:	65.5	156.2	791.7
Rabbits, breeding females (head/holding)	509.7	327.2	:	83.0	489.2	:	513.1	356.2	180.7
Laying hens (1000/holding)	27.1	18.9	16.8	26.5	25.2	:	0.4	3.0	33.1
Broilers (1000/holding)	64.2	41.1	50.5	53.9	57.6	:	2.0	10.0	62.3
Beehives (hive/holding)	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

*LSU = Livestock unit

The Netherlands – 2007



➤ METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

The survey on the structure of agricultural holdings in the Netherlands was carried out by Statistics Netherlands (CBS) in spring 2007 using an exhaustive survey. Since 1934 full-scale agricultural censuses have been conducted on an annual basis. The reference date of the FSS 2007 was 1 April 2007 for livestock and 15 May for crops. For labour force the reference period was the preceding year, ending on 1 April 2007.

The target population was all the farms registered in the National Farm Register, which is updated continuously and in 2007 counted 91'000 holdings. The register is kept by the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality and is obligatory for all holdings engaged in agricultural activities. For the census all holdings above 3 NGE (Nederlandse Grootte Eenheid) are selected (about 77 000 farms in 2007 that represent 99% of the Standard Gross Margin). The NGE is the Dutch equivalent of the European Size Unit, but due to the differences in inflation levels 1 NGE is 1420 euros in the year concerned.

For certain characteristics (e.g. environmental aspects, less-favoured and set-aside areas) administrative sources and the Geographic Information System (GIS) have been used.

The survey was mailed to the units with the possibility of being sent back by normal mail or using an internet application. About 20% of the holdings used the internet application.

Non-response in the Dutch 2007 FSS was 4% of the farms. Estimation using the next-neighbour imputation was done for the non-response.

Between FSS 2005 and 2007 "maintaining land in good agricultural and environmental conditions" (GAEC) became an agricultural activity and the concerned land has been included in the agricultural area. In the Netherlands it covers close to 2 500 ha.

For each activity ('enterprise') on a farm (for instance wheat, dairy cow or vineyard), a Standard Gross Margin (SGM) is estimated, based on the area (or the number of heads) and a regional coefficient. The sum of such margins in a farm is its economic size, expressed in European Size Units (ESU, 1 ESU is a 1200-euro SGM).

An Annual work unit (AWU) is equivalent to a worker employed on a full time basis for one year. In the Netherlands it is 1800 hours (225 working days of 8 working hours per day).

A Livestock Unit (LSU) is equivalent to a dairy cow. The number of animals (number of heads) is converted into LSU using a set of coefficients reflecting the feed requirements of the different animal categories.

➤ REFERENCE PUBLICATIONS

Website of the Centraal Bureau voor der Statistiek: <http://www.cbs.nl>
The Netherlands National Methodological Report – FSS 2007 (available on request)

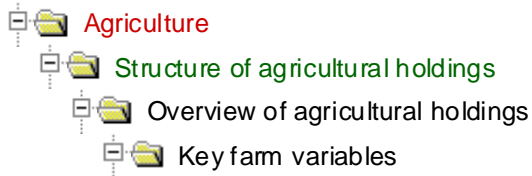
Further information

Data: [Eurostat Website: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat)

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Data: [EUROSTAT Website/Agriculture, forestry and fisheries](#)

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Eurostat set up with the members of the 'European statistical system' a network of support centres, which will exist in nearly all Member States as well as in some EFTA countries.

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