

Dutch lifetime production continues to rise

Once again a rise in lifetime production, a higher rolling annual average and cows with an increasingly longer lifespan. This, in a nutshell, is a summary of the Dutch MPR figures recorded by the CRV Cooperative in the financial year 2022-2023. The size of MPR farms has already increased again. An MPR farm now has an average of 113 cows.

Each year, the lifetime production of Dutch dairy cows continues to increase. That was also the case in the latest closed financial year. For the sixth year in a row, the CRV Cooperative recorded a growth. With an increase of more than 900 kg of milk, the lifetime production of the MPR cows that were culled during the period of 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 inclusive reached 38,327 kg of milk (table 1). The 40,000 kg milestone is therefore gradually approaching, after lifetime production had hovered around 30,000 kg for many years during the milk quota era.

Lifespan is also increasing

A similar pattern is emerging for kilos of fat and protein. For the first time, the culled Dutch dairy cows produced more than 3,000 kg of fat and protein in their lifetime. To be precise, 3,048

kg, 77 kg more than in the previous financial year. This means that lifetime production, expressed in kilos of fat and protein, has increased by just under 700 kg in six years, an increase of almost 30 percent.

That lifetime production record is, in part, due to cows living for longer. At 2,255 days, the lifespan of the culled cows, equivalent to around six years and two months, was at its highest level ever. Compared to last year, the lifespan increased by 22 days. The productive lifespan, the number of days between the first calving date and the last sampling date, was also on the rise. This rose by 27 days, partly due to the reduction of the breeding period by 4 days, to 766 days, or two years and a little over a month. That breeding period has been falling steadily since 2001, when it was 803 days.

Not only the lifespan contributed to the higher lifetime produc-

tion, but milk production also rose by 0.1 kg a day. Per milking day, the cows culled in the previous year produced 29.4 kg of milk, more than 2 kg more than the culled cows ten years ago. The average number of calvings and the calving interval remained stable last year. The culled cows calved an average of 3.9 times and achieved an average calving interval of 408 days.

The number of 100-tonners and 10-tonners confirms the picture that the lifetime production is gradually increasing. In the past financial year, 4,707 Dutch dairy cows passed the milestone of 100,000 kg of milk; exactly 750 more than in the previous finan-

cial year, a growth of 19 percent. Relatively, the number of 10-tonners grew faster still. In total 406 cows received a certificate for the production of 10,000 kg of fat and protein. That is 109 more than in the financial year 2021-2022, or an increase of almost 37 percent.

Rolling annual average: increase of 260 kg

Last year, the rolling annual average declined for the first time in nine years, but that decline was a one-off. Similarly to lifetime production, the rolling annual average also developed positively, likely due to last year's high milk price and the sugar-rich

	2021-2022	2022-2023
LIFETIME PRODUCTION ON CULLING (KG OF MILK)	37.401	38.327
ROLLING ANNUAL AVERAGE (KG OF MILK)	9.086	9.346
NUMBER OF COWS PER FARM	109	113

year	number*	days breeding	prod. lifespan**	days after last trial milking	days lifespan***	number of calvings	average calving interval	kg milk/ milking	kg milk	% fat	% protein	kg fat and protein
2022-2023	252.615	766	1.460	29	2.255	3,9	408	29,4	38.327	4,38	3,57	3.048
2021-2022	237.267	770	1.433	30	2.233	3,9	408	29,3	37.401	4,37	3,57	2.971
2020-2021	245.965	774	1.376	30	2.180	3,7	408	29,0	35.624	4,37	3,57	2.826
2015-2016	286.347	786	1.276	30	2.092	3,5	413	27,4	30.967	4,35	3,53	2.440
2010-2011	269.072	795	1.264	34	2.093	3,4	417	27,3	30.318	4,36	3,51	2.386
2005-2006	241.679	800	1.264	45	2.109	3,4	412	26,0	28.845	4,41	3,50	2.282

* number of cows with a maximum of 150 days between the last trial milking and deregistration

** = days between first calf date and the last sampling date

*** = days between birth and last culling date (sum of rearing days, productive lifespan and days after last trial milking)

Table 1 – Lifespan and lifetime production of culled herd book cows per year of culling

Table 2 – Rolling annual average per province and throughout the Netherlands (1 September 2022-31 August 2023)

province	number of farms	average number of cows per farm	current ave. age	kg milk	% fat	% protein	kg fat	kg protein	kg fat and protein	EAR
Zeeland	153	122	4.08	9.952	4,36	3,57	434	356	789	2.268
North Brabant	1.446	123	4.07	9.742	4,44	3,62	433	353	785	2.251
Flevoland	215	154	4.09	9.798	4,41	3,60	432	352	785	2.249
Gelderland	2.036	102	4.10	9.337	4,50	3,62	420	338	758	2.168
Drenthe	753	128	4.09	9.397	4,45	3,60	418	339	756	2.167
Overijssel	2.270	101	4.10	9.311	4,50	3,63	419	338	757	2.164
Limburg	338	118	4.08	9.357	4,47	3,60	418	337	755	2.160
Friesland	1.862	129	4.10	9.282	4,43	3,63	411	337	748	2.145
Groningen	619	136	4.11	9.236	4,45	3,60	411	332	743	2.130
North Holland	639	109	5.00	9.086	4,41	3,60	401	327	728	2.088
Utrecht	810	90	5.01	9.029	4,42	3,60	399	325	724	2.074
South Holland	729	99	5.01	8.980	4,39	3,59	394	322	717	2.054
The Netherlands 2022-2023	11.870	113	4.10	9.346	4,45	3,61	416	338	753	2.160
The Netherlands 2021-2022	12.264	109	4.10	9.086	4,38	3,55	398	323	721	2.066
The Netherlands 2020-2021	12.766	106	4.10	9.209	4,43	3,61	408	332	740	2.122
The Netherlands 2015-2016	14.951	101	4.07	8.663	4,38	3,55	380	307	687	1.968



spring silage of 2022. In the financial year 2022-2023, the CRV Cooperative recorded a rolling annual average of 9,346 kg of milk, with 4.45% fat and 3.61% protein, which is equivalent to an annual economic result of 2,160 Euros (table 2). That is an increase of 260 kg of milk. The dairy cows in the Netherlands have never previously produced so much milk. To put this into perspective: in the financial year 2012-2013, the rolling annual average was still at 8,217 kg of milk, around 1,100 kg of milk less than the previous year. Just as remarkable is the increase of the fat and protein levels, at 0.07 and 0.06% respectively. This takes the total kilograms of fat and protein above 750 for the first time (753).

Summary

- For the sixth year in a row, lifetime production has increased and is now 38,327 kg of milk.
- At 2,255 days, the lifespan is at its highest level ever.
- After a one-off decline, the rolling annual average has risen by 260 kg to 9,346 kg of milk with 4.45% fat and 3.61% protein.