

Dairy herd up in North Island but down in South Island

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After a decrease in 2015, the dairy cattle number increased 2 percent in 2016 to reach 6.6 million, Stats NZ said today. However, this was not back to the 2014 level (6.7 million).

The North Island dairy herd increased by almost 250,000 cows last year, led by a rise in Waikato. In contrast, the number of dairy cattle in the South Island fell more than 100,000 in the year to 30 June 2016.

The results also show continuing declines for sheep and deer numbers, with beef cattle being relatively unchanged.

In the year ended December 2016, exports of dairy products were worth \$12.8 billion – more than 26 percent of all exports and a value of almost \$2,500 for every milking cow. Even though there were four times as many sheep as dairy cattle in New Zealand, sheep-related exports were valued at \$3.6 billion, just over one-quarter of dairy's total.

The 2016 Agricultural Production Survey involved farmers and foresters in New Zealand. It covered land use, animal farming (livestock), arable crop growing, forestry, and farming practices in New Zealand (including fertiliser and cultivation) for the year to 30 June 2016. The survey ran in partnership with the Ministry for Primary Industries.

Ends

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Authorised by Liz MacPherson, Government Statistician, 10 May 2017