

Sheep number lowest since 1943

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New Zealand had 29.8 million sheep at 30 June 2014, Statistics NZ said today.

"The number of sheep fell by 3 percent from 2013. The last time the sheep number was below 30 million was back in 1943," agriculture statistics manager Neil Kelly said.

At 30 June 2014, the number of dairy cattle had increased 3 percent, while the total number of beef cattle declined slightly. The total number of dairy cattle was just under 6.7 million, with increases of 67,000 dairy cattle in the North Island and 148,000 in the South Island.

"These increases came mainly from the key dairy regions of Waikato, Canterbury, and Southland," Mr Kelly said.

In 2014 the number of deer fell below 1 million for the first time, decreasing by 70,000 (7 percent). The number of deer peaked at 1.8 million in 2004, but this has been falling since 2009.

New Zealand had 660 hectares planted in cherries at 30 June 2014, up 7 percent since 2012. The main export markets for cherries were Taiwan, China, and Thailand.

The 2014 Agricultural Production Survey involved farmers and foresters in New Zealand. It covered land use, animal farming (livestock), arable crops, horticultural crops, forestry, and farming practices (including fertiliser and cultivation). The survey was conducted in partnership with the Ministry for Primary Industries.

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Authorised by Liz MacPherson, Government Statistician
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