

Milk and milk product statistics

Statistics Explained

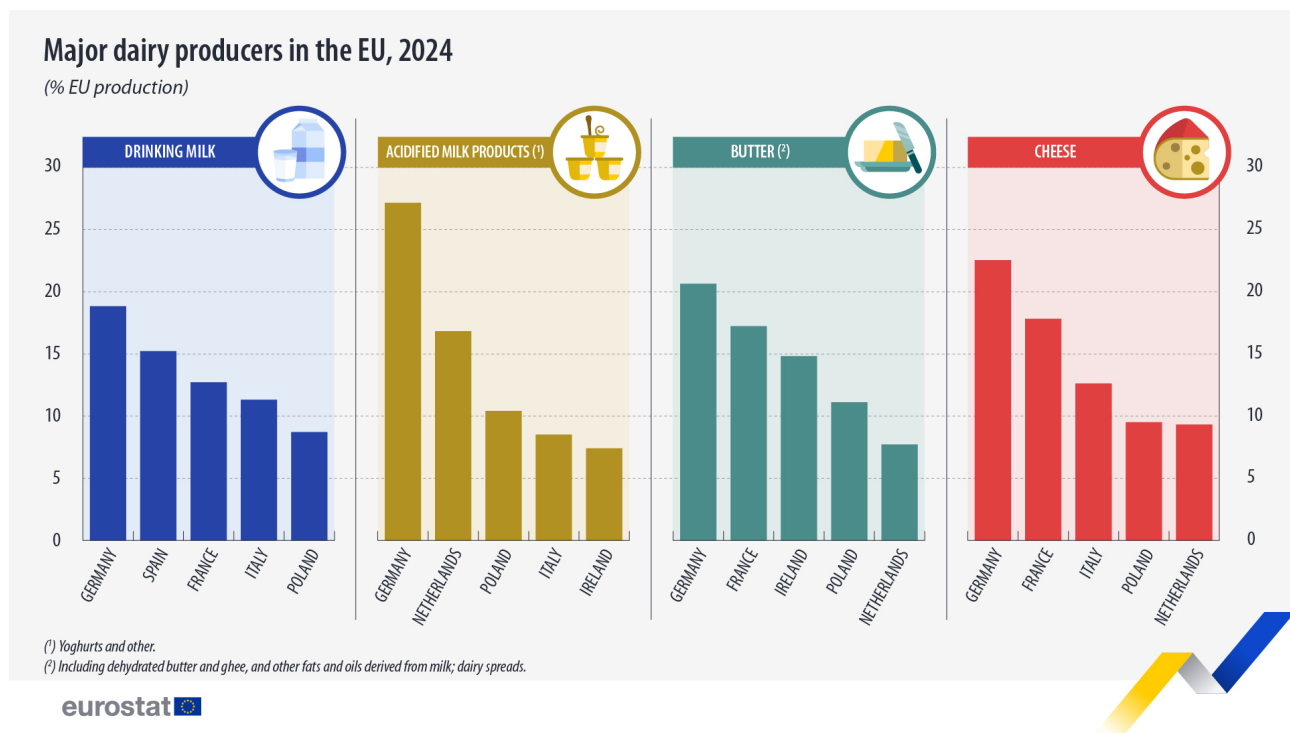
Data extracted in November 2025.
Planned article update: November 2026.

Highlights

The EU produced 161.8 million tonnes of raw milk in 2024, 0.9 million tonnes more than in 2023.

The average apparent milk yield per cow in the EU reached 8 120 kg in 2024.

The price of milk paid to farmers in the EU increased by an average 2.9% in 2024 after a sharper rate of decline in 2023.



Source: Eurostat (apro_mk_pobta)

This article presents information and statistics on [milk](#) and milk products in the [European Union \(EU\)](#).

Editorial note: Throughout this article, which deals with time periods when the United Kingdom was a Member State of the European Union, the acronym EU, however, refers to EU-27, the post-Brexit composition of the European Union as of 1 February 2020.

Milk production

Raw milk production of 161.8 million tonnes in 2024, 96% of which was cows' milk

The production of raw milk on the EU's farms was an estimated 161.8 million tonnes in 2024, which would represent a year-on-year increase of 0.9 million tonnes. This latest development confirms the relatively steady growth in milk production over the preceding decade; in 2014, the EU produced 149.7 million tonnes.

In 2024, the vast majority of raw milk was delivered to dairies; only 11.0 million tonnes were used on farms, either being consumed by the farmer and his family, sold directly to consumers, used as feed or processed directly. Of the 150.8 million tonnes of milk delivered to dairies, 146.5 million tonnes were cows' milk, the rest being ewes' milk, goats' milk, or buffalos' milk (see Figure 1).

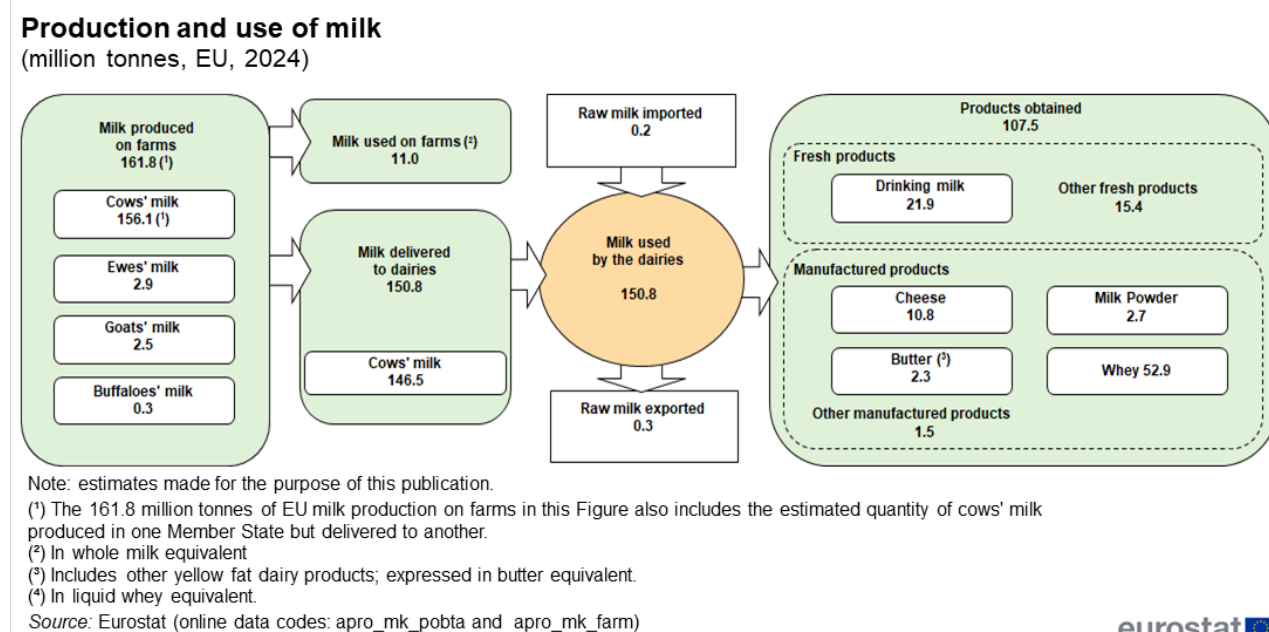


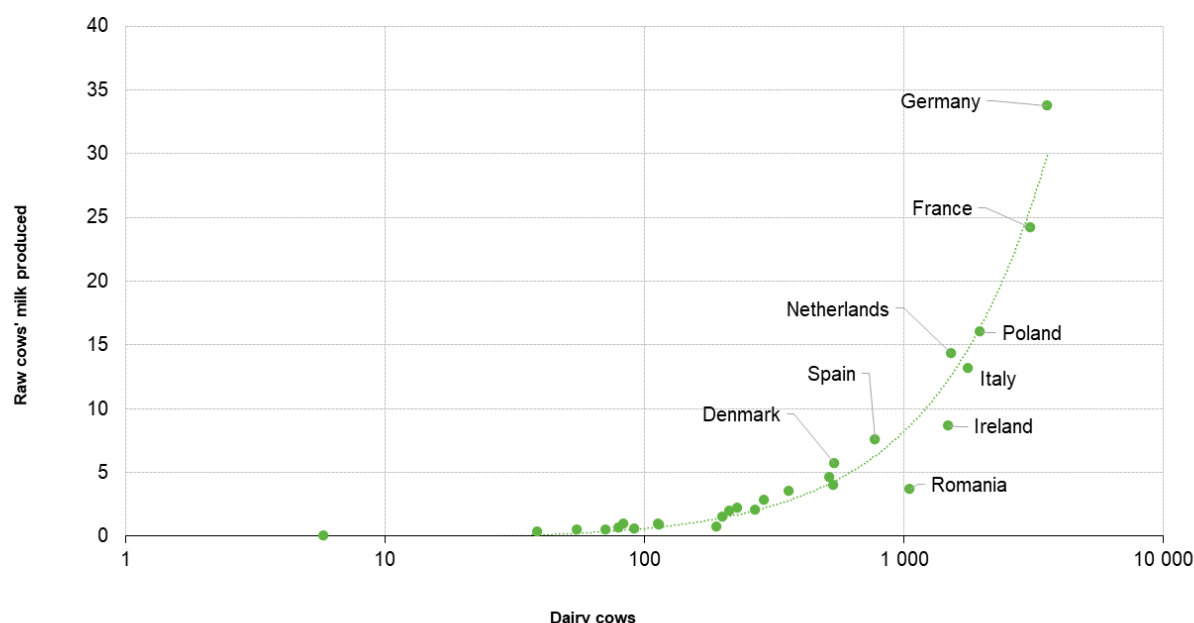
Figure 1: Production and use of milk Source: Eurostat (apro_mk_pobta) and (apro_mk_farm)

The average apparent milk yield per cow across the EU is still rising

There are a number of factors that can impact on a countries' apparent annual milk yields per dairy cow, including the structure of the dairy herd. In the EU, the apparent annual milk yield continued to rise, reaching 8 120 kg per dairy cow in 2024. As a national average, apparent annual yields were highest in Estonia (11 353 kg per cow) and Denmark (10 483 kg per cow) and lowest in Bulgaria (3 735 kg per cow) and Romania (3 540 kg per cow). Among the main cows' milk producing EU countries, apparent yields were above the EU average in the Netherlands and Germany, similar to the EU average in Poland, but slightly below average in France and Italy.

Dairy cows, milk production and the apparent milk yield

(thousand head and million tonnes, 2024)



Note: The line represents the average apparent milk yield across the EU (8 120 kg per cow) for a variable herd size.

Countries above the line had a higher apparent yield per cow than the EU average, and vice-versa.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: apro_mk_farm and apro_mt_lscatl)

eurostat 

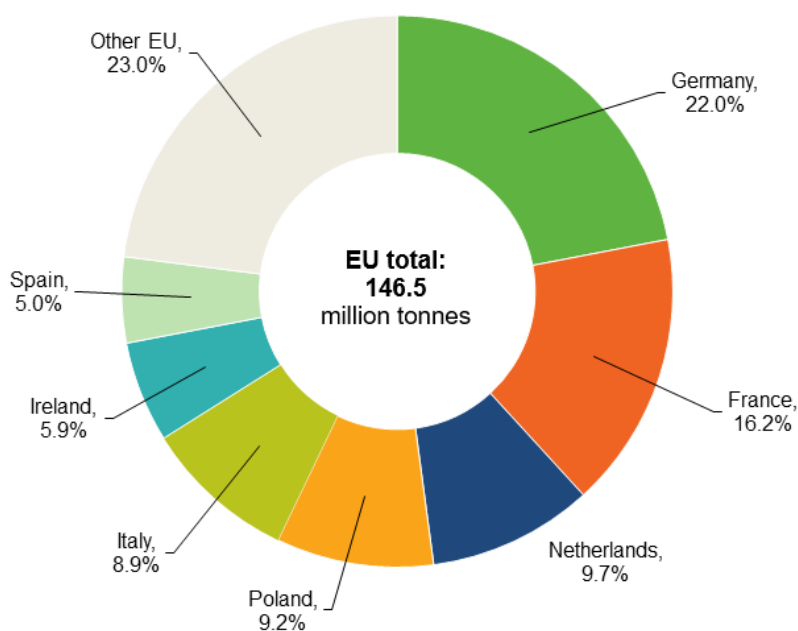
Figure 2: Dairy cows, milk production and the apparent milk yield Source: Eurostat (apro_mk_farm) and (apro_mt_lscatl)

A little more than one fifth of the EU's cows' milk was collected by dairies in Germany

Traditionally, hygiene rules have required that the collection of milk has been frequent and moved over a short distance between farms and dairies. However, the development of cooling tanks on farms and of bigger milk tankers have made this sanitary issue less critical. Meanwhile, the erosion of market restrictions has contributed to cross-border milk flows between farms and dairies or between dairies.

In 2024, Germany produced a little more than one fifth (22.0%) of the EU's raw cows' milk, which was the same proportion (22.0%) that was processed by German dairies. Indeed, just as Germany, France, Poland, the Netherlands and Italy together provided about two thirds (65.1%) of the EU's raw cows' milk in 2024, so they also accounted for two thirds (66.1%) of the cows' milk collected by dairies (see Figure 3).

Collection of cows' milk by dairies (%, 2024)



Note: The shares do not sum to 100.0% due to rounding.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: apro_mk_pobta)

eurostat 

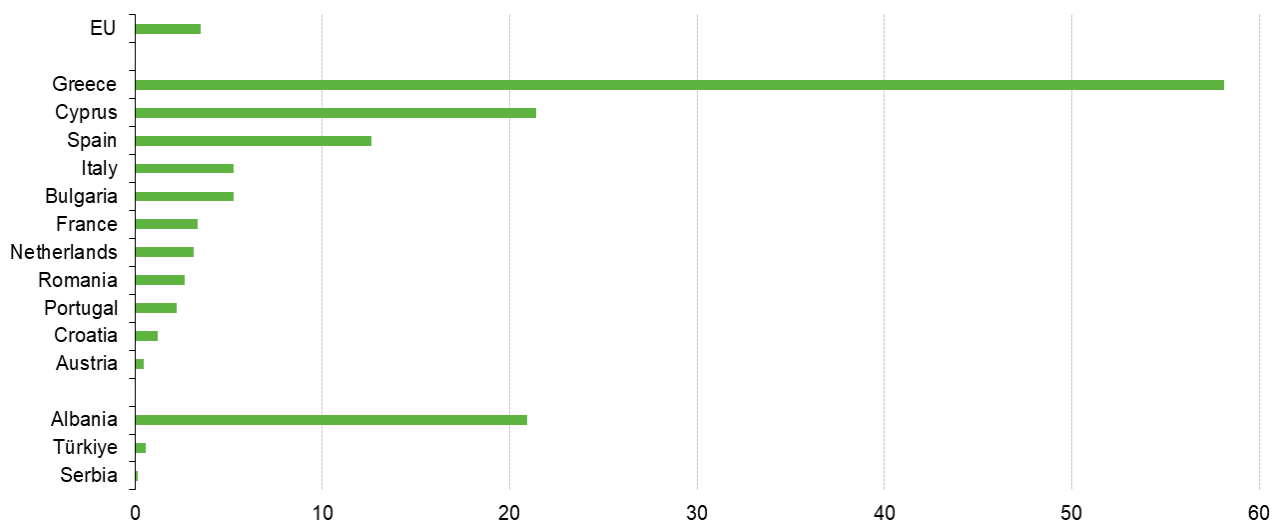
Figure 3: Collection of cows' milk by dairies Source: Eurostat (apro_mk_pobta)

There are a few EU countries where livestock other than cows make an important contribution to overall milk production; this is the case in many rural or arid regions, particularly in the Mediterranean area. In 2024, Spain produced 1.1 million tonnes of milk from ewes and goats, with Greece producing 0.9 million tonnes and France 0.8 million tonnes. Italy produced 0.7 million tonnes of milk from animals other than cows and this included almost all of the EU's production of milk from buffaloes.

Cows' milk accounts for the vast majority of the milk delivered to dairies across most of the EU countries. Nevertheless, a majority (58.1%) of the milk delivered to dairies in Greece in 2024 came from ewes and goats, as did about one fifth (21.4 %) in Cyprus (see Figure 4).

Milk collection from animals other than cows

(% of total milk delivered to dairies, 2024)



Note: Little or no milk from animals other than cows is produced in the Member States that are not shown in this Figure.

EU estimate made for the purpose of this article.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: apro_mk_pobta)

eurostat 

Figure 4: Milk collection from animals other than cows Source: Eurostat (apro_mk_pobta)

Rise in 2024 milk prices after fall in 2023

There was a rise in the price of milk paid to farmers in 2024, with the average price over the year being 2.9% more than the average in 2023. This increase followed lower prices in 2023 (-5.2%), as they fell back from a relative high in 2022. These latest changes underline the fluctuating developments in the average price of milk (see Figure 5).

Among some of the principal milk-producing EU countries, there were above-average increases in the price of milk in 2024: in Ireland (16.0%), the Netherlands (6.4%) and Germany (5.8%). By contrast, there were lower prices in Spain (-8.9%), among others.

Development of price indices for milk

(2020 = 100, EU, 2022-2025 Q2)

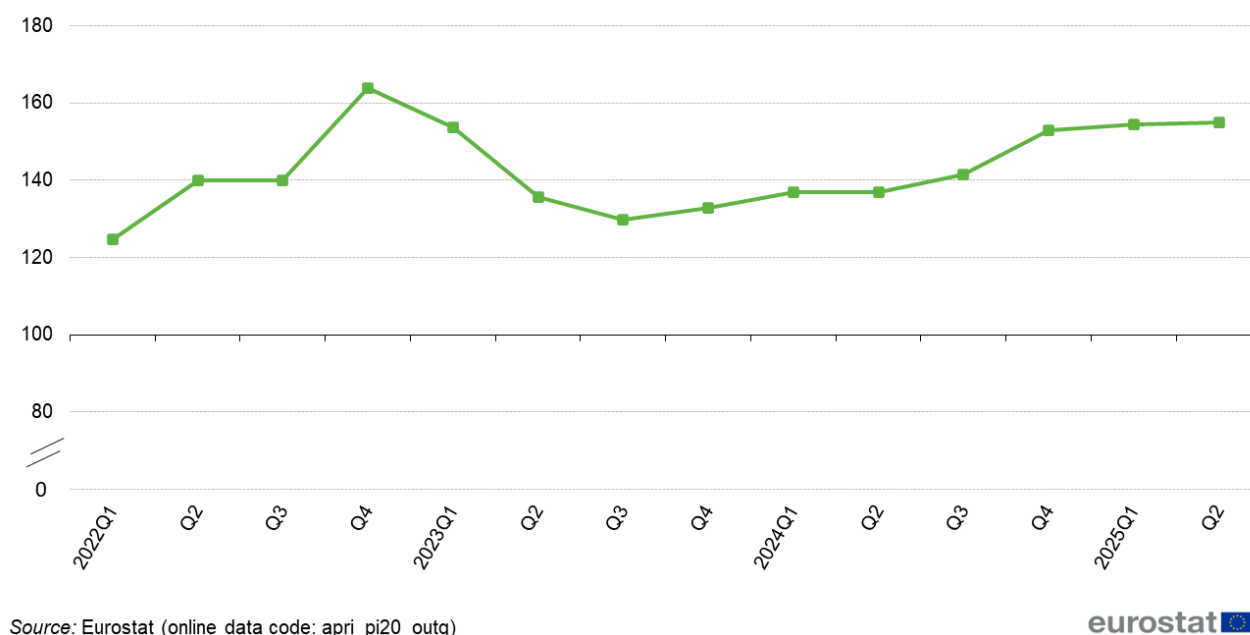


Figure 5: Development of price indices for milk Source: Eurostat (apri_pi20_outq)

Milk products

About 70% of all whole milk available to dairies in the EU is used to make cheese and butter

The milk delivered to dairies is processed into a number of fresh and manufactured products. Dairy products are recorded in terms of their weight. It is thus difficult to compare the quantities of various products (for example, tonnes of fresh milk and of milk powder). The volume of whole or skimmed milk used in dairy processes provides more comparable figures¹.

In 2024, 150.8 million tonnes of the whole milk available to the EU's dairy sector was processed.

The production of 2.3 million tonnes of butter and so-called 'yellow products' (such as butteroil and rendered butter) in the EU in 2024 required 44.2 million tonnes of whole milk (see Table 1). The production of butter and yellow products also generated 41.5 million tonnes of skimmed milk. A further 13.9 million tonnes of skimmed milk were generated through the fabrication of cream and 0.9 million tonnes from other fresh products. The skimmed milk generated was used with 87.3 million tonnes of whole milk for the processing of other dairy products.

Indeed, 17.0 million tonnes of skimmed milk together with 59.9 million tonnes of whole milk were used to produce 10.8 million tonnes of cheese in the EU in 2024. Together, the production of cheese and butter used 69.0% of all the whole milk available to dairies in the EU.

¹Two dimensions (quantities of whole and skimmed milk used) reflect the material balance of the valuable milk components, especially fat (in whole milk only) and protein (in total milk used).

Utilisation of milk and dairy products obtained

(million tonnes, EU, 2024)

	Utilisation of milk		Product obtained
	Skimmed milk	Whole milk	
Total	0.0	150.8	-
Sub-total of processes generating skimmed milk	-56.2	63.5	7.1
Butter and yellow products	-41.5	44.2	2.3
Cream	-13.9	16.5	2.5
Other fresh products	-0.9	2.7	2.3
Sub-total of processes consuming skimmed milk	56.2	87.3	46.9
Drinking milk	9.8	12.7	21.9
Powder products	19.0	4.8	2.7
Concentrated milk	1.3	1.4	0.8
Acidified milk	1.7	6.7	8.1
Buttermilk	0.4	0.1	0.4
Cheese	17.0	59.9	10.8
Milk based drinks	1.2	0.7	2.0
Caseins	5.8		

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: apro_mk_pobta)



Table 1: Utilisation of milk and dairy products obtained Source: Eurostat (apro_mk_pobta)

The EU also produced 21.9 million tonnes of drinking milk, from 9.8 million tonnes of skimmed milk and 12.7 million tonnes of whole milk. Drinking milk accounted for 8.5% of all the whole milk used by dairies in 2024.

In 2024, 2.7 million tonnes of dairy powder products were produced in the EU from 19.0 million tonnes of skimmed milk and 4.8 million tonnes of whole milk.

Germany produced more drinking milk, whey, butter and cheese than any other EU country. It produced 2.4 million tonnes of cheese (about 23% of the EU total), the other main cheese producing EU countries being France (1.9 million tonnes, about 18% of the EU total), and Italy (1.4 million tonnes, about 13% of the EU total).

The Netherlands had the second highest level of production for whey (about 17% of the EU total) and the fifth highest for cheese (about 9% of the EU total), just behind Poland (about 10% of the EU cheese total). Ireland accounted for the third highest share of butter produced (about 15% of the EU total).

Source data for tables and graphs

- [Download Excel file](#)

Data sources

Milk and milk product statistics

Milk and milk product statistics are collected under Decision 1997/80/EC and implementing Directive 1996/16/EC. They cover farm production and the utilisation of milk, as well as the description (structure), collection and production activity of dairies. Due to the small number of dairy enterprises, national data are often subject to statistical confidentiality. Thus, providing EU totals in this context is a challenge and some of the information presented in the analysis is based on partly provisional data. On the one hand, statistics from these few enterprises provide early estimates on trends. On the other, a complete overview of the dairy sector requires detailed information from farms and this means that the final figures on milk production are only available at an EU level about 1 year after the reference year.

Dairy products are recorded in terms of weight. It is thus difficult to compare the various products (for example, fresh milk and milk powder). The volume of whole or skimmed milk used in the dairy processes provides more comparable figures.

Livestock statistics

The number of dairy cows that was used in the analysis was drawn from the livestock population in November/December 2024.

Agricultural price statistics

EU agricultural price statistics are based on voluntary agreements between Eurostat and the Member States. National statistical institutes or Ministries of Agriculture are responsible for collecting absolute prices and calculating corresponding average prices for their country, as well as for calculating price indices and periodically updating the weights. Price indices are reported quarterly and annually. Absolute prices are reported annually. The agricultural prices expressed in national currency are converted into euro by Eurostat using fixed exchange rates or financial market exchange rates, in order to allow comparisons between the Member States. Eurostat is responsible for calculating indices for the EU.

Context

The abolition of milk quotas in 2015 resulted in a restructuring and further modernisation of the sector, including a re-orientation towards the most productive herds, more intense cross-border milk flows and increased production. Over recent years, milk prices have followed the global milk fat market.

There is no 'typical' European dairy cow breed, though the Friesian-Holstein is prevalent.

Footnotes

Explore further

Other articles

- [Agricultural production — livestock and meat](#)
- [Agricultural production — crops](#)
- [Agricultural production — orchards](#)

Database

- [Agriculture \(agri\)](#) , see:

Agricultural production (apro)

Milk and milk products (apro_mk)

Fat contents and protein contents (cow's milk) - annual data (apro_mk_fatprot)

Milk collection (all milks) and dairy products obtained - annual data (apro_mk_pobta)

Cows'milk collection and products obtained - annual data (apro_mk cola)

Cows'milk collection and products obtained - monthly data (apro_mk_colm)

Production and utilization of milk on the farm - annual data (apro_mk_farm)

Dairies structure - triennial (apro_mk_str)

Thematic section

- [Agriculture](#)

Publications

- [Agriculture, forestry and fishery statistics — 2024 edition](#) (statistical book)

Selected datasets

- [Agriculture \(t_agri\)](#) , see:

Agricultural production (t_apro)

Milk and milk products (t_apro_mk)

Methodology

- [Animal production](#) (ESMS metadata file — apro_anip_esms)

External links

- [European Commission — Agriculture and rural development — food, farming, fisheries](#)
- [European Commission — Agriculture and rural development — milk and dairy products](#)
- [European Commission — Agriculture and rural development — short- and medium term outlook and market reports for EU arable crops, dairy and meat markets](#)

Legislation

- [Commission Decision 1997/80/EC](#) of 18 December 1996 laying down provisions for the implementation of Council Directive 96/16/EC on statistical surveys of milk and milk products (Text with EEA relevance)
- [Directive 1996/16/EC](#) of 19 March 1996 on statistical surveys of milk and milk products
- [Summaries of EU Legislation: Statistical surveys of dairy products](#)

Visualisation

- [Regions in Europe – 2025 edition, chapter on Agriculture](#)
- [Regional Statistics Illustrated — Agriculture](#)