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Cattle and cow population in Ukraine

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As of April 1, 2023, compared to the same date last year, the number of cattle in Ukraine decreased by 264,4 thousand heads. The main reason is the consequences of the war started by Russia. The biggest losses are in households. On the positive side, there is a restrained increase in the number of cows and cattle in industrial farms compared to the beginning of March 2023.

The analyst of the Association of Milk Producers Georgii Kukhaleishvili reports.

According to preliminary calculations of the State Statistics Service, as of April 1, 2023, 2 million 494.4 thousand cattle are kept in the domestic and industrial sector of Ukraine, including 1 million 350.5 thousand cows. Compared to April 1, 2022, Ukraine lost 264,4 thousand heads of cattle (-9.60%) and 138,4 thousand cows (-9.3%).

Georgii Kukhaleishvili notes that as a result of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, many farmers were forced to sell or leave their livestock in the occupied territories or in the war zone. Farms from front-line and war-affected territories suffered from deteriorating animal health, which led to reduced productivity and forced culling. Some of the animals died as a result of rocket and bomb attacks by the Russian occupiers. However, a number of enterprises managed to adapt to work in extreme conditions, relocated their livestock to territories that were not so badly affected by the war. As of now, 84,4 thousand heads of cattle (including about 50 thousand cows), which is 3.6% of the total livestock, are kept in the territories where military actions are taking place, according to preliminary data of the State Statistics Service. The rest of the animals (96.4%) are located in regions where hostilities do not take place.

Relative stabilization in cattle breeding after significant losses in 12 months of war can be indicated by the preliminary calculations of the State Statistics Service, according to which, in the monthly dynamics (as of April 1 vs. March 1, 2023), the number of cattle in Ukraine as a whole increased by 85.3 thousand heads, and the number of cows increased by 3.2 thousand heads. However, the reason for such dynamics may be not only the actual increase in livestock, but also the clarification of information about the real number of animals at enterprises and in the private sector in the front-line regions.

Thus, as of April 1, 939,7 thousand head of cattle are kept in the industrial sector — almost at the same level as in April last year. However, the number of cows at enterprises decreased to 390.9 thousand, which is 1.8 thousand less than at the beginning of April 2022. Nevertheless, over the past month, Ukrainian dairies have increased their number of cattle by 3 thousand heads, including cows by 1 thousand.

The situation is different in households, which are more vulnerable to the consequences of war. According to the approximate estimates of the State Statistics Service, as of April 1, the number of cattle in the domestic sector amounted to 1 million 554.7 thousand heads, which is 17% less compared to the same date last year. The number of cows in households decreased to 959.6 thousand heads, which is 14.24% less than last year. According to the calculations of the State Statistics Service, compared to March 1, 2023, the number of cattle in households increased by 82,3 thousand on April 1, and cows by 2,200.

The following regions are leading the number of cattle in farms of all categories as of April 1:

- Khmelnytskyi region — 232.2 thousand heads;
- Vinnytsia region — 200.8 thousand heads;
- Poltava region — 190.2 thousand heads;

- Ternopil region — 145,400 heads;
- Odesa region — 141.5 thousand heads;
- Chernihiv region — 136.3 thousand heads;
- Cherkasy region — 130.7 thousand heads.

47% of the total cattle population in Ukraine is kept in these regions. Compared to April 1 of last year, the growth of the cattle population is observed only at the enterprises of Zakarpattia (+23.53%), Kharkiv (+7.14%), Kyiv (6.1%), Ternopil (+5.63%), Khmelnytskyi (+5.43%), Ivano-Frankivsk (+5.31%), Lviv (+4.86%) and Kirovohrad regions (+1.92%).