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# Livestock numbers down again in 2023

## Fewer cattle and pigs slaughtered

Vienna, 2024-02-15 – 1.84 million cattle were kept in Austria on 1 December 2023, 1.4% fewer than a year earlier, as Statistics Austria reports. The pig stock decreased by 5.0% to 2.52 million animals; between 2021 and 2022, the decrease was 4.9%. Sheep and goat numbers also decreased. Fewer cattle and pigs were slaughtered in 2023, but more sheep, goats and equids.

### Declines in all age groups of bovine animals

As of the reference date 1 December 2023, 1.84 million cattle were kept across Austria, 1.4% or 25 600 fewer than a year earlier. The stock of **bovine animals less than one year old** declined by 3.3% to 577 200 (see table 1). In detail, the number of calves for slaughter fell to 41 600 (–5.5%) and that of other calves and young bovine animals to 535 700 (–3.1%).

In the age group of **bovine animals one to less than two years old**, the stock decreased by 0.8% to 426 600 animals. Declines were recorded both in the number of male bovines (–1.7% to 163 200) and heifers for slaughter (–1.1% to 64 100 head), while the stock of heifers for production and breeding remained virtually unchanged compared to the previous year (199 200 animals; ±0.0%).

With a total of 831 700, the number of **bovine animals two years old and over** declined by 0.3%. An increase in stock numbers was recorded for male bovines (+8.8% to 23 700 animals), heifers for slaughter (+7.4% to 15 900) as well as heifers for production and breeding (+3.7% to 92 300). The number of dairy cows (–1.4% to 543 000 head) and other cows (–0.7% to 156 700) fell against December 2022.

The number of holdings with bovine animals on the reference day decreased by 2.2% to 51 400 compared to the previous year. The average livestock density was 36 animals per holding (2022: 35 animals).

### Pig livestock declines significantly once again

The pig stock as of 1 December 2023 decreased by 5.0% or 133 700 compared to the previous year to a total of 2.52 million animals. Livestock declines were recorded in almost all categories. Compared to December 2022, the number of **piglets and young pigs** fell by 5.2% to 1.25 million and that of **pigs for fattening** by 5.3% to a total of 1.06 million. The stock of **pigs for breeding** decreased by 2.4% to 207 000 animals (see table 2).

In a detailed comparison, the number of piglets fell by 4.8% to 605 300 and that of young pigs by 5.6% to 642 300. Within pigs for fattening, the stock of animals weighing 50 to less than 80 kg declined by 2.7% to 505 000, that weighing 80 to less than 110 kg by 5.4% to 430 800 and pigs weighing more than 110 kg fell by 14.6% to 126 000. Among pigs for breeding, the number of young breeding sows decreased by 0.7% to 40 900 and that of old breeding sows by 2.7% to 162 700. The stock of covered sows fell to 144 500 (–1.4%).

The share of the Austrian federal provinces most relevant for pig production (Upper Austria, Lower Austria and Styria) slightly declined to 93.8% of the total stock (2022: 94.0%).

The number of **holdings** with pigs on the reference day fell by 7.5% to 17 800 compared to December 2022. The average livestock density was 142 pigs per holding (2022: 138 pigs).

## Again fewer sheep and goats

Sheep and goat numbers fell by 2.2% to 391 900 and 2.1% to 96 900 animals, respectively. The stock of ewes and ewe lambs put to the ram declined by 0.8% to 232 100 animals and that of other sheep sunk by 4.2% to 159 700. Compared to the previous year, the number of goats mated or goats that have already kidded fell by 2.8% to 62 900 animals and that of other goats by 0.7% to 34 100 animals (see table 2).

## Less slaughtered bovines and pigs, more slaughtered sheep, goats and equids

In the 2023 calendar year, fewer cattle and pigs were slaughtered in Austria, but more sheep, goats and equids. Bovine slaughterings in slaughterhouses (examined and meat fit for human consumption) fell by 2.9% to 620 500 compared to 2022. The number of pigs slaughtered fell by 5.1% to 4.64 million. In contrast, the number of slaughtered sheep (+1.7% to 172 000), goats (+16.0% to 13 100 head) and equids (+13.6% to 468 head) rose.

From a regional perspective, the majority of bovine animals slaughtered nationwide was found in Upper Austria (32.2%), which also took the leading position for goats (36.5%) and equids (48.3%). Styria reported the largest proportion of slaughtered pigs (40.3%), while Lower Austria was the leader for sheep (46.3%).

Furthermore, a total of 19 200 pigs (-5.4%), 160 100 sheep (+4.9%) and 67 100 goats (+17.7%) were slaughtered unexamined in calendar year 2023.

The overall resulting volume of red meat in 2023 was 666 500 tonnes (-4.1%). In addition, 101.39 million poultry were slaughtered, resulting in a total volume of 150 500 tonnes of poultry meat (see table 3).

**Table 1: Number of bovine animals on 1 December 2023**

| Category                                  | 01.12.2022 | 01.12.2023       | Change in % |
|---|------------|------------------|-------------|
| <b>Bovine animals in total</b>            | 1 861 071  | <b>1 835 469</b> | -1.4        |
| Bovine animals less than 1 year old       | 596 990    | <b>577 237</b>   | -3.3        |
| Bovine animals 1 to less than 2 years old | 430 130    | <b>426 555</b>   | -0.8        |
| Bovine animals 2 years old and over       | 833 951    | <b>831 677</b>   | -0.3        |
| <b>Holdings with bovine animals</b>       | 52 545     | <b>51 401</b>    | -2.2        |

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, Bovine livestock, Agrarmarkt Austria, Rinderzucht Austria, Consumer health information system.

**Table 2: Number of pigs, sheep and goats on 1 December 2023**

| Category  | 01.12.2022 | 01.12.2023       | Change in % |
|---|------------|------------------|-------------|
| <b>Pigs in total</b>                            | 2 650 151  | <b>2 516 455</b> | -5.0        |
| Piglets and young pigs below 50 kg live weight  | 1 316 367  | <b>1 247 627</b> | -5.2        |
| Pigs for fattening, 50 kg live weight and above | 1 121 790  | <b>1 061 829</b> | -5.3        |
| Pigs for breeding, 50 kg live weight and above  | 211 994    | <b>206 999</b>   | -2.4        |
| <b>Holdings with pigs</b>                       | 19 201     | <b>17 756</b>    | -7.5        |
| <b>Sheep in total</b>                           | 400 664    | <b>391 868</b>   | -2.2        |
| <b>Goats in total</b>                           | 99 019     | <b>96 941</b>    | -2.1        |

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, Livestock survey.

**Table 3: Number of slaughtering in total and carcass weight 2023**

| Category       | Slaughtering in total, head | Change in % | Carcass weight in tonnes | Change in % |
|----------------|-----------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Equids         | 468                         | +13.6       | 103                      | +12.5       |
| Bovine animals | 620 486                     | -2.9        | 204 581                  | -2.6        |
| Pigs           | 4 655 073                   | -5.1        | 454 256                  | -4.9        |
| Sheep          | 332 125                     | +3.2        | 6 803                    | +4.8        |
| Goats          | 80 223                      | +17.4       | 792                      | +24.5       |
| Poultry        | 101 392 914                 | -0.4        | 150 473                  | +4.8        |

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, Slaughter statistics, poultry production.

For detailed results and further information on [livestock](#) and [slaughtering](#) please refer to our [website](#).

**Information on methodology, definitions:**

The statistics on **livestock** are based on Regulation (EC) No 1165/2008 concerning livestock and meat statistics; implemented under Ordinance Federal Law Gazette II No. 163/2012 (available in German only) issued by the Federal Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management.

The **bovine livestock** was determined through an evaluation of the central cattle database pursued by Agrarmarkt Austria in combination with data from Rinderzucht Austria. The detailed processing was carried out by Statistics Austria.

The data on the **stock of pigs, sheep and goats** was collected by a separated livestock sample survey at around 7 000 holdings directly.

**Slaughtering:** These statistics provide information on the number of domestic and foreign origin livestock slaughtered in Austria (examined/fit for human consumption; not examined) and the corresponding carcass weight. It is based on data from the consumer health information system, the Carinthian veterinary administration, the Austrian meat control, the Austrian sheep and goat trading exchange and poultry slaughterhouses with at least 5 000 poultry slaughtered per calendar year.

**Examined/fit for human consumption slaughtering:** Animals slaughtered in slaughterhouses, meat examined and fit for human consumption.

**If you have any questions on this topic, please contact:**

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