

Changes in milk performance and cattle farming technology in Poland during the last 50 years

S u m m a r y

The last 50 years constituted the period of big changes, which took place in cattle population, milk performance, cattle farming technology as well as in milk quality. Until 1975 in Poland cattle and cow population increased reaching the amounts of 13254 thousand and 6146 thousand heads respectively. In subsequent years a drastic reduction of the population to 5350 thousand heads of cattle and 2800 thousand heads of cows occurred. A slow increase of milk yield of the whole cow population as well as the population of cows under milk performance control showed greater pace in the last 10 years. In the years 1989-2005 the number of milk suppliers to dairy plants reduced from 1400 thousand to about 300 thousand. Big, beneficial changes occurred in housing and feeding technologies, milk collection and its quality evaluation systems as well as the geography of regions leading in milk production. In new built barns the loose, litter and litterless, ones dominate. In farms oriented to cattle breeding the feeding is based on the pasture, maize and hay silages supplemented by concentrates. A serious improvement in farm feedstuffs preparation and their quality took place. The biggest progress occurred in microbiological quality of milk. Over 90 percent of collected milk is in the highest quality „Extra” class.