Tasmania

Australian Bureau of Statistics

1993-94

Principal Agricultural Commodities Tasmania

(Preliminary)

Catalogue No. 7111.6

Principal Agricultural Commodities Tasmania (Preliminary) 1993-94

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AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS CATALOGUE NO. 7111.6

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Main features

Sheep and lamb numbers continue to decrease. Between 31 March 1993 and 1994, the State's flock numbers decreased marginally by a further half a per cent from 4.3 to 4.2 million in 1994. Significantly, almost all of this decrease is in wethers whose numbers fell by more than 60,000 (5.4 per cent) to 1.2 million.

The preliminary data indicate that the State's graziers have begun to shift their emphasis away from wool production to Tasmania's more traditional dual purpose sheep breeds.

As a result of continuing demand, Tasmanian farmers sowed and harvested a record barley crop in 1993-94. The early figures indicate that 41,500 tonnes were harvested from just under 17,000 hectares at an average of 2.5 tonnes per hectare. Growers have reported their intention of sowing more than 15,000 hectares to barley in the 1994-95 season.

The 1993-94 pea harvest of 33,000 tonnes was up by almost eighteen per cent on the previous year's reported 28,000 tonnes.

Tasmania's onion harvest is estimated at 64,000 tonnes in 1993-94. This is an eight per cent improvement on last season's very poor 59,000 tonnes.

Potato production for the 1993-94 season looks set to be at near record levels with the State's farmers reporting more than 7,000 hectares to be harvested.

TABLE 1. AREA INTENDED TO BE SOWN FOR ALL PURPOSES (a), CEREALS

	1991-92	*1992-93*	*1993-94*	*1994-95 p*	*Per cent change 1994-95 over 1993-94*	*Standard error (%)*
			'000 hectares			
Barley	8.8	9.3	14.4	15.2	5.6	5.9
Oats	16.2	16.9	15.9	14.3	- 10.1	5.3
Wheat	1.3	1.6	2.4	1.5	- 37.5	9.4

(a) Represents area intended to be sown as reported at 31 March in the seasons shown. The area intended to be sown during the season 1994-95 is presented as a possible basis for forecasting the total area to be sown for that season. But, because of the possibility of later changes in intention caused by unforeseen circumstances such as adverse climatic or economic conditions, this estimate may not necessarily be the area actually sown during the current season.

TABLE 2. AREA, PRODUCTION AND YIELD OF PRINCIPAL CROPS

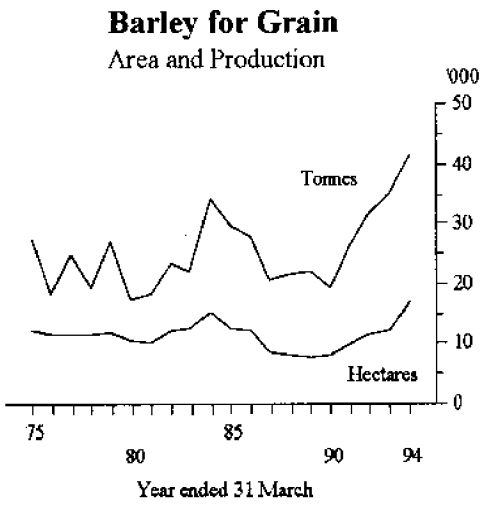
	1990-91	*1991-92*	*1992-93*	*1993-94 p*	*Per cent change 1993-94 over 1992-93*	*Standard error (%)*
			Area ('000 hectares)			
Cereals						
Barley	9.8	11.3	12.3	16.8	36.6	3.6
Oats	9.3	9.1	9.2	5.8	- 37.0	7.2
Triticale	0.8	1.0	0.8	0.7	- 21.6	20.0
Wheat	0.6	1.2	1.5	1.0	- 33.3	9.7
Vegetables						
Onions	1.4	1.5	1.2	1.1	- 8.3	5.7
Peas (processing)	5.6	5.3	6.0	7.5	25.0	2.8
Potatoes	5.7	6.0	6.1	7.2	18.0	4.4
Other crops						
Oil poppies	6.5	7.6	5.3	5.4	1.6	4.3
			Production ('000 tonnes)			
Cereals						
Barley	26.0	31.8	35.3	41.5	17.6	4.2
Oats	18.8	18.6	19.0	11.0	- 42.1	9.1
Triticale	2.9	3.4	2.6	2.4	- 6.8	22.7
Wheat	2.4	3.2	5.5	3.6	-34.5	9.4
Vegetables						
Onions	73.4	78.3	59.3	64.0	7.9	11.6
Peas (processing)	26.6	27.8	27.7	32.6	17.7	3.7
Potatoes	235.5	249.8	269.9	n.y.a.	n.a.	n.a.
			Yield (tonnes per hectare)			
Cereals						
Barley	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.5	- 13.8	n.a.
Oats	2.0	2.0	2.1	1.9	- 9.5	n.a.
Triticale	3.8	3.3	3.0	3.6	20.1	n.a.
Wheat	4.1	2.8	3.8	3.6	- 5.3	n.a.
Vegetables						
Onions	51.6	51.9	50.4	57.9	14.9	n.a.
Peas (processing)	4.7	5.2	4.7	4.3	- 8.5	n.a.
Potatoes	41.1	41.9	44.1	n.y.a.	n.a.	n.a.

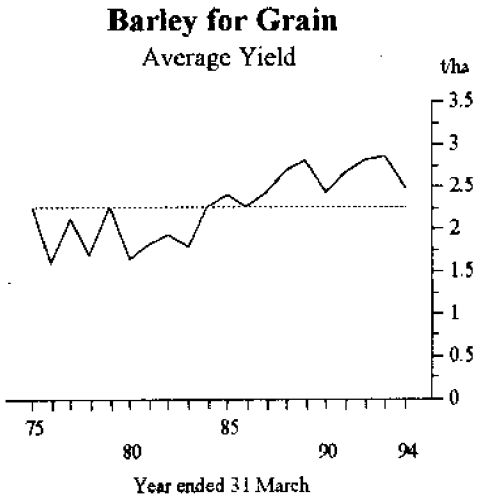
TABLE 3. FARM STOCKS OF GRAINS AND FODDER AT 31 MARCH ('000 TONNES)

	1991	*1992*	*1993*	*1994 p*	*Per cent change 1994 over 1993*	*Standard error (%)*
Grain stocks						
Barley	9.8	15.0	9.8	13.4	36.7	5.9
Oats	14.7	14.2	18.1	12.7	- 29.8	6.8
Wheat	4.8	4.2	2.5	1.3	- 48.0	24.3
Fodder stocks						
Hay	273.6	245.8	313.5	273.0	- 12.9	2.6
Silage	123.4	113.8	186.2	188.5	1.2	3.9

Barley for grain

Continuing strong demand for the State's barley has seen production more than double from 19,300 tonnes in the 1990-91 season to an estimated 41,500 tonnes in 1993-94. Farmers' intentions for the forthcoming season indicate that some 15,000 hectares is likely to be sown to barley in 1994-95. Given the correlation between intended and actual plantings, this suggests that the area of barley will be around 17,000 hectares next season.

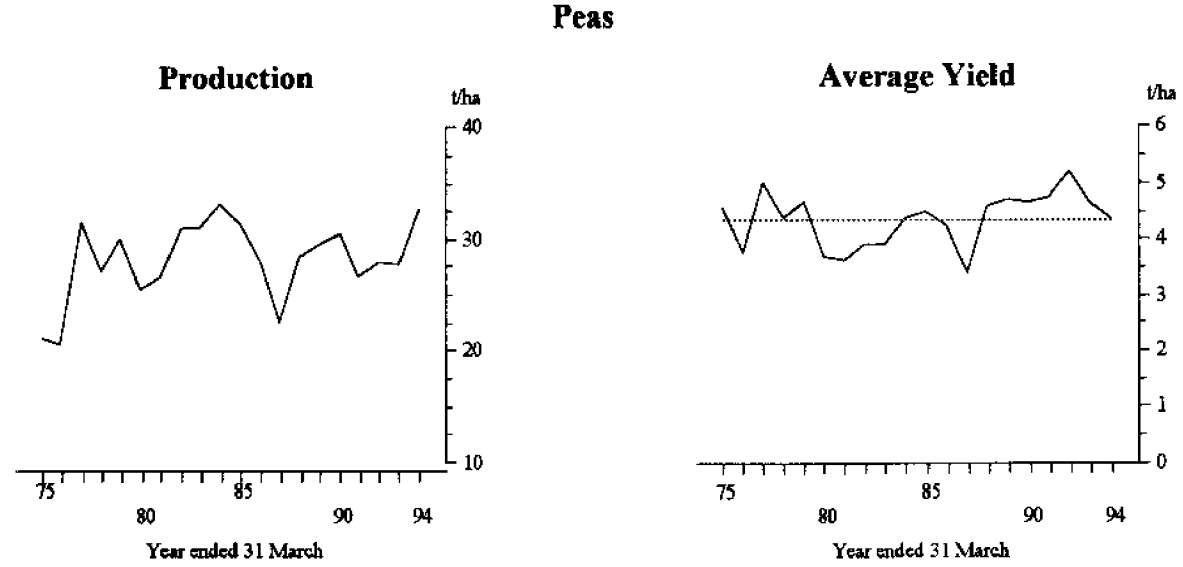




Peas

The 1993-94 pea harvest, at an estimated 32,650 tonnes, is the highest level reported since the 33,300 tonnes reported in the 1983-84 season. This followed a 25 per cent increase in plantings from 6,000 to 7,500 heatres in 1993-94.

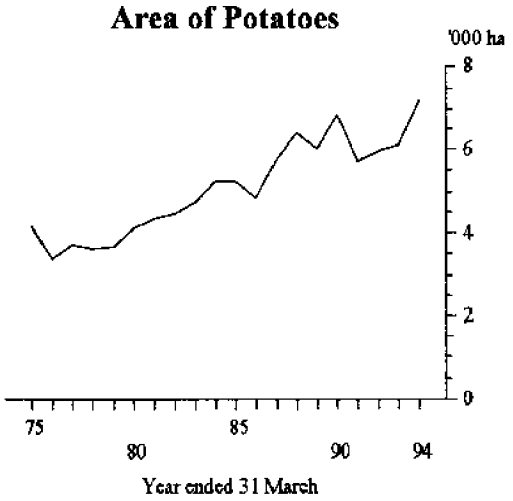
The average yield was 4.3 tonnes per hectare and is the lowest annual average since the 3.4 tonnes per hectare recorded in the 1986-87 season.

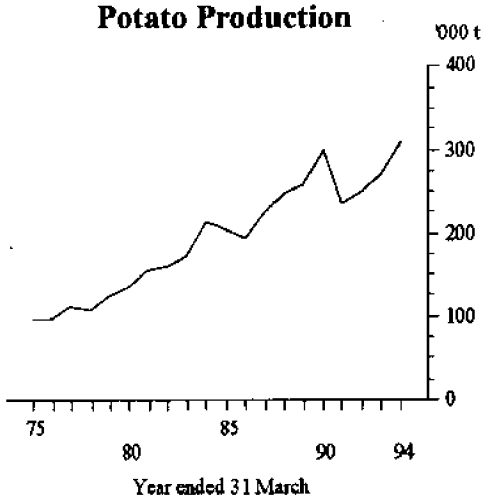


Potatoes

Potatoes are the single most valuable Tasmanian crop, worth an estimated $53.7 million in 1992-93. This represents about half the total value of the State's vegetables or around ten per cent of the total value of agricultural in Tasmania.

The area planted to potatoes in the 1993-94 season is a record 7,200 hectares. This is an eighteen per cent increase on the previous season's 6,100 hectares. The amount of potatoes harvested from this area will, based on a 5-year average yield, be around the 300,000 tonne mark.

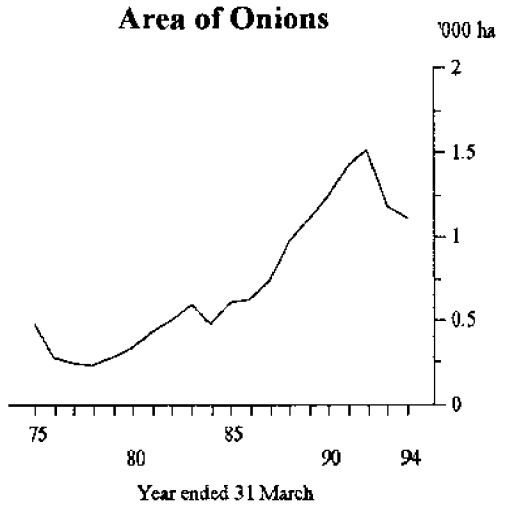


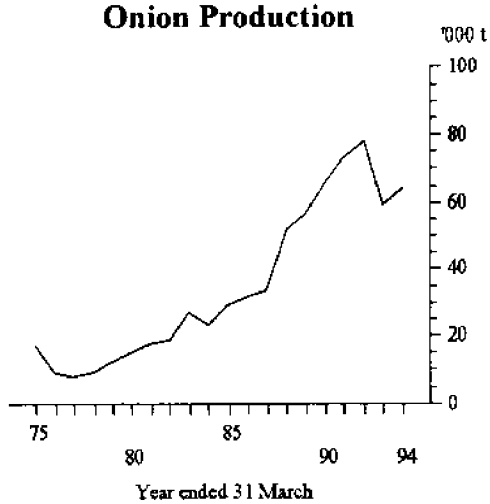


Onions

Since the record 1,500 hectares of onions harvested in the 1991-92 season, the area has fallen by more than a quarter to 1,100 hectares in the 1993-94 season. Most of this decrease is due to the loss of a major European export market.

Despite the decrease in the area sown, onion production rose by eight per cent from 59,300 tonnes in 1992-93 to 64,000 tonnes in 1993-94. The average yield is estimated at almost 58 tonnes per hectare for the 1993-94 season and is a marked improvement on the previous season's 50 tonnes per hectare.





Sheep

Although Tasmania's sheep numbers continue to decline, the overall decrease between March 1993 and 1994 was less than one per cent. This strongly suggests that flock numbers have stabilised at around 4.2 million, down one million head (20 per cent) from the high of 5.3 million at 31 March 1990.

Based on farmers's forecasts of intended matings over the past two seasons, it appears that Tasmania's graziers have shifted their emphasis away from primarily wool bearing sheep to the more traditional dual purpose sheep breeds. This is in marked contrast to the push during the 80's to merino and merino comeback sheep, which saw their proportion more than double from less than a quarter of the total to more than half.

TABLE 4. SHEEP NUMBERS AT 31 MARCH

('000)

	1991	*1992*	*1993*	*1994 p*	*Per cent change 1994 over 1993*	*Standard error (%)*
Sheep and lambs						
Rams	48.6	42.3	41.3	39.5	- 4.4	1.6
Breeding ewes	1,863.4	1,744.7	1,710.4	1,680.9	- 1.7	0.9
Other ewes	265.6	232.3	220.9	236.4	7.0	5.7
Wethers	1,419.3	1,335.1	1,262.4	1,200.0	- 4.9	1.4
Lambs and hoggets, under one year	1,206.9	940.3	1,028.6	1,084.3	5.4	1.5
Total	**4,803.9**	**4,294.8**	**4,263.6**	**4,241.1**	- 0.5	**n.a.**

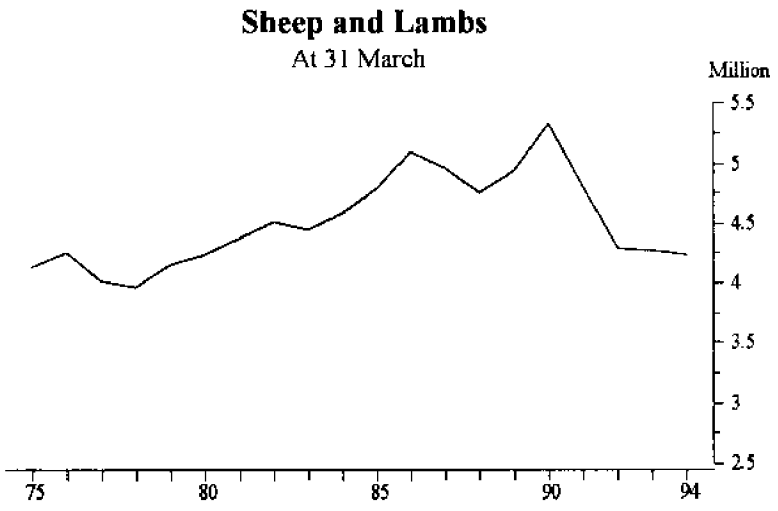
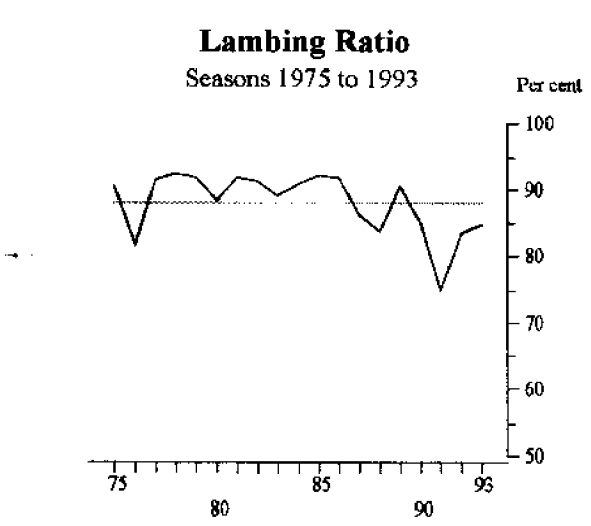
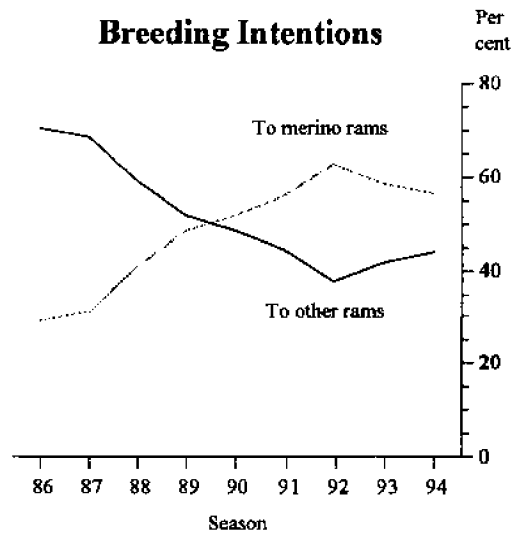


TABLE 5. LAMBING, SEASONS 1991 TO 1994

	1991	*1992*	*1993*	*1994 p*	*Per cent change 1994 over 1993*	*Standard error (%)*
			('000)			
Breeding ewes at 31 March	1,863.4	1,744.7	1,710.4	1,680.9	- 1.7	0.9
Farmers' forecast of intended matings of ewes or ewe lambs for lambing in the next season						
To merino rams	990.5	1,050.9	978.0	911.4	- 6.8	1.1
To rams of other breeds	783.9	628.8	697.2	707.1	1.4	1.9
Total intended matings	*1,774.4*	*1,679.7*	*1,675.2*	*1,618.5*	*- 3.4*	*n.a.*
Actual matings	1,660.2	1,633.8	1,601.3	n.y.a.	- 2.0	n.a.
Lambs marked	1,240.2	1,361.8	1,353.5	n.y.a.	- 0.6	n.a.
			Per cent			
Actual matings as a percentage of						
Breeding ewes	89.1	93.6	93.6	n.y.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Intended matings	93.6	97.3	95.6	n.y.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Lambs marked as a percentage of						
Actual matings	74.7	83.4	84.5	n.y.a.	n.a.	n.a.





Wool Production

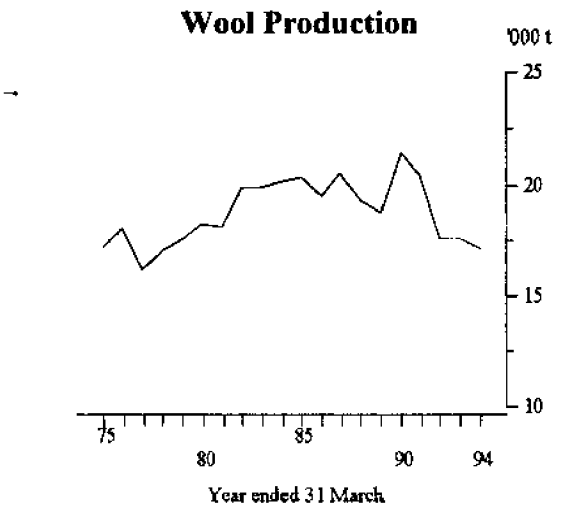
Wool production fell by a further three per cent from 17,600 tonnes in 1992-93 to around 17,100 tonnes in the 1993-94 season. This represents a fall of over twenty per cent since the record production of the 1989-90 season when the Floor Price Scheme was abandoned.

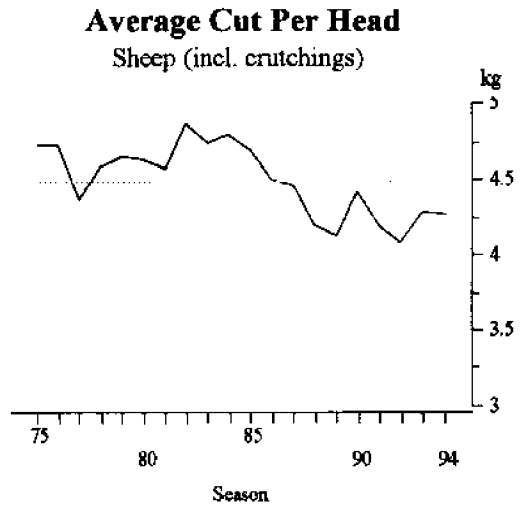
The average cut per head of sheep was 4.27 kilograms as against the national average of 5.11 kilograms.

TABLE 6. SHEARING AND WOOL PRODUCTION, YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH (a)

		1991	*1992*	*1993*	*1994 p*	*Per cent change 1994 over 1993*	*Standard error (%)*
Sheep							
Number shorn	'000	4,640.0	4,121.8	3,917.1	3,803.2	- 2.9	0.8
Shorn wool (b)	'000 kgs	19,421.4	16,794.7	16,793.1	16,232.6	- 3.3	0.9
Average clip	kg	4.19	4.07	4.29	4.27	0.4	n.a.
Lambs							
Number shorn	'000	760.7	573.4	594.4	606.3	2.0	3.6
Shorn wool	'000 kgs	971.5	783.8	797.0	848.8	6.5	3.4
Average clip	kg	1.28	1.37	1.34	1.40	4.5	n.a.
Total							
Number shorn	'000	5,400.8	4,695.1	4,511.5	4,409.5	- 2.3	n.a.
Shorn wool (b)	'000 kgs	20,393.0	17,578.5	17,590.1	17,081.4	- 2.9	n.a.
Average clip	kg	3.78	3.74	3.90	3.87	- 0.8	n.a.

(a) Based on Agricultural census data.
(b) Includes crutchings.





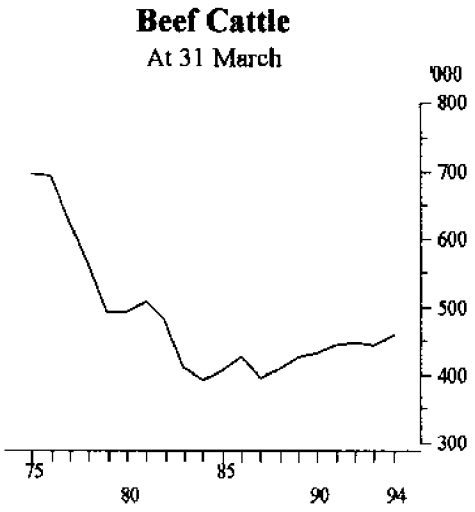
Cattle

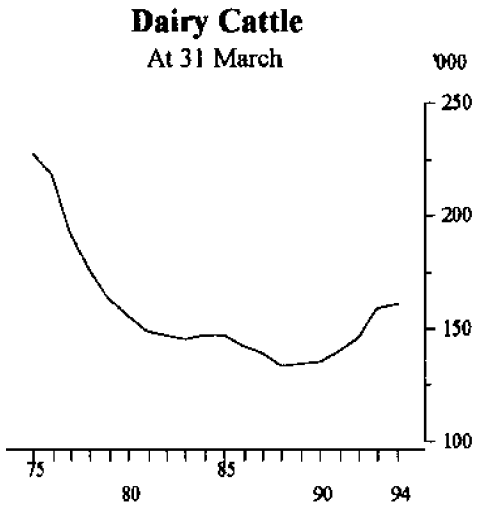
Beef cattle numbers continued to recover from the low of 394,000 in March 1984, increasing by a further three per cent from 445,000 to 459,000 between March 1993 and March 1994. The 1994 figure is only two thirds of the peak of around 700,000 head in the mid 70's.

Dairy cattle numbers increased marginally in 1994, rising by less than one per cent from 159,500 in March 1993 to 160,600 head at 31 March 1994. This is in line with the trend of the past five years which have seen dairy cattle numbers recover from a low of 134,400 in March 1989.

TABLE 7. CATTLE NUMBERS , AT 31 MARCH
('000)

	1991	*1992*	*1993*	*1994 p*	*Per cent change 1994 over 1993*	*Standard error (%)*
Dairy cattle						
Bulls and bull calves for service	1.9	2.0	2.3	2.6	13.0	5.4
Cows, in milk and dry	95.5	97.7	105.8	105.4	- 0.4	0.9
Heifers and heifer calves	42.5	46.3	51.4	52.6	2.3	1.9
Total dairy cattle	*139.9*	*146.0*	*159.5*	*160.6*	*0.7*	*n.a.*
Beef cattle						
Bulls and bull calves for service	10.4	10.4	10.0	10.7	7.0	3.4
Other calves under one year	148.7	143.0	134.3	143.0	6.5	1.5
Cows and heifers, one year and over						
For beef herd replacement	199.1	198.4	170.5	180.0	5.6	1.2
Other			39.5	34.8	- 11.9	5.2
Other cattle	86.1	94.8	90.8	90.8	0.0	2.9
Total beef cattle	*444.4*	*446.7*	*445.2*	*459.3*	*3.2*	*n.a.*
Total all cattle	**584.3**	**592.7**	**604.7**	**619.9**	**2.5**	**0.6**



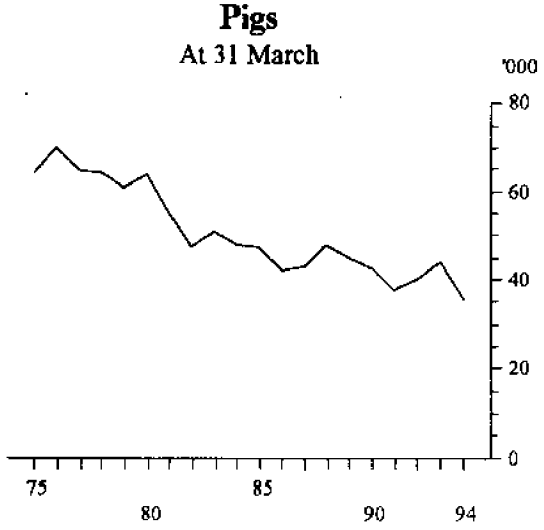


Pigs

Preliminary estimates show a marked fall in the number of pigs in 1993-94. Numbers have fallen by 18 per cent from 44,000 at 31 March 1993 to 36,000 at 31 March 1994. The number of sows and gilts fell by 28 per cent during the same period.

TABLE 8. PIG NUMBERS AT 31 MARCH
('000)

	1991	*1992*	*1993*	*1994 p*	*Per cent change 1994 over 1993*	*Standard error (%)*
Pigs						
Boars	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.0	2.9
Breeding sows and gilts	5.0	5.5	5.8	4.2	- 27.6	2.6
Other pigs	32.3	34.1	37.7	31.3	- 17.0	3.2
Total pigs	**37.6**	**40.0**	**43.9**	**35.9**	**- 18.2**	**3.1**



EXPLANATORY NOTES

This publication contains preliminary agricultural estimates from the 1993-94 season, together with estimates of intended sowings of principal crops and intended ewe matings for the forthcoming season. Comparative data for the three previous years is also included.

Scope and coverage

2. The ABS has in the recent past excluded from the Census those establishments which make only a small contribution to overall agricultural production.

3. From 1986-87 to 1990-91 the scope of the Census included those establishments undertaking agricultural activity and having an estimated value of agricultural operations (EVAO) of $20,000 or more. From 1991-92 to 1992-93, only those establishments with an EVAO of $22,500 or more were included.

4. The 1993-94 Census is based on a scope of $5,000 or more EVAO. However, the estimates presented in this publication are based on the same scope as the previous two Censuses to enable direct comparisons to be drawn.

Reliability of estimates

5. Since the estimates are based on a proportion (approximately forty per cent) of agricultural establishments selected for survey in 1993-94, they are subject to sampling variability. That is, they may differ from the figures that would have been produced if all units had been included.

6. One measure of the likely difference is given by the *standard error*, which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied because only a sample of units was included. There are about two chances in three that a sample estimate will differ by less than one standard error from the figure that would have been obtained if all units had been included and about 19 chances in twenty that the difference will be less than two standard errors.

7. In this publication, sampling variability is measured by the relative standard error which is obtained by expressing the standard error as a percentage of the estimate to which it refers. The relative standard error is a useful measure, in that it provides an immediate indication of the percentage errors likely to have occurred due to sampling. It avoids the need to refer also to the size of the estimate.

8. As an example of the above, if a sample gives an estimate of 1,000 hectares and the relative standard error is 5 per cent then there would be two chances in three that, if all units were included, a figure within the range of 950 to 1,050 hectares would have been obtained. There would also be nineteen chances in twenty that the figure would lie within the range 900 to 1,100 hectares.

Symbols and other usages

kg	kilograms
n.a.	not available
n.y.a.	not yet available
p	preliminary - figure or series

General

9. The ABS has more detailed agricultural statistics on MS-DOS compatible floppy disk, compact disc, microfiche and magnetic tape. AgStats on floppy disk and compact disk offers a wider range of data aggregated at smaller geographical areas than those generally available in printed publications. Both systems come complete with an easy-to-use, menu-driven interrogation facility.

10. Current publications and other standard products and services are listed in the Catalogue of Publications (1101.0). The catalogue is available from any ABS office.

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