

1. Introduction

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Livestock Improvement Corporation Limited is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the New Zealand Dairy Board, with responsibility for the Board's farm production activities and, in particular, dairy herd improvement and herd records. Livestock Improvement aims to "lead the world with genetics and knowledge to create wealth for pastoral dairy farmers". Livestock Improvement's activities can broadly be described as genetics, information and advice. Services provided to farmers include farm management information, herd testing and artificial breeding services, DNA analysis, a farm advisory extension service, research to improve farm profitability, statistical information related to the New Zealand dairy industry and herd recording on the Livestock Improvement National Database.

1998/99 Dairy Statistics contains many of the dairy industry statistics that were released until 1983/84 in the *New Zealand Dairy Board Farm Production Report*. In 1984/85, with the formation of the Livestock Improvement Division, the report was renamed the *Livestock Improvement Report*. In 1987/88 it was titled *Annual Report (Livestock Improvement Division)* and, with the establishment of the Livestock Improvement Corporation Limited, the report is now released under the title *Dairy Statistics*.

Source data used for the publication has altered over time. The statistics presented in *Dairy Statistics* from 1992/93 were obtained from dairy companies and from information stored on the Livestock Improvement National Database. Prior to 1991/92, the information for the *Dairy Statistics* publications was obtained primarily from the analysis of the New Zealand Dairy Industry Cow Census (an annual survey of all dairy farmers) last conducted for the 1990/91 season. The 1991/92 edition of *Dairy Statistics* was a transition year for which only minimal data was available.

In the Herd Improvement section of *Dairy Statistics* there is an important difference to the data presented in *Dairy Statistics* before 1995/96. Since the implementation of Animal Evaluation in June 1996 statistics presented from 1995/96 onward include bull and cow genetic trends.

