Livestock – Sheep

The global number of sheep exceeded 1 billion head in 2010. Sheep are cheap to maintain and can provide both food and non-food products. These factors mean that sheep breeding has an important role to play in the developing world. This is especially pertinent as 70 percent of global livestock can be found in Asia and Africa.

More than 19 percent of the global domestic sheep population is found in this region. In 2010, EU other and EFTA had an eight percent share of the global sheep population, while Central Asia was host to four percent, and the Caucasus and Turkey had a three percent share. The other sub-regions of Europe and Central Asia had more modest shares.

Overall, there were more than 208 million sheep in the region in 2010. Forty three percent of these were kept by farmers in the EU other and EFTA countries, with the United Kingdom having the largest sheep population in this region numbering around 31 million head. In Central Asia there were 47 million head (22 percent of the region’s population), the Caucasus and Turkey accounted for 15 percent – with Turkey having nearly 22 million head. CIS Europe accounted for more than 10 percent, while South Eastern Europe and EU Central and Eastern accounted for three and six percent of regional sheep stocks respectively.

Data on livestock per hectare show that sheep breeding, regionally, is at its most intensive in the Caucasus and Turkey with 69 head per hundred hectares, followed by EU other and EFTA, South Eastern Europe, EU Central and Eastern, Central Asia and, lastly, CIS Europe. The world average was 22 head per hundred hectares in 2010. Generally, it can be seen that the Mediterranean countries have the higher intensities of sheep breeding.

In the last two decades the global number of sheep has fallen significantly, with drastic decreases in CIS Europe, EU Central and Eastern and the Caucasus and Turkey. More specifically, in CIS Europe the decrease was by nearly two thirds, and in EU Central and Eastern region nearly half of the sheep population disappeared. There were 20-30 percent decreases in the other sub-regions/groupings as well, except South Eastern Europe, where there was a moderate increase.
MAP 27: Sheep breeding (thousand heads, 2010)

MAP 28: Number of sheep per 100 hectares agricultural area (heads, 2009)
Livestock – Poultry

The poultry sector is one of the most rapidly growing sub-sectors of the livestock industry. Production is becoming more intensive and vertically integrated due to technological advancements. Global demand is expected to continue growing, and Asia — prominently China — is playing a main role in this trend.

In 2010 there were more than 21 billion heads of poultry in the world, and 11 percent of this global stock was in this region. The EU other and EFTA accounted for five percent of the global stock, CIS Europe for three percent, EU Central and Eastern for two percent. The other sub-regions of Europe and Central Asia had lower shares.

More than 83 percent of the 2.5 billion heads of poultry in this region (2010 data) was in CIS Europe, and the EU and EFTA sub-regions. The Caucasus and Turkey accounted for another 11 percent. Nearly 404 million heads of poultry was kept in the Russian Federation, 234 million in Turkey and 190 million in Ukraine. There are further significant stocks in countries like France, the United Kingdom, Italy and Spain.

In 2010, the average number of poultry in the world was 422 thousand per hundred hectares. In this region, characteristic differences can be seen among the different sub-regions. Generally, intensity tends to decrease from west to east, which can be explained by the general economic conditions and technological gaps between the countries. In EU other and EFTA the indicator was 744,000 heads per capita, while in EU Central and Eastern the per capita figure was 662,000 and 226,000 in CIS Europe.

Globally, poultry numbers have increased by two thirds over the last two decades. In line with this, there has been significant growth in South Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Turkey and in EU Central and Eastern, while contrary to this global trend, in CIS Europe and Central Asia the poultry population has fallen considerably.

- The region accounts for 11 percent of the global poultry population
- The Russian Federation has the highest poultry head count (403 million heads)
- The Netherlands has the highest intensity, at 5.2 million heads per hundred hectares
MAP 29: Poultry (million heads, 2010)

Source: Statistics Division (FAOSTAT)
MetaLink: P3.REU.FAO.ESS.POUL, p. 111

MAP 30: Number of poultry per 100 hectares of agricultural area (heads, 2009)

Source: Statistics Division (FAOSTAT)
MetaLink: P3.REU.FAO.ESS.POUL.SHL, p. 111