

Agricultural census 2020



What is the agricultural census ?

The agricultural census provides a precise and geographically detailed count of farms and farmers in a country.

It provides information about a wide range of agricultural variables. This makes it a rich source for in-depth and flexible analysis. Censuses provide essential statistical input for formulating and evaluating policies, for administration and for research.

Censuses have a long tradition in the Member States of the European Union (EU). Historically, the development of census methods in each country has been shaped by numerous factors, such as: information needs; the availability of data sources and technology; data protection requirements; the burden on the respondents; and, last but not least, the financial cost of the census operation.



Why are censuses conducted ?

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) advises countries around the world to carry out an agricultural census every ten years.

The agricultural census is the only way to get updates on the full agricultural population of the EU, by casting the widest net to cover the farming sector as a whole. It is the only data collection instrument that produces statistical information on farms at the most detailed geographical level.



Find more information on:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/agriculture/census-2020>

Why is harmonisation at the EU level important ?

At the EU level, national censuses are of greater value if their results can be compared between Member States. This is why the EU has been taking continuous steps to harmonise census outputs.

What data is collected ?

The EU's Agricultural Census 2020 collected approximately 300 variables covering the following aspects on farming :

- General characteristics of the farm and the farmer
- Land
- Livestock
- Labour force and other gainful activities on the farm
- Animal housing and manure management
- Rural development support measures

Within each of these broad aspects, a considerable amount of data was collected. For example, there is information on the size of farms, the number of people working on farms, their age and gender, the level of training attained by farm managers, places available in animal housing and information on manure management.

The countries collect information from individual agricultural holdings and, observing strict rules of confidentiality, data is forwarded to Eurostat where it is validated and cross-checked against other data sources. EU aggregates are determined and the tables made available to the public on the Eurostat database. The agricultural census collects data from all 27 EU Member States and some EFTA countries.



Agricultural holdings in the EU and EFTA countries

Agricultural holdings in the EU in 2010: 12.1 million

Agricultural holdings in the EU in 2020: 9.1 million



Source: Eurostat
(online data code: EF_LUS_MAIN)



What is new for the 2020 census ?

The EU's Agricultural Census 2020 followed a modular approach, consisting of a core data set and modules on the labour force, rural development, and manure management and animal housing. The core data set is collected from all farms (through the Census), with the modules drawing data from a representative sample of farms. In two complementary data collections being run in 2023 and 2026, new modules are being introduced, on a rotation basis: these will cover machinery and equipment, irrigation, soil management practices, the structure of orchards and the structure of vineyards.



Where and when are the census data going to be available ?

Eurostat started publishing results for the main tables in the second half of 2022. These tables are available on Eurostat's free public database:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/explore/all/agric?lang=en&subtheme=agr&display=list&sort=date>

Data for researchers

Eurostat makes available scientific use files for researchers. Available datasets include agricultural data. For the details and conditions to access the anonymised information see:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/farm-structure-survey>



Are the data safe ?

Statistical confidentiality is a fundamental principle of official statistics enshrined in the Treaties, in EU and national laws and in the European statistics Code of Practice. Harmonisation of principles and guidelines on the protection of confidential data is the obligation of Eurostat and of national statistical authorities in the European Statistical System.

No information on identifiable individual persons can be derived from the tables; the data is aggregated and flagged so that the individual data are anonymised.



EU legislation regulating the 2020 agricultural census

Eurostat is responsible for issuing the legislation establishing the framework for the EU's Agricultural Census. It covered:

- [European Parliament and Council Regulation \(EU\) 2018/1091](#) on integrated farm statistics.
- [Commission Implementing Regulation \(EU\) 2018/1874](#) covering the 2020 agricultural census and the data to be provided under Regulation (EU) 2018/1091.





Find the latest data here!

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/explore/all/agric?lang=en&subtheme=agr&display=list&sort=date>



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