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**\* Please note that paper copies of the documents will not be provided at the meeting\***

## **STANDING COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS (CPSA)**

**6-7 MAY 2013**

**STARTING ON 6 MAY AT 9H30 AM AND PLANNED TO FINISH ON 7 MAY AT  
5H00 PM**

**BECH BUILDING – ROOM QUETELET  
KIRCHBERG, LUXEMBOURG**

**CHAired BY: MR. DÍAZ MUÑOZ**

### **3.3. SEMINAR NOVEMBER 2012 AND FOLLOW UP ACTION PLANS \***

**Doc. CPSA/686**

\* Document available on Circabc: <https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/02f61522-efa7-4e9d-ab7b-0a6262c5a226>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of this document is to summarise the presentations, discussions and conclusions of the CPSA Seminar on Agriculture and environment and Best practices in farm surveys held on 5 November 2012.

The Members of the CPSA are invited to:

- provide their opinion on the raised issues and the discussion
- suggest possible actions as a follow-up;

## SUMMARY

1. Mr Pedro Díaz Muñoz, Director, Eurostat, opened the seminar by reminding of the series of former seminars where Eurostat, Commission services, other stakeholders and Member State NSI representatives have discussed issues dealing with agricultural statistics. The aim of the seminar in 2012 is to know more about the data needs in improving information on the relation between agriculture and the environment and to identify future statistical actions.
2. Tassos Haniotis, Director, DG AGRI, gave a presentation on the greening aspects of the new CAP reform ([available on Circabc<sup>1</sup>](#)), stressing the need for more data on several issues and the fact that it is time to stop discussing the data gaps and start filling them. The CAP needs to respond to some very new challenges, such as cost-driven commodity price spikes which bring external impacts on agriculture, price volatility and extreme weather events which add more uncertainty to the sector, the significant deterioration of the terms of trade and productivity for agriculture. The CAP reform process can be viewed as an effort to address (i) Market failures, especially those linked to economic and environmental sustainability, (ii) Policy failures, and the need for an effective and efficient delivery of policy outcomes, (iii) "Jointness" in delivery of private and public goods (one is prerequisite for the other). The new CAP aims to improve support targeting, "greening" and innovation respond to the above challenges, re-target direct payment support towards "joint" economic and environmental targets, all taking into account administrative costs and feasibility of controls. Mr Haniotis described the environmental benefits of the green CAP measures (permanent grassland, ecological focus areas, and crop diversification) on soils, water, biodiversity and habitats, landscape and climate change mitigation. He mentioned that one of the key statistics that needs to be improved is on land use and related changes.

Replying to questions from the audience, Mr Haniotis underlined that European agriculture has no big impact on food prices globally, and that the answer to ending food security rather lies in Africa than anywhere else. The European policies aim to keep all European agriculture active, thus reducing the impact of local weather conditions on the market, as production is so wide spread. He also said that advisory services are important tools for ensuring innovation in the domain. CAP support has to some degree capitalised in land prices, but mainly in the new MS, even though the

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that the link points to the CPSA seminar Circabc site. This can cause login-problems for some. In that case, please contact [ESTAT-EI-SECRETARIAT@ec.europa.eu](mailto:ESTAT-EI-SECRETARIAT@ec.europa.eu) for access.

cause/effect correlation is difficult to assess. Policy changes must be gradual not to rise prices.

3. Mr Asger Olesen from DG CLIMA presented "Agricultural lands and *climate change* –overview of risks, mitigation, adaptation" ([Circabc](#)), reminding that reducing the emissions of CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O from agriculture is part of the EU reduction commitment in the Kyoto protocol, but not CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from agricultural soils. He then continued to give a detailed description how agriculture is reported and accounted for in the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol, and how improved land use data could help identify the possible positive impact on emissions. He mentioned that in the negotiations, it was known that much of the required data on land use would not be available, and therefore this area was not taken fully on board. This is not acceptable in the long run, as the inclusion of land use parameters would give a fuller and fairer accounting. The main risks foreseen are the slow depletion of soil carbon stock on mineral soils and the drainage or ploughing of wetland soils. His conclusion was that we need to step by step need to improve data availability on geo-referenced soil data, and to ensure coherent and consistent land use definitions on MS level.
4. Mr Jérémie Crespin from DG ENV ([Circabc](#)) informed why policy makers must not only follow general trends but also what are the individual farmers doing. He showed how indicators are good to show the trends of many issues, such as biodiversity loss, water pollution, decrease of water quantity, soil deterioration, air pollution, and can be used for evaluation/monitoring of the CAP, baselines/targets of RDPs, reporting requirements of ENV directives, new ENV policies (P, land use), etc. However, they fail to give answers to the questions "Why", "Where", "How", and "Who". This is why there is a need for farm level data that can fill in the picture.
5. Professor Oene Oenema from Wageningen University ([Circabc](#)) described the results of the [DireDate](#) project that created a framework for collecting data from farmers and other sources that would not only serve statisticians for creating the 28 agri-environmental indicators and policy makers, but also agricultural and environmental researchers, observers of climate change and other environmental issues linked to agriculture. He reminded that we need data for policy reporting requirements, both for EU policies and for AEI, for benchmarking farm performances for the sector, for informing society (citizens, NGO's, research & education. The most important data relate to inputs (resources), outputs (yields) and management and production methods (including housing, manure storage and use). There are clear potentials to harmonize data collection, especially those related to nitrogen, phosphorus, and GHG and NH<sub>3</sub> emissions. The general recommendations of the project were to (i) adopt the recommended procedures for a more harmonized data collection – processing – reporting chains, (ii) develop protocols and formats/models for automated calculation of the indicators according to the proposed harmonized data collection – processing – reporting chains and (iii) establish Task Forces for making & approving protocols and formats/models, and working groups for deriving the needed coefficients.
6. Jonas Bergström from Statistics Sweden ([Circabc](#)) explained how GHG emissions from agriculture are calculated in detail, showing the differences between the different Tier levels, what data should be made available for the calculations in order to reach better quality. He gave hints on what data it would be good to focus on, by putting the resources to where it matters, on key categories and where there are large differences between different sub-categories in a category. These can of course be different in different countries. However, as a ground rule we should focus on the enteric fermentation by ensuring detailed information on cattle with enough breakdowns, on manure management systems, on volumes of mineral fertilisers,

nitrogen excretion rates and volatilisation plus the areas of organic soils. Finally, he reminded that the methodology seems straightforward enough on paper, but that when you start putting the data together you find many issues to be solved. Increased comparability in Europe would be important to achieve.

7. Marc Thomas from Defra, UK, ([Circabc](#)) presented their system for collecting agricultural data related to environment. The surveys are all based on the FSS population, they are targeted (type of farm, regions, size) and carried out with small samples. Defra keeps the surveys flexible, areas covered can change substantially. Some of them can be carried out as postal or on-line surveys, other data must be collected by interviewers. To ensure relevance the surveys are set up in close coordination with stakeholders. Small-scale, targeted, surveys are vital to meet current and emerging policy needs, they can fit with current FSS 'core' surveys and although set-up costs are an issue, results can be delivered efficiently.
8. Jean-Claude Teurlay from the French Ministry of agriculture, agro-food and forestry ([Circabc](#)) presented the National Action Plan to reduce the use of pesticides by at least 50% between 2008 and 2018 (<http://agriculture.gouv.fr/ecophyto>) and "Cultivation practices" surveys and indicators. The Ecophyto plan has increased the frequency of "Cultivation practices" surveys: two types of survey (a full survey on "cultivation practices" and a "phyto" survey concerning only the plant protection aspect. The objective is to increase the knowledge of the crop management, on nitrogen fertilisation, plant protection practices, and other, and to monitor changes over time. The data is generally collected over two months by interviewers using tablet PCs, and the surveys are well received by the farmers.
9. For the panel discussion, the Chair put forward 3 questions to the participants:
  - a. What are the priority data needs
  - b. How can we combine data sources, create a new architecture
  - c. How to ensure a harmonised approach?

Mr Haniotis would give much priority to resources, especially land use that is becoming increasingly important. There is a need to know and follow up on land use changes, as environment, climate change, economic issues all rely on land use. He stressed that we need to focus on understanding issues better, to communicate on what data already exist and on what is really needed. The harmonisation process must start from the objectives, what do we want to achieve.

Mr Crespin would start from nutrients, as improved availability in this area would immediately bring much clarity on a number of environmental aspects. Other areas are soil issues, biodiversity, air emissions. The new ecological focus areas in the CAP should be clearly recorded in LPIS. He agrees that we should try to avoid added burden on farmers, but new surveys will be inevitable. In any case data must increasingly be collected only once but used many times.

Professor Oenema said that economic data are always needed but resource use will become increasingly important. There is a need to create Working Groups or Task Forces to identify approaches, these should be stepwise, perhaps with Tier approach. Eurostat should create guidelines, as for example UNFCCC.

Tania Runge from Copa-Cogeca agreed that we need to measure the impact of the CAP on the environment. However, today the actions that farmers are taking to reduce pollution are not visible in the data, for example because countries do not go

to higher Tier levels, often because data are not collected in the proper way. Farmers need assurance that actions taken are taken into account. The potential burden non respondents can be reduced by cooperating with farmers' organisations from an early point.

In reaction from the audience, Ms Laiho-Kauranne from Finland said that there are plenty of challenges in this domain. The Finnish experiences in cooperating with farmers' unions have been very good, the information coming through them in both directions is very important.

Mr Carvalho from Portugal agreed to the exhaustive list of data needs, but asked for prioritisation, a task for the users of the data. He confirmed that communication with administrations must be improved, but at the same time concepts and definitions used in both statistics and administrative registers must be harmonised. He also asked for information on what kind of data DG ENV collects. He reminded that collaborating with farmers doesn't mean only to inform them about coming surveys, but is larger than this.

Ms Brand from Germany suggested that a Task Force with CLIMA might be a good idea. She also reminded that the needs presented are not new, they have been there for more than 15 years. Many of the data were also collected in the SAPM. It is important not to change priorities without proper analyses, the present statistics are collected for a reason.

Mr Hjulsager from Denmark said that the combination of data sources must be made on national level, whereas the Commission must focus on creating coherent and improved concepts, definitions and units. He also said that statistical output must meet demands put forward but asked whether it is certain that there is a real demand for all present statistics.

Mr Laczynski from Poland reminded about the importance of time series in statistics, so new or changed variables should not be introduced on a whim.

Mr Teurlay from France suggested that some countries that already have a good experience in particular areas could serve as poles of competencies, to serve other countries.

Mr Díaz Muñoz conceded that the IACS Task Force that had met on 22 October had a slightly biased composition, and needed to be extended. Eurostat will continue working with DG ENV, CLIMA, AGRI, JRC to ensure that all data flows are known. Users will have to accept that not all needed data will be available, there is also a trade-off between quality and response burden. He reminded that the FSS will provide much of the needed information. Graduality is important, planning for 2020 means that some data should be made available by 2015. He considered the idea put forward by France very good, this is in the line of the ESSnet approach of Eurostat.

10. The Chair drew the following conclusions from the seminar the following day in the CPSA:

- There is important progress in presenting data needs for different policies linked to environment, climate change and agriculture.
- We need to see to what extent what we are delivering and plan to deliver under the new FSS to meet these demands. Considerations about temporal, spatial and level of detail (Tier level) have to be taken into account.

- We need a holistic view on data deliveries under different frameworks (examples: Water Framework Directive, LU/LC information, Resource efficiency indicators)
- Main gaps have to be identified. **Possible action.**
- Several levels of details of information can be envisaged (Tier 1- Tier 3 example)
- Gradual approach through priority setting can be envisaged (two waves of AEI example)
- Synergies with administrative sources must be exploited to the maximum. The work of the current TF on IACS/FADN should be pursued ensuring a good spread of MS participation and stakeholder representation. There is now an opportunity to work with the CAP that is under scrutiny for adaption.
- Clear message to users that while many of the needs are feasible now or in the medium term, others are not and proxies or more limited information (tier 1 type) should be used. Also gradual development will enrich the information available.
- A certain trade-off between data quality and burden reduction must be envisaged.
- The role of farmers associations in improving quality of responses is important, especially the role of communication in this context and feedback to data providers (i.e. farmers).
- Cooperation between MS could be enhanced. Possibility to use Competence Centers (concept to be refined) for this purpose. **Possible action.**
- Pursue the exchange of good practices between MS. **Possible action.**
- Possible set up of a TF with the policy makers responsible of Climate Change legislation. **Possible action.**
- Statisticians need to be involved very early in development process of policies to ensure that concepts and definitions of envisaged data are harmonized and data provision can be optimized.