

Annex II to Doc. CPSA/SB/692

General conclusions of the exercise on burden assessment of the existing FSS variables

(Numbers of variables specified below accordingly to the list included in Annex I)

I. General characteristics

- This group of characteristics in general doesn't seem particularly problematic
- The information on location of the holding seems to be easily obtainable for some countries, while very difficult for others
- Information on legal personality of the holding (variables 3-8) seem to be difficult to obtain for certain countries (UK, LT, MT) due to the fact that the questions need to be collected by interviewer, as are not understood by farmers
- Information on organic farming (14-30) is indicated as difficult to obtain by ES due to difficulty with the unit and the concept
- Variables 31 and 32 (more than 50% of production self-consumed, sale to consumer more than 50% of total sales of the holding) are indicated as very difficult by considerable number of countries

II. Land – Arable land

- The information on area of arable land by type of crops seems overall relatively easy to obtain by the countries
- However ES, LT and MT indicate difficulties with obtaining these variables due to the need for personal interview

III. Livestock

- The information on amounts of cattle and pigs seems overall relatively easy to obtain by the countries
- However ES and LT notify of higher burden related to obtaining this information due to the need for personal interview and the fact that farmers only consider the livestock of their own property
- BE seems to have higher burden related to obtaining information on sheep and goats, however no reason for this was provided
- The information on numbers of poultry seems to have a slightly higher burden than in case of other livestock (however overall still the burden for poultry is average/normal)
- ES, LT and BE indicate higher burden for obtaining information on poultry due to the fact that it needs to be collected by an interviewer

IV. Machinery and equipment

- Level of difficulty of obtaining the information on machinery and equipment is varied among the countries: for some these variables seem to have an average burden, while for others they are indicated to be on the difficult side. Some reasons for the difficulty are related to the following:
 - lack of precision of the characteristics (problems with understanding the definitions and concepts)
 - the farmers don't distinguish between the equipment used on the holding and outside
 - it is difficult for farmers (also for interviewers) to group agricultural machinery into the 4 specified groups

- questions are not easily understood by farmers and require personal interview
- presence of another question on energy in the OGA section is a source of confusion and can lead to farmers answering one part incorrectly

V. Labour Force

- Variables related to farm work on the holding (V(i)) are indicated as difficult by a large number of countries. Some reasons for the difficulty are related to the following:
 - questions not well understood by farmers, requiring personal interview
 - large burden for the respondents, especially for ones with high number of employees
 - farmers often do not indicate non-family employees working in the farm without contracts and it is difficult to find and correct such errors
 - farmers find it difficult to fill out hours worked
 - problems with definitions
 - AWU concept can be difficult to apply as many agricultural workers regularly work more than the required hours (also for non-salaried workers potential bias associated with when data is collected)
 - there are particular work arrangements specific for certain countries
 - often difficult to separate agricultural and non-agricultural working hours on the farm, high leads to a lot of errors that have to be resolved by contacting respondents
 - self-assessment by the respondents - risk of not reliable information
 - difficulty to demarcate regular and non regular labour force – lack of willingness of farmers to read complex definitions
 - difficulty in estimating full time working days, because some services are invoiced differently (e.g. per hectare)
 - it is difficult to determine the days worked for 12 month backwards
 - data collected could be misleading because of the difficulty to measure the exact time the farmer spent on the holding
 - very complex - the respondent must transpose the hours worked into AWUs, difficult to apply in self-enumeration questionnaire (postal or online form)
 - the unit makes it difficult to obtain the information, calculations necessary in the case of small farms
 - in case of smaller holdings it is hard to measure the working time (the agricultural works are closely connected with housework)
 - older persons tend to overestimate their working time
 - in case of regular employees it is hard to report only working time used for agricultural works and exclude that used for other works
 - in small farms (households) there is no evidence of worked hours
 - the number of working hours of labour force is usually not recorded on the farm and is often difficult to estimate
 - often difficult to separate agricultural / non-agricultural working hours on the farm leads to a lot of errors that have to be resolved by contacting respondents
- Variables related to other gainful activities (V(ii)) are very difficult to obtain for vast majority of the countries, among others for the following reasons:
 - questions are not well understood by farmers, need for personal interview
 - respondents refuse to answer the questions concerning the spouse of the holder when he/she does not work in the holding

- problem with farmers working 100% AWU and still having OGA; farmers very reluctant to answer questions on OGA particularly for the spouse or other family members as it may not be related to the holding
- farmers do not understand the reason for collecting this information.
- difficult to define the difference between agricultural work and other work if in the same business; in some countries there is a big difference between self-employment and employment so difficult to combine the two
- nearly impossible to check and verify the obtained data for plausibility
- concept and definition problems
- very complex question, hard to provide concise definitions, which farmers are willing to read; high risk to confuse the farmers
- unwillingness of the farmer to reveal this information; unreliable data
- very complex question - in case of big families - collecting so detailed information makes the interview very long
- very confusing since OGA is surveyed in relation to the holding and also to the labour force
- it is sometimes hard to determine whether the other gainful activity is or is not related to the holding
- not clear how the other gainful activities should be reported if the holder has several activities of which one is and the other is not related to the holding
- these are characteristics that must be methodically adjusted - these questions should not be answered by subsistence farms
- difficulties related to the classification of certain social groups (eg. pensioners, unemployed)

VI. Other Gainful Activities of the holding

- Variables related to other gainful activities of the holding are overall rather difficult to obtain for the countries, for the following reasons:
 - poorly understood by farmers
 - problems with definitions
 - difficulty with distinguishing between activities directly related to the holding or not
 - need for a personal interview
 - difficulty with the unit, because for many farmers the work on the holding includes not only farm work but also all gainful activities even if the holding is for tax or other reasons split up among two or more persons
 - Data must be collected for each farm member; subjective answers from farmers
 - unwillingness of the farmer to reveal this information; unreliable data
 - increasingly difficult to assess; more and more activities are placed in separate legal entities and are not regarded gainful activities of the holding, or because of fear of imposts
- In particular variable 186 (% of OGA in the final output of the holding) is very difficult to obtain for the countries, due to the fact that:
 - very few farmers can provide this information with a degree of accuracy
 - difficult to distinguish between activities directly and indirectly related to the holding
 - question not understood by farmers
 It's difficult in the case where there is another entity created by the farm; risk of inconsistency with FADN in this case
 - difficult to determine/estimate the ratio in particular for small farms
 - subjective and difficult answer for farmers, information not reliable

- these questions should not be answered by subsistence farms

VII. Support for Rural Development

- Overall there normal/average burden related to obtaining data in this section
- However for certain countries (in particular UK, ES, IT and BE) this section causes difficulties due to:
 - often data extracted from administrative sources and matching this data to the other FSS components is problematic
 - agri-environment payment data is collected by agreement number
 - one holding might have numerous agreements with different start and end dates
 - where the holding is part of a larger business, the agreements can be at the business level and span a number of (and not necessarily all) holdings
 - difficulty with the concept
 - many farms do not answer because they have not introduced directly the requests
 - although obtained from administrative sources, requires extra complex processing