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DOC FSS WG/2015/1/MINUTES  
DOC CROP WG/2015/1/MINUTES

**Meetings of the  
Working Group Structure of Agricultural Holdings  
and  
Working Group Crop Statistics  
Luxembourg, 12-14 October 2015**

**FINAL MINUTES**

Available at

<https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/6fdae406-1e87-4f35-a6af-9d36dc1c1a70>  
<https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/a63ea622-df6e-41a9-97ae-50622149c10a>

## Day 1: WG Structure of Agricultural Holdings (FSS)

### 1. Registration

The participants registered for the FSS WG meeting.

### 2. Opening

Eurostat welcomed the participants, informed them about the content, objectives and practical arrangements of the meeting, and thanked them for their useful input during the Exchange of Views. The next FSS WG meeting is scheduled to take place in April 2016.

### 3. Adoption of the agenda for the FSS WG meeting (Doc. FSS WG/2015/1/03)

The agenda was approved without changes.

### 4. Adoption of the minutes of the meeting held on 24.-25.02.2014 (Doc. FSS WG/2015/1/04)

The minutes of the last FSS WG meeting were approved without further changes.

## FSS 2013

### 5. Overview of the grant payments for FSS 2013 (Doc. FSS WG/2015/1/05)

Eurostat informed about the status of the balance payments for the grants on FSS 2013 and the related status of the dataset and National Methodological Report (NMR) acceptance. For twenty Member States the deliverables have been validated and the final balance has already been paid or the payment procedure can start upon receipt of the request for payment. For six Member States validation is still on-going, hence the payment procedure cannot be launched. One Member State did not yet deliver the NMR and is significantly delayed.

#### Discussion (1 intervention by 1 country):

A country suggested publishing the available NMR information on the Eurostat website.

#### Conclusion:

Eurostat intends to pay the final balance to all Member States before the end of 2015, subject to acceptance of the NMR and datasets. In order to facilitate a smooth processing of payments towards the end of the year, beneficiaries are requested to prepare all the accompanying documents for the request for payment, so that they can be submitted a.s.a.p. once the validation is completed.

Eurostat will analyse two options for the publication of the NMRs: 1) as pdf documents or 2) as html pages (as they are in the Metadata Handler application). Eurostat will publish the available NMRs as soon as possible.

## 6. Validation of micro-data

Eurostat presented the workflow for the validation of FSS 2013 micro-data, identifying the Standard Output coefficients as the main bottleneck for the validation process, and the identification and changes of non-existing and non-significant characteristics as a secondary bottleneck.

Eurostat reported that the micro-data validation process improved a lot from FSS2010 in terms of number of redeliveries, thanks to the use by NSIs of the standalone validation tool developed by Eurostat (based on EDIT), or similar implementation of validation rules at NSIs. In FSS2013 a new version of control tables was created to make the check easier.

Validation of coordinates in FSS2013 was made easier by introducing tolerances based on both rounding and the precision of the GIS layer used for the comparison.

A schema showing how the microdata file should be organized in order to support data using 2 extrapolation factors was shown.

The Data Suppliers Manual for FSS2016 was made available on CircaBC in September. Validation rules are still draft, as some of them need to be reformulated as they were too strict or too different between countries in FSS2013. They will also be classified based on severity (error, warning, information).

### Discussion (3 interventions by 2 countries):

Two countries thanked Eurostat for its efforts. A country asked Eurostat to validate data faster in future surveys.

### Conclusion:

The Working Group welcomed Eurostat's FSS micro-data validation efforts.

The Working Group thanked Slovenia for sharing the SAS validation tool.

The Working Group asked Eurostat to validate the FSS 2016 more promptly and upon receipt of data transmitted.

## 7. Validation of National Methodological Reports (Doc. FSS WG/2015/1/07)

Eurostat presented the procedure used for validating the National Methodological Reports (NMRs). Given the large scope of the document, the presentation focused on some important common methodological problems identified and set out several proposals.

### Discussion (8 interventions by 7 countries):

Several countries appreciated Eurostat's detailed work that allowed moving towards solving important methodological problems. Countries raised the following main issues (in no particular order):

- The characteristic "More than 50% of the final value of production is self-consumed by the holder and family" is problematic, should be dropped in the future and replaced with model-based estimation.

- Only eligible livestock should be recorded and only active farms should be covered. Ineligible holdings (inactive, under all thresholds etc.) should be reported in the NMR.
- Eurostat should inform users when data is not comparable.
- Quality criteria for dissemination are needed not only for geographical levels lower than NUTS2 but also for other breakdowns, as well as for geographical levels higher than NUTS2.
- Estimates from data collected on non-significant (NS) characteristics have a very low quality level.
- A procedure should be defined so as to avoid detecting collected NS characteristics needing SO coefficients only at a later stage.
- Unutilised agricultural areas (e.g. forest areas) should be included in the common land, and they are often integral parts of the common land units in some countries.
- Permanent crops, e.g. orchards, can be harvested in a common land framework.
- Sometimes deviation from a single reference date for livestock is needed to get structural information or to facilitate recalling of accurate information by respondents.
- Thresholds of for example 0.5 ha or 1 ha for kitchen gardens are suitable for warning rules.
- It is relevant to add new characteristics (eligible for the EU) such as bulb forcing together with their standard output (SO) coefficients, as they are an economic reality for specific countries. The NMR workload can be high due to the required detailed quality reporting, so more time for analysis and discussion with regional experts may be needed; changes to the template are welcome, but should be in line with the 2013 version. Receiving the next template by mid-2016 would be good for preparing the FSS 2016.
- A deadline for delivery of NMR one month later than the deadline for the data would allow preparation of a more accurate NMR.
- The ESS metadata handler should have a possibility for proofreading.
- The NMR reporting interface in the ESS metadata handler is hard to use and some actions (e.g. copying from other documents) are problematic.
- Requirements should be balanced to achieve the overall best result for countries with different levels of resources.

Eurostat replied that:

- It is planned to propose a quality rating system for all breakdowns in the next Working Group that will make distinctions between dissemination without warning, with warning and no dissemination possible. As relative standard errors (RSEs) are expected to be very high for collected NS characteristics, the rating system will indicate that those estimates should not be published.
- Work is planned on the complex issue of eliminating ineligible holdings. Metadata will inform users about comparability problems.
- According to the Regulation, common land is only utilised agricultural land. Common land units are artificial holdings meant to record common land. Other land type of statistical units corresponding to agricultural holdings should be recorded separately. Permanent crops could indeed be harvested in a common right framework, but this is less likely for arable land. Work on the common land issue continues and will be addressed with new characteristics in the FSS 2016 and also in future legislation.
- Thresholds for warning validation rules will be set at a later date after more country responses. Countries should communicate to Eurostat justified cases where warning rules are not respected by the dataset.
- The 2016 NMR template will be produced during next year, based on the 2013 version; the new template with improved guidelines and less redundant requirements will keep the scope of information required, so countries can use it as a basis to start preparing the information.
- The Eurostat IT team is working on improving the ESS metadata handler.

**Conclusion:**

The Working Group welcomed the exhaustive document. Some topics should be tackled in their own documents.

The countries welcomed the new approach for transmitting the NMR and the enhanced validation.

The countries asked to receive the new template and guidelines by mid-2016.

Eurostat will improve the 2016 NMR concerning the guidelines. Countries will be requested to specify the Eurofarm codes in the presentation of thresholds used, to make distinction between definition of holding and survey coverage, to provide the number of agricultural holdings as basis for the relative coverage and to provide information on holdings with standard output equal to 0 euro and with crops not recorded in Eurofarm.

Eurostat will address the requested IT improvements to the ESS metadata handler with its IT team.

Once validation finalises for all countries, Eurostat will bilaterally contact countries on the exclusion of ineligible holdings in 2013 from disseminated final data, with a priority on the removal of ineligible holdings that account for higher shares of population.

Eurostat will add the additional data checks implemented in 2013 as a prototype to the production system for 2016 and will apply the 'warning' micro-data validation rules in 2016. In case these 'warning' rules are broken, countries should provide justifications in a document accompanying the transmission of the dataset.

**8. Methodological project**

Eurostat signed a contract with the company GOPA to analyse the national methodological reports of FSS 2010 and FSS 2013 and issue recommendations on a number of methodological issues. The contract runs from January until November 2015. The contractor presented the first results.

**Discussion (3 interventions by 3 countries):**

Among other issues, countries welcomed standardisation efforts and stated that distributing common land areas among individual agricultural holdings can be difficult; that deciding on what constitutes a non-significant characteristic can be complicated due to a lack of information; that efforts to collect information on FSS headings under which they are recorded are not statistically justified; that assessing the quality of administrative sources is very important and that splitting holding data in more records by NUTS3 region is not feasible and relevant for a structural survey.

Eurostat replied that different approaches on common land areas can affect structural data, but that it will try to find a common approach for the FSS 2020 and beyond; asked countries to provide the usual information on non-significant and non-existent characteristics (and use of administrative data) by end 2015 in the same template used so far and Eurostat will then upload the information in the new template (new tool) and ask countries to check and complete the information; on non-significant characteristics, rough figures e.g. provided by experts are acceptable; even if the template collects some information which is not statistically justified, it aims to gather knowledge and standardise the information; that work on assessing the quality of administrative data is considered, for example from the ESSnet AdminData.

**Conclusion:**

Eurostat will upload the deliverables from the project on CIRCABC as they become ready. Feedback from countries is welcome.

Eurostat is considering the recommendations from the contractor on issuing current and future proposals.

Eurostat takes note that splitting holding data in more records by NUTS3 region is not feasible and relevant for a structural survey.

**9. Standard output validation  
(Doc. FSS WG/2015/1/09)**

Eurostat and DG AGRI informed about the validation of SO coefficients, identified issues and potential adaptations to the methodology and processes: a) experiences: b) need for new guidelines; c) potential tool for data delivery and validation; d) DG AGRI/Eurostat agreement.

**Discussion (3 interventions by 3 countries):**

Countries agreed with the presented approach and asked for clarifications on legal deadlines, the validation workflow, and clearer definitions of several items.

Eurostat and DG AGRI answered that changing legal deadlines is infeasible as the process would take too long; correcting wrong coefficients and calculating backwards can be cumbersome, but is necessary, as the impacts on classifications can be large; and an electronic tool for the collection of the SO coefficients and non-significant and administrative data is planned to be made available during the course of 2016. Some of the information now asked in the NMR will be provided in the information on non-significant characteristics and administrative data.

**Conclusion:**

The countries welcomed the automation of the SO workflow for data transmission and validation and highlighted the need for careful consideration of the costs and benefits of additional checks and revisions.

At the moment, deadlines for submission of the data cannot be changed as they are enshrined in relevant regulations.

**FSS 2016****10. Grant agreements for FSS 2016  
(Doc. FSS WG/2015/1/10)**

Eurostat presented the state of the call for proposals and evaluations and grants for the FSS 2016.

**Discussion (2 interventions by 2 countries):**

Countries asked for a simultaneous launch of call for proposals to all Member States in the future to allow taking costs into account from the same starting date.

Eurostat replied that the launch of the call for proposals had been split in order to accommodate the requests by the countries, however indeed in the future the call for proposals would be foreseen to be launched for all the applicants at the same time. Concerning the on-going evaluation of the proposals Eurostat asked the countries to respond quickly to the questions to be posed after the grants evaluation committee meeting on October 16.

**Conclusion:**

Eurostat and the Member States will cooperate for a smooth operation of the FSS 2016 grants.

**11. Handbook on implementing the FSS definitions  
(Doc. FSS WG/2015/1/11)**

Eurostat presented a draft version of the Handbook as adapted to the list of characteristics for the FSS 2016 survey (Commission Regulation (EU) No 715/2014) and the subsequent definitions regulation Commission Regulation (EU) 2015/1391. Earlier versions had already been transmitted in the framework of the work on the definitions regulation, and comments from Member States were received. Eurostat had drafted a document with indications on how the comments from countries would be responded to in the final amended Handbook that had been uploaded on CIRCABC. Eurostat therefore considered that Member States had already been able to work on an updated Handbook, albeit not with a final version. Eurostat stressed that the definitions had been finalised much earlier and that explanations in the Handbook are there to give further clarity.

Eurostat explained that work is on-going to combine the FSS handbook and the Data Suppliers Manual into one consistent whole, to avoid duplication of work and to increase coherence. However, this work could not yet be accomplished. The Data Suppliers Manual is already final and had been uploaded on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015 on CIRCABC. It might be complemented for some validation rules in the near future. The Members of the Working Group were invited to comment on the updated FSS handbook.

**Discussion (18 interventions by 11 countries):**

Countries raised several general points:

- The handbook should not override legislation regarding kitchen gardens and references to legislation should be up to date concerning this item.
- Clarifications on permanent grassland, holdings and agricultural activity were requested, particularly their conditions for eligibility for subsidies.
- Clarifications on differences between FSS and Crops Statistics were requested, e.g. on energy crops, age brackets of the labour force, and on differences between the Handbook and the CAP regulation.
- Countries were requested to provide detailed written feedback until 31<sup>st</sup> October. Eurostat committed to update the Handbook by the end of November incorporating the comments provided during the meeting and received in writing by end October..
- Eurostat and DG AGRI took note of the comments and replied that permanent grassland kept in good agricultural and environmental condition is a basis for receiving subsidies, as agricultural activity means producing agricultural products, or maintaining assets in a state suitable for production easily, or with some effort. Moreover, despite differences in energy crops between FSS and Crops Statistics, there is a common understanding.

On specific chapters of the new combined handbook, the following comments and replies were offered:

- Holdings: Countries requested clarification on what constitutes a holding. For example, applying for subsidies should not turn a kitchen garden into a holding.
- General characteristics: Countries asked for more clarity on the location of holdings. Eurostat replied that the main agricultural building is seen as the most appropriate location, with this definition applying where relevant, but that there is no clear priority among the suggested methods listed.
- Land: Countries requested clear criteria on subsidies for land that does not produce anything. DG AGRI and Eurostat replied that land needs minimum activity and possibly other criteria, as defined by the countries, to be eligible for subsidies. More clarification will be given soon.
- Livestock: Countries asked for clarification on reference dates for livestock, and a question on horses. Eurostat replied that the relevant legislation mentions as reference a day for the livestock, but that for farms where stables are empty due to short, temporary breaks in the production, the normal or average number of animals during the year could be recorded, as the FSS needs to give correct information on structure, not animal production. As to horses, only those used for meat production or leisure activity of the farm household should be included. Further clarification will be provided soon.
- Labour force: Eurostat explained that the changes aim at correcting previous gaps in the handbook.
- Other gainful activities of the holding: Eurostat will clarify the recording requirements for these data when written comments have been provided.
- Support for rural development: Some written comments are expected to be sent regarding this issue.
- Soil and manure management practices: Eurostat explained differences in areas excluded for different concepts.
- Production methods: Eurostat is working on validation rules for production methods and welcomes further input.

**Conclusion:**

The Working Group approved changes to the Handbook with several comments and will send further written comments until October 31<sup>st</sup>.

Eurostat will provide an updated version until the end of November.

## 12. NUTS changes

Eurostat presented the updates to NUTS and the impact on FSS.

**Conclusion:**

Seven countries will have to provide back-casting by the end of 2016.

## 13. Information exchange between the countries on issues related to FSS

The countries brought up issues to be discussed in the context of the on-going or future FSS for an exchange of experience and discussion between experts, based on a list of issues sent beforehand.



**Discussion (1 intervention by 1 country):**

Eurostat explained that producing entities not receiving subsidies can still be included in the FSS, while entities receiving subsidies can be excluded if they fall below a threshold; the concept of less favoured areas will be discussed further.

**14. Any other business**

There was no other business.

The meeting concluded at 17:10.

## Day 2: Joint Meeting for WG FSS and WG Crops Statistics

### 1. Registration

The participants registered for the joint FSS WG and Crops Statistics WG meeting.

### 15./2. Opening

Eurostat welcomed the participants, informed them about the content, objectives and practical arrangements of the meeting, and thanked them for their useful input during the Exchange of Views.

### 16./3. Adoption of the agenda for the Crop Statistics WG meeting

**(Doc. FSS WG/2015/1/16, Doc. CROP WG/2015/1/03)**

The agenda for the Crop Statistics WG meeting was approved without changes.

### 17./4. Agricultural Statistics Strategy 2020

**(Doc. FSS WG/2015/1/17, Doc. CROP WG/2015/1/04)**

Eurostat informed about the progress with the Strategy for Agricultural Statistics 2020 and beyond. The strategy was endorsed by the DGAS meeting on 30 June 2015 and will be submitted to the ESSC meeting in November 2015. Eurostat also informed about the Impact Assessment for the Strategy which was launched in June 2015.

#### Discussion (6 interventions by 6 countries):

Countries asked for more details on how to, as stated in the strategy objectives, “produce more and better statistics without increasing the burden”, and on the plans for the unique farm identifier. A country stated that the impact assessment should be neutral towards the options and not present foregone conclusions.

#### Conclusions:

Eurostat will provide more details and open discussions on the burden of agricultural statistics and unique farm identifier.

Eurostat confirmed that the impact assessment will flow from problems to options openly.

Input from some countries is likely needed for the burden estimation which is part of the Impact Assessment. The concerned countries will be contacted by Eurostat.

### 18./5. First draft proposal for the Framework Regulation on Integrated Farm Statistics (IFS)

**(Doc. FSS WG/2015/1/18, Doc. CROP WG/2015/1/05)**

Eurostat presented the first draft proposal for the new legal architecture of Agricultural Statistics with a focus on the very first preliminary draft proposal for the Framework Regulation on Integrated Farm Statistics (IFS) (scope, list of characteristics, thresholds, etc.)

#### Discussion (47 interventions by 15 countries):

Comments were structured around four general areas.

## General comments including recitals

The ambition of the project in changing methods, contents and legal instruments while remaining burden-neutral was seen as challenging and requiring more consultation with the countries and more time to scrutinise drafts. More information on the scope of the surveys, confidentiality, unique farm identifiers and precision issues was requested. Several countries requested to hold additional meetings and/or task forces to work on the details of the proposal.

Several countries saw reducing the burden of data provision as a main goal of the new legislation. The flexible core and module approach was supported, provided the core is kept small and precision requirements do not increase the burden. Several individual variables were seen as hard to collect.

Eurostat replied that the timing constraints of the project do not allow for many more meetings, but that the European Commission has foreseen written consultations instead in order to collect the inputs and feedback from the WG and DGAS members in the process of preparation of the legal text. DG AGRI reminded the Working Group that the EU agricultural budget cannot be defended if there are no agricultural statistics at EU level. Regarding the question if there is any fallback position if the project fails due to timing constraints Eurostat answered that Scenario 1 will be applied then. One country stated that Scenario 2 would be a preferable option.

## Chapter 1 – General provisions (Art. 1-5)

Countries asked for more information on the scope and coverage of Article 3, the suggested different scopes, e.g. excluding kitchen gardens and including orchards and vineyards, and provided editorial comments meant to increase the clarity, precision and coherence of the regulation. More discussion on thresholds was requested, e.g. to preserve time series. Several countries stated that the unique farm identifier would be a lot of work and could lead to confidentiality problems. It was further suggested to remove the labour force or alternatively the animal housing and irrigation modules from the 2020 census, as the workload was seen as too high. Several reference periods should be changed as they would otherwise be unworkable. Some countries would like to request derogation on the reference year of the agricultural census to avoid overlaps with their population census in 2021. One country suggested conducting only one structural survey in between decennial censuses and thus reduce frequency. Several Scandinavian countries asked to make data collection on reindeer husbandry voluntary. Article 4 (on the usage of administrative data) should be worded identically to the existing Regulation 1166/2008, and it should be clarified how to assess the quality of administrative data. Lastly, countries requested more discussion on using IACS data.

Eurostat welcomed support on the final formulation of articles. The question of whether to include or exclude kitchen gardens is still open. As to the coverage rules, they should be less complex than now and exclude units below certain thresholds, which need to be detailed so not to exclude significant holdings. The suggested changes to reference periods for animals are meant to include their offspring. Regarding the request on including all farms in IACS, Eurostat stated that knowing the structure of units receiving subsidies is important. DG AGRI added that using IACS data is not an obligation and that using the unique farm identifier should help make life easier for data providers. Micro-data will not be disseminated by Eurostat, so there should be no confidentiality problems.

## Chapter 2 – Farm statistics (Art. 6-10)

Several countries preferred implementing acts to delegated acts and suggested spelling out some technical details and definitions in the framework regulation. Conditions for delegated acts should be more detailed, and more information given on modules. The deadline for delivering census data should

be extended to 18 months, and reference periods should also be changed in this section, e.g. in Article 9.

Eurostat replied that it is foreseen at the moment to subject the possible changes in the list of characteristics to control by the countries via an implementing act to control the burden of data provision according to an objective methodology to be established. Definitions of the characteristics could be possibly argued to be defined by an implementing act and this option should be consulted with the lawyers. One additional possibility to consider is whether the definitions need to be specified in the legal act or whether a technical document (like the Handbook) could be sufficient. Precision requirements will be kept for the core, but relaxed for modules and satellites: under these conditions and assuming a common sampling design, Eurostat will estimate the sample sizes required to fulfil precision requirements during next months.

#### Annex I – List of characteristics

Countries asked for more information on the characteristic on producer organisation memberships and why public institutions are included in the list of legal personalities. Farm locations could better be expressed with a grid, e.g. INSPIRE, than with geographical coordinates which could infringe confidentiality. Some clarifications on terms and definitions were requested, e.g. the classification of permanent grasslands. Countries also asked about the status of organic data collection, what irrigation data are used for and why some questions are posed only in a yes/no format. Some countries pointed out that collecting grazing on common lands in hours per day is not realistic. Countries also asked for the addition of new characteristics such as bulb forcing, since it has been suggested to add a SO coefficient for this production.

Eurostat will look at the suitability of the INSPIRE grid and get back to the countries on organic data. Public institutions are included because some countries have indicated the existence of such units that are not competing in the agricultural market in the same way as other legal units are. Irrigation data are important as agriculture is one of the heaviest water users. Detailed farm level information is important to calibrate several models.

DG AGRI added that the yes/no questions are included for structural, not quantitative information. Data on farm managers is needed as they are the principal decision-makers on holdings. The Commission supports producer organisation membership and wants to know whether it makes a difference in farm returns.

#### **Conclusion:**

Eurostat takes note of the feedback provided by the countries in the exchange of views as well as during the meeting and the countries will send further written comments on the regulation until October 31<sup>st</sup>.

Eurostat will proceed towards internal consultations and preparation of a revised version of the draft regulation text, taking as much as possible suggestions of the countries on board. It is foreseen to have a written consultation of the Working Groups and DGAS members early in 2016. The countries will be notified of the foreseen consultation dates in advance and will have two weeks to react, endeavouring to send concrete proposals and formulations.

**19./6. Proposal for the integration of Orchard and Vineyard survey into IFS  
(Doc. FSS WG/2015/1/19, Doc. CROP WG/2015/1/06)**

The new strategy includes a proposal to integrate the Orchard and Vineyard surveys (Regulation (EC) No 1337/2011) into the IFS Framework Regulation. Eurostat presented the reasons for the proposal, a detailed comparison of the current data collections and the proposed one, and the likely impact of the proposal.

**Discussion (18 interventions by 15 countries):**

The proposal to collect less detailed breakdown of the data was welcomed by several countries. Some countries asked why the focus is proposed to be moved from area to the holdings. Some were sceptical about whether the burden will be reduced if micro data instead of tabular data are to be collected and whether integration can help to reduce the burden, particularly as the data are proposed to be representative at NUTS 2 level. Some countries stated that it is very difficult or even impossible to provide micro data as the sources do not allow that (administrative sources with different units without a common identifier, area frame surveys or that the burden of micro-data editing is much bigger than in providing tabular data). Several countries expressed their view that the vineyard register should be kept as the only data source for the vineyard survey. Several countries pointed out that they have only very small orchard or vineyard area and requested higher thresholds in order not to increase the burden. Two countries supported the proposal in its entirety as it ensures better coherence with other structural data. Several countries criticised the envisaged switchover from secondary statistics to more burdensome primary statistics. One country will already integrate the orchard survey of 2016 in the FSS 2016.

Eurostat and DG AGRI replied that orchard and vineyard data are structural data and therefore fit with the aim of creating a framework regulation. The proposed reduction of data to be collected on one hand and the proposed delivery of micro data at lower regional level meets better the current needs. The proposed integration of the orchard and vineyard surveys as modules in the IFS would allow better harmonisation of the data and more thorough analysis of the sector as more contextual data would be available. The burden is planned to be reduced by lowering the frequency of data collection and eliminating a large number of characteristics. The vineyard register will remain as an obligation for the 15 main wine-producing countries, but it is not required from some countries which need to deliver the vineyard survey data to Eurostat. For this reason too other data sources need to be allowed.

**Conclusion:**

Eurostat took note of the feedback provided by the countries in the exchange of views as well as during the meeting.

The countries were invited to send further written comments on the draft regulation until October 31<sup>st</sup>.

Eurostat continues the elaboration of the Orchard and Vineyard surveys in the context of the Framework regulations. DG AGRI will analyse the thresholds needed for both surveys. An updated version of the proposal will be integrated into the next IFS proposal which will be made available to the countries in early 2016.

**20./7. Common methodological basis for Integrated Farm Statistics (IFS) and Statistics on Agricultural Input and Output (SAIO)**  
**(Doc. FSS WG/2015/1/20, Doc. CROP WG/2015/1/07)**

Eurostat reported on the future plans concerning the joint methodological basis for Integrated Farm Statistics (IFS) and Statistics on Agricultural Input and Output (SAIO), including common definitions, classifications and other methodological issues.

**Discussion (8 interventions by 5 countries):**

The elaboration of a common methodological basis for the IFS and SAIO was welcomed. Some countries asked if the Economic Accounts for Agriculture (EAA) and the Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN) are planned to be covered by the common methodological basis and common codes. Countries asked for more information on the next steps. Some countries underlined the fact that statistical micro data can not be disseminated outside the statistical offices.

Eurostat replied that EAA will remain out of IFS and SAIO as they are a satellite of national accounts. The EAA will also be reformed in the future. Despite not being part of IFS And SAIO, the EAA should use as much as possible the common classification and definitions. DG AGRI replied that the definitions of the FSS and FADN are already aligned. Some countries also use the same data for both FADN and FSS (for those years when both are available).

**Conclusion:**

Eurostat will continue working on a common methodological basis for IFS and SAIO in co-operation with the countries and DG AGRI.

**21./8. Cross validation of the FSS and Annual Crops Statistics data**  
**(Doc. FSS WG/2015/1/21, Doc. CROP WG/2015/1/08)**

Eurostat has validated the 2013 FSS data against the 2013 final Annual Crop Statistics data. It presented the validation criteria, the results of the validation work and the plans for future cross-domain validation activities.

**Discussion:**

There was no discussion on this point.

**Conclusion:**

The Working Group took note of the results and supports further analyses to reduce data discrepancies.

**22./9. Any other business**

There was no other business.

The meeting concluded at 17:00.

## Day 3: WG Crops Statistics

### 10. Minutes of the Crop Statistics Working Group Meeting held on 22-23 October 2014 (Doc. ASA/PE/817)

The Minutes of the Crops Statistics WG meeting held on 22-23 October 2014 have been approved in a written procedure.

## Annual Crop Statistics

### 11. Updated regulatory basis: Commission Delegated Regulation 2015/1557 and the ESS agreement on annual crop statistics (Doc. CROP WG/2015/1/11)

Eurostat presented the Commission Delegated Regulation amending the annex of Regulation EC (No) 543/2009 and the ESS agreement on annual crop statistics.

#### Discussion (4 interventions by 4 countries):

Cyprus, Greece and Luxembourg asked for corrections in the list of participatory institutions in the ESS agreement.

#### Conclusion:

Eurostat will update the list of participating institutions in the ESS agreement based on the received comments.

### 12. Progress report on the implementation of Regulation (EC) No 543/2009 (Doc. CROP WG/2015/1/12)

Eurostat reported on the progress made since the last Working Group Meeting. This item included among other issues new crop codes, new flags, new Web-Forms, yield reporting, quality control activities and dissemination policy.

#### Discussion (5 interventions by 5 countries):

Several countries welcomed the renewed data flow and clarified code lists as they will make the data flow more efficient and transparent. The quality of the data is expected to improve. Some countries expressed a wish to have a training session (e.g. a Webinar) on the use of new Web-Forms (including flags and non-significant crops). Some technical problems on the Web-Forms were reported (e.g. the decimal separator, printing facilities). A question was posed on the correct use of flags and on yield calculation.

#### Conclusion:

Eurostat will organise a Webinar on new Web-Forms. The date will be communicated later.

The data quality in general and in particular the yield data will be analysed in 2016.

**13. Handbook for Annual Crop Statistics, rev. 2016 (Regulation (EC) No 543/2009)  
(Doc. CROP WG/2015/1/13)**

Eurostat presented the draft "Handbook for Annual Crop Statistics" rev. 2016. The 2016 version of the Handbook is based to a large extent on the 2015 version. However, several definitions have been clarified. Particular attention was drawn to the new annex on validation rules implemented in the Web-Forms and in the Eurostat data processing platform. Eurostat explained the background of the new validation rules. Some data transmission principles and the use of flags were clarified. The countries were given guidelines how to start working on the annex on country specific notes. Eurostat made a proposal for the next steps necessary for publishing the new version of the Handbook in January 2016.

**Discussion (8 interventions by 7 countries):**

The delegates thanked Eurostat for the efforts to improve the Handbook and to implement the new definitions and data flow. They welcomed the new validation rules and made some proposals for further validation actions (e.g. cross-domain validations). Several questions were posed on the use of flags and on the reporting of non-significant crops. A template was proposed to be made available for the country notes annex.

**Conclusion:**

Eurostat will implement additional validation rules in the data processing platform as soon as possible. They will be added to the validation annex of the handbook.

Eurostat will draft a template for the country notes and provide it to the countries by the end of October.

The countries need to start working on the existing country notes or, in case they do not exist yet, drafting them according to the new template. The countries shall finalise the country notes in cooperation with Eurostat by mid-December.

All other comments to the Handbook shall be sent to Eurostat by 27 November 2015 at the latest.

Eurostat will update and finalize the Handbook according to the contributions of the countries by January 2016 and release it on CIRCABC.

**14. Compliance assessment  
( Doc. CROP WG/2015/1/14)**

Eurostat presented the results of the compliance monitoring for Annual Crop Statistics (Regulation (EC) No 543/2009) and for the wine Supply Balance Sheets (Commission Regulation (EC) No 436/2009). The assessment covered completeness, punctuality and quality. It also included an analysis of voluntary data provision for annual crop statistics (Gentlemen's/ESS agreements).

**Discussion (3 interventions by 3 countries):**

The delegates informed Eurostat about the delivery of missing data sets and other non-compliance issues. It was pointed out that the detailed annex accompanying the compliance document contained errors.

**Conclusion:**

Eurostat took note of the delivery plans for the missing data sets.



An updated version of the data annex will be uploaded to CIRCABC.

Eurostat will be in contact with countries with persistent compliance problems.

## **15. Information session on humidity content (Doc. CROP WG/2015/1/15)**

Eurostat informed about the need of humidity degree data and about the applicable methodologies for assessing it for crops and especially for plants harvested green. Austria, France and Sweden presented the national methods for estimating the humidity degrees of harvested crops.

### **Discussion (1 intervention by 1 country):**

The delegates appreciated the information on methodological background, the guidance on estimation procedures and the very informative presentations of practical methods used in Austria, France and Sweden.

The delegates agreed on the need of humidity data for making the production and yield data meaningful and useful in the European context, although the estimation of humidity degree especially for the 'plants harvested green from arable' is challenging.

### **Conclusion:**

The Working Group thanked the delegates from Austria, France and Sweden for the very informative presentations.

Eurostat continues to check the availability of humidity degree data and will contact bilaterally the countries whose data are still missing. As the new Web-Forms are also now in use for previous years, the countries were kindly asked to start delivering the missing figures for the time range from 2000 to present.

The delegates agreed to start delivering the humidity degree data with early yield and production figures starting from August year n, if available. In case no data on humidity degree are available at that time, the delegates confirmed that Eurostat may use an average of the previous three years. The EU-aggregates for production can be calculated on European standard humidity level only when information on humidity degree is available.

Eurostat will add further methodological information on humidity degree estimation to the Handbook 2016.

## Supply Balance Sheets

### 16. Status of the re-launch of the Supply Balance Sheets (SBS) for main cereals, oil seeds and rice (Doc. CROP WG/2015/1/16)

Eurostat presented the progress with the re-introduction of the SBS data collection for main cereals, oilseeds and rice, including methodological preparations and the legal proposal presented in the DGAS meeting. The updated schedule indicated that the preparations for the re-launch have been postponed by one year (until mid-2016) in order to make the new Handbooks available to the countries.

#### Discussion (9 interventions by 7 countries):

DG AGRI and the JRC underlined the importance of the SBS data for international commitments, market monitoring (e.g. the short and mid-term Outlooks) and impact assessments. DG AGRI proposed a voluntary inclusion of 'other cereals' in the future SBS data collection. The countries expressed diverging views on the options for regulatory basis: some called for a Commission Regulation based on a direct statistical action and others opposed to it firmly stating that the pre-conditions set for such an action are not met and that thus the action is not possible. The requests reported in the DGAS meeting in June 2015 to postpone the deadline, to consider thresholds and to pre-fill the Web-Forms with the available data were reiterated. Some countries expressed their surprise linked to new needs communicated by DG AGRI (other cereals). The countries asked for sufficient time to analyse the Handbooks before re-starting the negotiations on re-launching the SBS data collection.

#### Conclusion:

Eurostat continues the methodological preparations and analyses carefully the comments. Some countries will be contacted bilaterally early next year for agreeing on contributing the methodological work done for preparing the new Handbooks.

Eurostat will examine the pros and cons of available regulatory options.

## Permanent Crop Statistics

### 17. Vineyard data collection 2015 (Doc. CROP WG/2015/1/17)

Eurostat presented the current status of the Vineyard data collection.

#### Discussion (2 interventions by 2 countries):

A question was posed on the table on p. 14 and the figure on p. 15. They do not seem to be in line with Regulation (EU) No 1337/2011 for the purpose grapes.

#### Conclusion:

Eurostat will investigate the table and figure on p.14-15 of the Handbook and, if necessary, release a corrected version.

The final version of the data transmission files will be made available at latest by Q1 of 2016.

## **18. Any other business**

### **Discussion (1 intervention by 1 country):**

It was proposed to put an item on organic farming on the agenda of the next Crop Statistics Working Group meeting.

### **Conclusion:**

Eurostat informed that the next meeting will take place in April 2016 (date to be decided). As soon as the date is confirmed it will be communicated to the countries. The next meeting will be organised back-to-back with the FSS Working Group meeting.

The meeting concluded at 16:00.