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COUNCIL DECISION
of 25 June 1996
on improving Community agricultural statistics

(96/411/EC)

(OJ L 162, 1.7.1996, p. 14)

Amended by:

		Official Journal		
		No	page	date
►**M1**	Council Decision 98/3/EC of 18 December 1997	L 1	9	3.1.1998
►**M2**	Commission Decision 98/514/EC of 29 July 1998	L 230	28	18.8.1998
►**M3**	Decision No 2298/2000/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 September 2000	L 263	1	18.10.2000

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COUNCIL DECISION

of 25 June 1996

on improving Community agricultural statistics

(96/411/EC)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 43 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission [1],

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament [2],

Having regard to Council Decision 93/464/EEC of 22 July 1993 on the framework programme for priority actions in the field of statistical information 1993 to 1997 [3], and in particular Article 4 (a) thereof,

Whereas the 1993-1997 framework programme envisaged by Decision 93/464/EEC establishes, *inter alia*, the need for better utilization of the resources devoted to agricultural statistics by implementation of the results of a 'screening' operation carried out under the previous statistical programme envisaged by the Council Resolution of 19 June 1989 on the implementation of a plan of priority actions in the field of statistical information: Statistical programme of the European Communities (1989 to 1992) [4];

Whereas this screeening has identified the main aspects of the changes to be incorporated in Community agricultural statistics;

Whereas these changes include some of the main areas where savings may be made and where there are new or increasing needs; whereas these changes should conform to agreed general principles;

Whereas national adaptations have to be coordinated at Community level, in order to ensure that:

(a) data remain sufficiently reliable in the case of each Member State and comparable between Member States;

(b) the changes to Council legislation which may be necessary can be identified, prepared and proposed by the Commission in good time and in addition that the Commission approves implementing rules for Council legislation in good time;

(c) methodological studies by different Member States into efficient ways of meeting the new information needs are appropriate;

(d) the scheduling of national activities takes account of collective Community interest;

(e) the Community financial resources facilitating execution of this programme are used as an addition to other national resources and in the most efficient way;

Whereas the best means of achieving this coordination is within a formal structure which allows the technical constraints and preferences to be considered collectively and choices made which reconcile national and Community interests;

Whereas a financial contribution by the Community to the Member States is necessary, according to their objective needs, to facilitate the adaptations required;

Whereas, to achieve the desired savings, adaptations to the technical implementation of certain surveys may be necessary; whereas such adaptations should be permitted subject to appropriate safeguards;

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[1] OJ No C 336, 14. 12. 1995, p. 6.
[2] Opinion delivered on 24 May 1996 (OJ No C 166, 10. 6. 1996).
[3] OJ No L 219, 28. 8. 1993, p. 1.
[4] OJ No C 161, 28. 6. 1989, p. 1.

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Whereas provision should be made for a possible extension of this Decision in the context of the next framework programme for priority actions in the field of statistical information relating to the period after 1997;

Whereas the distribution of tasks between the Commission and the Member States is fully in accord with the principle of subsidiarity,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

Purpose

In order to improve the way in which Community agricultural statistics meet information needs resulting from the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, Member States shall, within the limits imposed by available resources, take appropriate measures to adapt their national systems of agricultural statistics. In this they will take account of the work areas set out in Annexes I and II hereto, and the objectives, characteristics and criteria given in Annex III.

Article 2

Role of the Commission

The Commission, acting in concert with the Member States, shall:

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(a) define the priority statistical fields, amongst those set out in Annex II, which may be the subject of actions at Member State level for the following year;

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(b) check data quality and comparability;

(c) identify and implement Community-level actions which are important for the purposes of this Decision.

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Article 3

Application time-frame and procedure

The process of adapting Community agricultural statistics provided for in Article 1 shall be continued during the period 2000 to 2002. It shall be coordinated by the Commission through technical action plans as provided for in Article 4. After this period, the European Parliament and the Council may decide to extend the process in accordance with the Commission proposals provided for in Article 11.

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Article 4

Technical action plans for agricultural statistics

1. A technical action plan for agricultural statistics shall be established by the Commission each year in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 10. These plans shall cover the actions to be carried out by the Member States pursuant to Article 1. Available resources shall be used in such a way as to make the greatest possible improvement in the cost-effectiveness of Community agricultural statistics in meeting the requirements of Community law, informal agreements and new information needs.

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Article 5

Member State reports

The Member States shall submit to the Commission:

(a) by 31 May at the latest of each year, a communication setting out their intention, if any, to participate in priority actions for the following year, accompanied by a summary of the plans for implementation and an estimate of costs;

(b) following adoption by the Commission of the technical action plan, a working plan for each action which concerns them;

(c) after completion of each action, a brief report on implementation of the action in which they have participated.

The documents to be submitted pursuant to points (a), (b) and (c) should cover the planned amendments to the methodology of implementation, work to be carried out, difficulties identified and proposals for overcoming them, the national and Community resources to be mobilised and proposals for improvements at Community level. Actions for which Community financial support is required shall be identified as such.

Following the procedure laid down in Article 10, the Commission shall draw up simplified standard forms to facilitate the presentation of the above information.

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Article 6

Financial provisions

1. The Community shall contribute to the costs realized by the Member States in making adaptations to national agricultural statistical systems or to such costs for preparatory work relating to new or increasing needs which are part of a technical action plan.

2. The amount of the contribution for Member States shall be decided each year by the Commission in conjunction with the technical action plan and in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 10.

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3. The contribution shall be paid to the Member States in two instalments, the first of which, equivalent to 30 % of the Community share of the cost of the action, shall be paid as an advance, after notification to and acceptance by the Commission of the working plan for the action in question. The balance shall be paid once the report on implementation of the action by the Member States has been submitted to and approved by the Commission. The Commission shall carry out any on-the-spot checks it deems necessary in cooperation with the competent authorities of the Member States.

4. The financial framework for the implementation of this programme for the period 2000 to 2002 is hereby set at EUR 3 million.

The annual appropriations shall be authorised by the budgetary authority within the limits of the financial perspective.

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Article 7

Flexibility

Where necessary to achieve the purposes of this Decision and for the duration of a technical action plan the Commission, acting in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 10, may approve a Member State's request to be allowed to adapt one or more of the following features of the agricultural statistical surveys listed in Annex IV: regions covered, territorial sub-divisions, definitions, survey methodology, survey date, list of characteristics and size of classes.

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Article 8

Adapting to changing circumstances

The Commission may modify Annex I (statistical areas in which potential savings have been identified) and Annex II (statistical areas where there are new or increasing needs) in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 10. It shall inform the European Parliament and the Council of these modifications.

Article 9

Role of the Standing Committee on Agricultural Statistics

The Standing Committee on Agricultural Statistics set up under Decision 72/279/EEC [1] shall meet at least once a year to discuss the following:

(a) the reports made by the Member States on the execution of the programme in the previous year;

(b) the actions proposed by the Member States for the following year and the outlook for the two years thereafter;

(c) the technical action plan for the following year;

(d) the Community financial contribution provided for in Article 6;

(e) possible changes to Annexes I and II.

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Article 10

1. The Commission shall be assisted by the Standing Committee on Agricultural Statistics, hereinafter referred to as 'the Committee'.

2. Where reference is made to this Article, Articles 4 and 7 of Decision 1999/468/EC shall apply, having regard to the provisions of Article 8 thereof.

The period laid down in Article 4(3) of Decision 1999/468/EC shall be set at three months.

3. The Committee shall adopt its rules of procedure.

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Article 11

Report

Before ►M1 1 November ►M3 2002 ◄ ◄ the Commission, having consulted the Standing Committee on Agricultural Statistics, shall make a report on the progress of this Decision to the European Parliament and to the Council accompanied if necessary by proposals for its extension.

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Article 11a

Database of payments by the EAGGF (Guarantee Section)

The Commission shall continue current feasibility studies to determine the technical possibility of setting up a database relating to the payments made by the EAGGF (Guarantee Section) to include in particular, at the level of each beneficiary, data on the level of aid received, the areas and the number of animals concerned, and the most appropriate computer system for processing such data.

At the latest on 31 December 2001, the Commission shall submit a report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the results of these feasibility studies, and on the resources (technical, financial and human) which would be required to implement the database and to process the data statistically.

[1] OJ No L 179, 7. 8. 1972, p. 2.

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Article 12

This Decision is addressed to the Member States.

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ANNEX I

STATISTICAL AREAS IN WHICH POTENTIAL SAVINGS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED [1]

1. Farm structure surveys: simplification and restructuring of the list of characteristics, particularly for intermediate surveys.
2. Survey on the area under vines: simplification of the programme of statistical tables.
3. Survey on fruit trees: reduction in the obligations relating to intermediate surveys.
4. Agricultural income index: elimination of the first disaggregated estimates in October and elimination of any details of secondary importance.
5. Total income of agricultural households: greater flexibility in frequency and in target concepts.
6. Animal surveys: application of the agriflex concept, i.e. adapting the frequency of the surveys to the numbers of livestock in each country.
7. Dairy statistics: elimination of weekly statistics, elimination of statistics on casein, reduction of certain annual statistics and simplification of statistics on dairy structures.

[1] In the review of agricultural statistics carried out under the Statistical Programme of the European Communities 1989-1992. Some of the savings identified have already been implemented since this exercise started.

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ANNEX II

AREAS WHERE THERE ARE NEW OR INCREASING NEEDS

Topics

1. Farm structure survey: adapting the list of characteristics to take account of new needs.
2. Rapid estimates of sowings and planting intentions at the beginning of the winter for principal crops.
3. Improvement to and rapid provision of the production statistics in certain sectors (fruit and vegetables, wine, eggs and poultry, flowers).
4. Improved statistics on consumption and on stock levels and changes for main products with a view to regular production of supply balances at the European level.
5. Livestock feed: overcoming certain delays in the fodder balances.
6. Development of better harmonised Community forestry statistics.
7. Agricultural price statistics: new selection of the absolute agricultural price series taking into account the technical progress and economic changes.
8. Statistical data on rural development and on the environmental impact of agriculture.

Methodology

9. Improved and new methods to allow Member States to meet more efficiently existing and new information needs e.g. light surveys, administrative data, panels, remote sensing.

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ANNEX III

OBJECTIVES, CHARACTERISTICS AND CRITERIA OF THE COMMUNITY AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SYSTEM

Constant improvement

1. Community agricultural statistics will steadily increase in cost-effectiveness and in their capacity to meet the statistical needs of the Community and third countries.

Positive comparability checking

2. Community agricultural statistics will incorporate continuous quality checking to ensure that data are adequate for the needs to which they are put. In particular, Member States may be required to inform the Commission and other Member States of the statistical methods used and their suitability.

Response burden

3. Community agricultural statistics will impose the smallest possible burden of response consistent with meeting information needs.

Integration of agricultural statistics with those of other activities

4. The improvement to Community agricultural statistics will facilitate:

   (a) drawing on statistics from other areas;

   (b) contributing to general statistical systems;

   (c) use of the agricultural statistics apparatus to collect statistical information required in other areas.

Complementarity between Community and national levels

5. National agricultural statistics systems may collect and deliver to the Commission data not formally provided for at Community level. Similarly, certain applications developed directly at Community level (for example Eurofarm, SPEL) may be used to provide Member States with information which is not available at national level.

Concentration on the most important aspects

6. The amount of information each Member State supplies may vary according to the importance of the phenomenon covered regionally, nationally and at Community level.

Most efficient national approach

7. Member States may collect basic data by the statistical method which is most efficient, having regard to the definition, time limits and level of accuracy required (subject to the checking referred to in point 2).

Optimization

8. The detailed Community requirements set out in various Community legal instruments and informal agreements do not in themselves constitute an optimized structure. Each Member State must ensure that its national system of agricultural statistics is adapted and responds in an optimum way to Community requirements. Community requirements must not unnecessarily impede national optimization.

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ANNEX IV

PRINCIPAL COUNCIL REGULATIONS AND DIRECTIVES ON AGRICUTURAL STATISTICS

Council Directive 72/280/EEC	of 31 July 1972 on the statistical surveys to be made by Member States on milk and milk products (OJ No L 179, 7. 8. 1972, p. 2)
Council Directive 76/625/EEC	of 20 July 1976 concerning the statistical surveys to be carried out by the Member States in order to determine the production potential of plantations of certain species of fruit trees (OJ No L 218, 11. 8. 1976, p. 10)
Council Directive 93/23/EEC	of 1 June 1993 on the statistical surveys to be carried out on pig production (OJ No L 149, 21. 6. 1993, p. 1)
Council Directive 93/24/EEC	of 1 June 1993 on the statistical surveys to be carried out on bovine animal production (OJ No L 149, 21. 6. 1993, p. 5)
Council Directive 93/25/EEC	of 1 June 1993 on the statistical surveys to be carried out on sheep and goat stocks (OJ No L 149, 21. 6. 1993, p. 10)
Council Regulation (EEC) No 2782/75	of 29 October 1975 on the production and marketing of eggs for hatching and of farmyard poultry chicks (OJ No L 282, 1. 11. 1975, p. 100)
Council Regulation (EEC) No 357/79	of 5 February 1979 on statistical surveys of areas under vines (OJ No L 54, 5. 3. 1979, p. 124)
Council Regulation (EEC) No 571/88	of 29 February 1988 on the organization of Community surveys on the structure of agricultural holdings between 1988 and 1997 (OJ No L 56, 2. 3. 1988, p. 1)
Council Regulation (EEC) No 837/90	of 26 March 1990 concerning statistical information to be supplied by the Member States on cereals production (OJ No L 88, 3. 4. 1990, p. 1)
Council Regulation (EEC) No 959/93	of 5 April 1993 concerning statistical information to be supplied by Member States on crop products other than cereals (OJ No L 98, 24. 4. 1993, p. 1)