

Historical outline

Beginnings with 1910 agricultural censuses have been conducted in Finland almost at every ten years. The last ones were in 1959, 1969, 1990 and in 1999/2000. The information for inter-censal years has been collected through administrative sources like Rural Business Register, or by means of annual sample survey.

Organization

The Information Centre of Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (IC/MAF) carried out the agricultural census according to FAO guidelines and EU regulations. Legal framework for the census was provided by Finland's Statistics Act, Act on IC/MAF and Act of Rural Business Statistics. About 450 municipalities played the essential role regarding data collection in the field. Services of a private company were utilized for conducting telephonic interviews. The census was led by a project team comprising agricultural, automated data processing and statistical experts.

Enumeration period

In addition to data already available from administrative sources, enumeration was carried out in three phases. Data on machinery, computers, irrigation area, storage facilities and other activities on the holdings were collected during February to July 2000. The data on livestock and arable land on farms which had not availed subsidies, were collected during July to August 2000. From September to December 2000, computer aided interviews were carried out to collect data on labour force.

Reference date/period

For crop and land use: 26 May 2000. For livestock: 1 May 2000. For machinery, storage facilities and rural development: year 2000. For the labour force survey: 1 September 1999 to 30 August 2000.

Definition

- **Farm/Agricultural holding:** a production unit, which is technically and economically a single production unit. It could be operated by a single natural or legal person or a group of natural or legal person.
- **Utilized Agricultural Area (UAA):** is the holding's area consisting of arable land, kitchen gardens, land under permanent crops and land under permanent meadows and pastures.
- **Standard Gross Margin (SGM):** The SGM determines the techno-economic orientation and techno-economic size of the holding. It is calculated, for each crop or animal production, as the difference between the standard value of the production and the standard amount of certain specific costs (mainly proportional specific costs). For easy comparison it is measured in European Size Units.

Coverage

Geographically, the survey covered the entire territory of Finland. Statistically, for the purpose of agricultural census, target population was agricultural holding with: (1) A utilized agricultural area (UAA) of at least 1 ha or (2) A total standard gross margin of 1.00 European Size Units.

Frame

Four different registers, viz. the Rural Business Register, the Register of Horticultural Holdings, the Register of Bovine Animals and the Register of Organic Farming were used to build census frame. The information on new holdings which were not yet part of the registers was collected by municipalities.

Method

The census was carried out as complete enumeration, avoiding duplication of data available from registers. The Bovine Animal Register is concurrently updated as there exists an obligation to report birth, death and slaughter of animals within two weeks of the event. Other registers are updated once a year. Questionnaires were sent by post and telephonic interviews were carried out.

Data source

Farm Structure Survey 1999/2000, 2003 Edition, Agriculture and Fisheries Theme 5, European Commission, Eurostat.

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