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ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ALIMENTATION ET L'AGRICULTURE (FAO)

ORGANISATION DE COOPÉRATION ET DE DÉVELOPPEMENT ÉCONOMIQUES (OCDE)

Réunion commune CEE/Eurostat/FAO/OCDE sur les statistiques alimentaires et agricoles en Europe
(Genève, 2-4 juillet 2003)

RAPPORT

INTRODUCTION

1. La Réunion sur les statistiques alimentaires et agricoles en Europe, organisée conjointement par Eurostat, la FAO, l'OCDE et la CEE, s'est tenue à Genève du 2 au 4 juillet 2003. Les pays ci-après y ont participé: Albanie, Allemagne, Australie, Autriche, Bulgarie, Canada, Danemark, Estonie, États-Unis, Fédération de Russie, Finlande, France, Hongrie, Irlande, Italie, Kazakhstan, Kirghizistan, Lettonie, Lituanie, Norvège, Pays-Bas, Pologne, République de Moldova, République tchèque, Roumanie, Royaume-Uni, Slovaquie, Suède, Suisse et Turquie. Les Communautés européennes étaient représentées par Eurostat. Des représentants de l'Organisation de coopération et de développement économiques (OCDE), de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture (FAO) et de l'Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS) ont également participé à la Réunion.

2. L'ordre du jour a été adopté.

3. M. Denis Chartrand (Canada) et M^{me} Crina Turtoi (Roumanie) ont été élus Président et Vice-Présidente, respectivement.

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ORGANISATION DE LA RÉUNION

4. La Réunion a examiné les questions de fond ci-après, sur la base de communications sollicitées et de documents d'appui présentés par les pays et organisations:

a) Inventaire des faits nouveaux et des besoins futurs dans le domaine des statistiques alimentaires et agricoles;

b) Mesure du revenu et de la richesse des ménages agricoles par rapport au revenu des activités agricoles;

c) Les statistiques liées à la multifonctionnalité, à la durabilité, à l'espace rural et à l'environnement, et leur interaction avec l'agriculture;

d) Les systèmes de classification et leur adaptation aux nouveaux besoins;

e) Incidences des nouvelles technologies sur la production et la diffusion des statistiques agricoles.

RÉSUMÉ DES DÉBATS ET PRINCIPALES CONCLUSIONS DE LA RÉUNION

5. Les recommandations concernant les travaux futurs sont présentées ci-après. Les autres conclusions dégagées par les participants à la Réunion sur les thèmes susmentionnés sont présentées dans l'annexe de ce rapport (en anglais seulement). Elles peuvent également être consultées sur le site Web de la Réunion à l'adresse suivante: www.unece.org/stats/documents/2003.07.agri.htm.

RECOMMANDATIONS CONCERNANT LES TRAVAUX FUTURS

6. Sur proposition du Comité de programme du Groupe de travail intersecrétariats sur les statistiques agricoles (IWG.AGRI), la Réunion a recommandé qu'une nouvelle réunion conjointe CEE/Eurostat/FAO/OCDE soit organisée en 2005. Elle a considéré qu'il serait particulièrement intéressant d'inscrire les questions de fond ci-après à l'ordre du jour de cette réunion:

a) Statistiques relatives au développement rural dans le cadre de l'agriculture;

b) Mesure du revenu des ménages agricoles, y compris la définition du ménage agricole;

c) Statistiques concernant la sécurité alimentaire et, dans ce contexte, l'emploi de contrôles;

d) Statistiques agroenvironnementales, statistiques relatives à l'agriculture biologique et statistiques liées à la durabilité; et

e) Le rôle de l'agriculture, du secteur agroalimentaire et de l'agro-industrie dans l'économie.

7. La Réunion a également recommandé de créer une équipe spéciale qui serait chargée d'entreprendre des travaux méthodologiques se rapportant au rôle de l'agriculture dans le développement rural dans le but de réaliser une comparaison internationale et d'élaborer des statistiques internationales, qui seraient présentées à la réunion de 2005, en se penchant notamment sur les questions liées aux aspects suivants:

a) Bien-être en milieu rural;

b) Revenu des ménages agricoles, y compris la définition du ménage agricole.

8. La Réunion a également recommandé que la CEE, Eurostat, la FAO et l'OCDE élaborent, en vue de la soumettre à la réunion de 2005, une proposition concernant la définition d'un agrégat relatif au secteur agroalimentaire, semblable à celui qui se rapporte au secteur des TIC, et d'illustrer la définition proposée par des données numériques tirées des bases de données internationales existantes.

ANNEX

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Joint ECE/Eurostat/FAO/OECD Meeting on Food and Agricultural Statistics
Geneva, 2nd to 4th July 2003

Mr. Denis Chartrand (Canada) was elected the chairperson and
Ms. Crina Turtoi (Romania) the vice-chairperson of the meeting

Information items:

1. OECD informed participants of the meeting about the 8th IWG.AGRI Seminar "Perspectives for Agriculture and Rural Indicators and Sustainability", PARIS, which took place in November 2002. The conference was attended by a large number of international experts. During the seminar the presentations and resulting constructive and forward-looking discussions focused on sustainability and the rural dimension within agricultural statistics. It emerged from these discussions that IWG.AGRI should play a facilitating role in setting up task forces on specific themes such as rural statistics, agricultural household unit and the aspect of the environment in EAA.

2. Eurostat updated the meeting about the preparations for the 3rd Conference on Agricultural Statistics to be held in Cancun on 2 to 4th November 2004. The conference will focus on next steps for agricultural statisticians such as creation of indicators for sustainable agriculture.

3. Eurostat also reported on the international conference on "Agricultural and Rural Information Applied to Defence of Nature and Environment". The papers and discussions of the conference led to the conclusion that there is a need for reliable data on which agri-environmental indicators can be based. Reliable, relevant and comparable indicators are needed as a tool for the planning of sustainable development in agriculture.

4. FAO presented their FAOSTAT2 project and CountrySTAT. FAO have developed this new system to improve the user interface, improve the data quality, incorporate new user requirements, improve user access and enhance the integrity of the data.

5. UNECE informed the participants about the preparations for setting up a task force on rural development statistics – one of the outcomes of the PARIS seminar. IWG.AGRI have discussed the terms of reference and have drawn up a provisional list of experts. It was stressed that the task force will be a working group and that participants who have the necessary resources can join the task force with the only condition that the group should not exceed a certain size. The meeting will be informed about the terms of reference and the composition of the task force later this year. The envisaged outcome of the task force is a set of guidelines on definitions and concepts in rural development statistics. The task force is expected to present the results at the 2005 IWG.AGRI meeting on food and agricultural statistics.

Session 1: Stocktaking of recent developments and future needs in food and agriculture statistics (invited papers 1, 2 and 3)
Discussant: Mr. Giuseppe Calò (Eurostat)

6. The three invited papers dealt with different aspects of new future requirements on agricultural statistics. The discussant stressed that in a time when a lot of changes take place in agriculture it is important that the statistical systems react quickly to the changing needs.

7. The first paper presented the situation from a member country's point of few. The French delegate concluded that there is still a need for the 'traditional' agri-food economic statistics but that demands for new statistics in the agri-food sector have emerged. The 'traditional' economic statistics such as statistics on the structure of the industry and on production, sales and consumption by product remain a priority. However, new demands for statistics outside the 'traditional' economic aspect of agriculture require the current system of agri-food statistics to change. Some of these new demands, such as information on use of new technologies and on the changing structure of enterprises, are closely linked to the traditional economic data. Thematic surveys were introduced to collect this kind of information.

8. However, new needs for information have also emerged in fields further removed from the traditional agri-food statistics, particularly in the area of rural development and environmental protection. France introduced surveys to cover some aspects of these new areas. More recently, demands for statistics on food quality and safety have come up. Definitions and concepts of food quality and safety are not yet well developed. There are several initiatives in France to start compiling information on some aspects of food quality. The new demands on agri-food statistics are not easily to satisfy because of a lack of a conceptual and methodological basis. Statisticians need face these new demands and invest on the methodological groundwork so that these new demands can be satisfied in future.

9. The second paper presented FAO's work on the World Census of Agriculture. So far, eight decennial Programmes for the World Census of Agriculture (WCA) have been published and FAO are at present starting preparations for the WCA 2010 Programme. An analysis of the number and area of holdings for selected countries shows that in all but one country the average size of holdings increased between 1970 and 1990 while the number of holdings decreased over the same period. The measurement of the equitability of the land distribution poses problems for international comparison and is therefore only possible for country subgroups.

10. The analysis of cattle figures showed that of the 17 countries for which data are available all but one recorded a decrease in the number of holdings reporting cattle between 1970 and 1990. The number of cattle did not change much which resulted in an increase in the average number of cattle per holding in all countries with the largest increase in Greece where the average had increased threefold.

11. The second part of the paper looked at the preparations for the WCA 2010 by FAO. Whereas the objectives and main characteristics of the WCA 2010 are the same as for the previous programmes, the following changes are considered: collection of more data on livestock, collection of more data relevant to food security, improvements of definitions and census coverage relevant to women's participation in agriculture, simplifications of sections

concerning soil characteristics and use of fertilizers and pesticides and re-introduction of the collection of data on crop production.

12. Changes are not only suggested in the data collection but also in data analysis and dissemination. It might be recommended that Gini coefficients and medians be calculated and time series tabulations for the most important data be introduced at country level. New technologies such as Internet and CD-ROMs may be included in a chapter on improved dissemination of data. FAO are interested in finding out what the countries in Europe think should be priorities for the next census and in learning about experiences in Europe which could be relevant for FAO.

13. The paper by the National Agricultural Statistics Service of the United States looked at procedures and approaches for the creation and release of ad-hoc and flash statistics using examples from the United States and Canada. The author pointed out that there is not one single approach for all countries and situations as requirements vary from country to country. However, there are attributes that are desirable for any statistical organization in order to provide good quality, timely ad-hoc and flash statistics. Relevant baseline information should be available in a serviceable data base which should also include good metadata. The second important attribute is infrastructure both relating to mechanisms in place for the creation, approval and release of ad-hoc analysis and to the availability of experienced staff. The third attribute relates to policy needs.

14. The author suggested approaches to progress towards the optimum procedures. One is to analyze past requests which had to be rejected and look at what it would have taken to meet these requests. Another approach is to link surveys and census results for analysis both across surveys but also across periods of time.

15. In the following discussion, the question was raised how a system that will allow provision of flash and ad-hoc statistics can be built with tight budgets for almost all services. It was pointed out that statisticians have to try to find resources, for example by cutting sample sizes of surveys, combining surveys, using administrative data or working together with research establishments which have funding.

16. Another important point discussed was the collection of data on food safety including data on the composition of actual food consumption to deal with questions of healthy diets. Participants agreed that there is a fast increasing demand for data on food safety but that concepts and definitions are not yet well established. Work has been undertaken to adjust food balance sheets so that they can be used for estimate actual food consumption.

17. The discussant concluded that agri-food statistics systems need to change with changing needs, and if possible in anticipation of changing needs; in order to avoid conceptual obsolescence. These changes have to be made.

Session 2: Measurement of farm household income and wealth versus agriculture activity income (invited papers 4, 5, 6 and 7)
Discussant: Mr. Andreas Lindner (Eurostat)

18. The paper by the United States' Economic Research Service concluded that the one farm − one household farm type does not represent the reality any more. In reality, multiple households contribute to one farm business, business arrangements exist such as production contracts or share renting and off-farm income and work play an important part for many agricultural households.

19. Therefore, measures of the income of the agricultural sector, even though valuable indicators of how the farming sector is performing on a national scale, may not be the best tools to capture the financial situation and needs of farmers and farm families. To better measure the latter, an integrated data collection system was introduced in the United States that enables the development of farm business household accounts. This system recognizes that an operator household may not receive all the income generated by its farm business (other stakeholders receive from of the income) but also that farming income is but one source of earnings to many farm households.

20. For more than 15 years, statistics on the income of the agricultural household have been on the agenda of Eurostat working groups. However, IHAS results are calculated regularly only in 6 EU Member States. Other countries produce statistics on agricultural household income infrequently; some countries have stopped calculating agricultural household income altogether. Thus, further development would require clearer definitions of the needs for this kind of statistics. For the time being Eurostat will continue to collect available data but IHAS statistics are not considered a priority for Candidate Countries.

21. The paper raises questions regarding the future of IAHS statistics in light of new demands for data not just on agricultural households but on rural households. It concludes that both statistics on rural households and on agricultural households are needed. However, to ensure that the statistics on the agricultural household income meet users' needs, improvements have to be made in the quality of the data and its comparability. The periodicity of the data needs to be discussed; it might not be necessary to have annual data. However, most importantly the definition of the basic unit, the agricultural household, has to be reconsidered.

22. The paper by ISTAT, Italy, described the situation in Italy in relation to farm incomes and multi-functionality. More than 10 per cent of agricultural holdings report at least one secondary activity related to agriculture. These farmers are described as rural multi-activity and multi-functional farmers.

23. The paper concludes that multi-activity and off-farm income support is therefore a necessary element to increase holdings' economic performance. In a wider perspective, multi-functionality of farms is one element to consider when looking at the minimum incomes to keep people in the agricultural sector and in rural areas. Additional activities carried out by farmers, such as agri-tourism or organic farming, can produce positive effects on rural development and local employment.

24. The paper by the United Kingdom suggested that a lot of the basic investigation needed into the definition of both the agricultural household and of income has in fact already been carried out. The paper argues that it is likely that the focus will be on two definitions of agricultural households, a narrow definition which would include households that are primarily dependent on agriculture for their livelihood and a broad definition which would include all households that derive some income from independent agricultural activity. As to the definition of income one approach is based on national accounts and the other on microeconomic accounting using household budget surveys, taxation records or farm account surveys. Micro-macro harmonization is one of the areas where further work is required. Work also needs to be undertaken to ensure that the methodology can be applied to Candidate Countries as the structure of the agricultural sector differs from that of the 15 current members in particular the treatment of large-scale agricultural units and agricultural production of a subsistence nature.

25. In the second part, the results of a study on diversification in England were presented. The study showed that 60 per cent of farms in England have some form of diversified activity and that nearly 1 in 5 farms have no conventional agricultural production. Income from diversified activities is estimated to be on a similar scale than income from agricultural activities (£0.8 billion versus £1.0 billion).

26. A supporting paper submitted by Russia pointed to the specific problems in Russia related to land and capital concentration such as limited access to finances and information for a large part of farmers. Two supporting papers were submitted by Italy, the first presenting the results of an analysis of the distribution of farm, global and extended incomes for different fiscal reform scenarios, the second reporting on how micro and macro level approaches can be linked.

27. During the discussion, participants agreed that there is a demand for income data at household level both for the agricultural household but also more generally for rural households that these statistics will receive increasing attention following the CAP reform. Some participants felt that agricultural households need to be given special attention within the analysis of rural households because most of the support given to rural areas is given to farmers and because it is often the farming activity, whether as main occupation or not, that keeps households in rural areas.

28. It was pointed out that comparability is crucial both between countries but also between sectors of the same country. Statistics on the income of the agricultural household should be comparable to that of other households. In some countries this is already the case, in others comparison is not possible. The usefulness of the data was questioned in cases were data on agricultural households cannot be compared to other households. General agreement was expressed on the need to review the definitions but also that attention must be given to the terminology used.

29. It was also mentioned that income only partly reflects welfare and that to draw conclusions about the living standard of households; household production should be taken into account. Another aspect of the analysis of the agricultural household is intra household resource allocation.

Session 3: Statistics related to multifuntionality, sustainability, rural space and environment and their interaction with agriculture (invited papers 8, 9 and 10)
Discussant: Mr. Giuseppe Calò (Eurostat)

30. The UNECE paper presented the provisional results of a project aiming at compiling an inventory of rural development statistics. The replies from 11 countries to a questionnaire sent out by UNECE to showed that generally rural development policies cover all factors that influence the life of people living in rural areas such as economic situation, service provision and infrastructure, environmental issues and the preservation or renewal of rural communities. However, the importance attributed to agriculture within these main areas differs greatly between countries.

31. The definition of rural also varies greatly from country to country. Definitions can be based either on administrative areas such as municipalities or on settlements. Furthermore, different variables are used, either on their own or in combination to distinguish rural from non-rural areas. The most common variables are population level and population density. The thresholds applied also differ greatly.

32. At present, only two countries have a standard set of indicators to monitor rural development statistics. Others are in the process of developing a standard set. The paper concluded that at present, it is difficult, if not impossible, to compare rural development statistics internationally due to the different definitions in use and the different indicators in use. The question was asked whether there is a need for international standards.

33. The paper by Ireland described the main statistical issues and user requirements in relation to emerging rural development policy. The main issues which are to be considered in the setting up a system of rural development statistics in Ireland were identified as the identification of the broad areas of concern for rural areas, the choice of geographical units, the definition of rural, the choice of indicators and the collection of data in a cost-effective way.

34. Six areas of concern were identified and include sustainable communities, income and employment, access to services including education, participation of rural residents in decision making processes, cultural identity and environment. The geographical unit identified as best suited for rural development statistics in Ireland is the District Electoral Division which corresponds to NUTS 5 in the EU classification and which is used for the Census of Population and the Census of Agriculture. However, not all data will be available at this level.

35. At present, there is no single definition for rural. In some instances rural includes all open countryside and small towns and villages with populations of less than 1,500 people. A subdivision of rural areas depending on whether people live in or near a small is likely to be used in some instances. Work is also under way to put together a set of indicators for each of the broad areas of concern. A basic set of indicators was presented. This set only included indicators that are already available or that could be obtained fairly easily.

36. As there are limits on the resources available, the only realistic possibilities of collecting new data are the addition of some questions to existing surveys and the use of administrative data. As the result of a recent initiative on the use of administrative records for statistical

purposes in Ireland, the Statistical Potential of Administrative Records Project, the Central Statistics Office has started discussions with six other Departments that hold data on social and equity statistics. This approach also seems to be the most promising one for a system of rural development statistics. The representative of Ireland expressed interest in any experience in other countries especially relating to the use of indicators for more vague concepts such as sense of identity and community in rural areas and the role of agriculture in rural development.

37. The paper by Sweden dealt with issues in setting up a register based statistical system for rural development in Sweden. In Sweden, there has been a growing awareness that agriculture is only one of the important actors in rural areas and new policies for the development of rural areas have been established. These policies require statistics that go beyond the traditional agricultural statistics and need to cover social, economic and environmental aspects. As Sweden has a well-established system of registers based on administrative and other sources, a register-based approach was chosen in the paper.

38. In Sweden, there is no broadly accepted definition of rural areas. The statistical results presented were based on the definition of the Swedish Board of Agriculture which divides the country into two rural and two urban areas which are independent of administrative borders. Urban 1 areas have more than 10,000 inhabitants. Urban 2 areas have more than 1,000 but less than 10,000 inhabitants. Rural 1 areas are influenced by urban areas. Rural 2 areas are all other rural areas. The study focused on the social dimension of rural development.

39. The results showed that 33 per cent of the households are in the two rural areas of which only a small part are agricultural households. Remote rural areas (Rural 2) and small urban areas (Urban 2) have experienced negative net migration between 1995 and 2001. Net migration in Rural 1 areas and Urban 1 was positive. On average the population in Urban 1 and Rural 1 areas are younger and have higher education level. Household sizes are bigger in rural areas than in urban areas. Total average income levels are similar in all areas with the exception of Rural 1 areas where incomes are higher. The proportion of households below the poverty line is highest in Rural 2 areas followed by Urban 1 areas.

40. Two supporting papers were submitted by Italy. One presented a set of indicators to monitor sustainability of agriculture in Italy. The second paper dealt with one specific aspect of the environmental aspect sustainability, the use of fertilizers and pesticides products in agriculture.

41. Participants discussed the usefulness of a standard definition of rural. It was noted that it might be difficult and/or not appropriate to have a standard definition due to the differences between countries. Others expressed the need for some kind of standard pointing out that differences within countries can be larger than those between similar areas of different countries and that demand for internationally comparable is increasing. There was general agreement though that more work needs to be done on an international level both on the definition of rural and on indicators on rural development.

42. Participants pointed out that rural development statistics should be seen in the larger framework of regional/territorial statistics as demand for statistics on small geographic areas increases. The demand is not limited to rural areas. A system based on statistics for small

geographic areas should be built up which would be flexible and accommodate different definitions and different classifications.

43. During the discussion a need to better understand policy needs emerged. Rural development statistics is the evidence base for rural development policy and therefore policy needs should be at the center of statisticians' preoccupations. It was mentioned that with decoupling of subsidies there is likely to be more demand for rural development statistics. It is clear that rural development is much broader than agriculture and that a statistical approach needs to be cutting across traditional areas of statistics of which agriculture is one. The possibility was raised that agricultural statisticians could coordinate rural development statistics building on their knowledge with agricultural statistics.

Session 4: Statistics and analysis of food supply, food quality, food safety, consumer needs and international trade flows (invited papers 11, 12, 13 and 14)
Discussant: Ms. Shala Shapouri (United States)

44. The paper by Denmark investigated the possibilities of using food supply balance sheets to measure human consumption of food and nutritional intake. There are many possibilities of reducing statistical errors in supply balance sheets and thus of enabling the estimation of food consumption on the basis of food balance sheets. It was shown that for meat balance sheets, the use of certain parts of the animal, such as the legs or the head, can vary considerably with the price of meat and can lead to a non-negligible error in the estimated food consumption if these factors are ignored. It is also crucial that trade statistics are of good quality which is often not the case as it is known that large errors can be found in external trade statistics especially for trade within the European Union.

45. Due to the questions about the accuracy of the macro approach using food supply balance sheets to estimate human consumption of food, household surveys are an essential supplement to the statistics. The main drawback of household expenditure and dietary surveys is that they are very cost-intensive. In addition, household expenditure surveys only collect data on values. Dietary surveys allow more detailed analysis of food consumption and nutritional intake but they are very expensive to conduct. Dietary surveys were conducted in 1985, 1995 and 2000. They show for example that the intake of fruit and vegetables has increased between 1995 and 2000 but that it does not reach the recommended intake yet.

46. The paper by FAO presented their work on measuring undernourishment. The World Food Summit 1996 and the UN Millennium Summit in 2000 stated as one of their aims to halve the number of people suffering from hunger by 2015. The FAO methodology measures the number of people suffering from hunger by looking at the usual food consumption compared to the energy requirement level and thus the prevalence of undernourishment. In order to derive the prevalence of undernourishment, the distribution of energy consumption and the mean energy consumption need to be estimated. The estimation of the energy consumption is based on dietary surveys where available or on household income and expenditure surveys. The estimation on the mean also used food balance sheets. The cut-off point is calculated using the minimum acceptable body with for each sex/age group and the required energy level per kg of body weight.

47. Issues have arisen regarding the appropriateness of using a cut-off point. A joint distribution approach might be preferable. Questions are also asked about the reliability of the results of household surveys used to estimate the distribution. For the future, improvements in the calculation of the cut-off point and the estimation of the parameters of the distribution functions are planned.

48. The paper by the United Kingdom started with the presentation of the method used to estimate the nutritional content of food consumed in the United Kingdom. It then explored the possible measurement of other dimensions of food quality. Nutritional intake is estimated using the results of the Expenditure and Food Survey, a household survey of around 7000 households. Households record the value and the weight of the food items purchased. This information is then used to estimate the quantities consumed for a range of food items. Nutrient contents for a range of nutrients are estimated for each food type. Estimates can then be derived for example for the household consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables and the percentage of energy derived from fat.

49. The method by which food is produced is another dimension of food quality even if it does not have an impact on the final nutritional quality or safety of the product. In the United Kingdom the share of free-range eggs has increased considerably over the last ten years even though free-range eggs are about twice as expensive as battery eggs. Consumers' willingness to pay double gives a measure of their perception of the higher quality of free-range eggs. Food safety can be measured by the frequency of foodborne illnesses or the prevalence of bacteria and toxins at different points in the food chain. However, neither measurement is straightforward. Public perception provides a further measurement of food quality.

50. The fourth invited paper in this session presented Eurostat's work on a framework for the quantitative evaluation of data on food safety of products used for human or animal consumption in the EU Member States irrespective of whether these products are manufactured within the EU or imported. Data should be made available at regular intervals and not only measure compliance with food safety regulations but also provide a measure of people's access to safe food, both physical access (proximity to commercial outlets) and financial access (the availability of sufficient resources).

51. In 2002/2003 Eurostat have started the compilation of an inventory of EU legal acts relating to food safety and an inventory of data available and the related methodology. A questionnaire was sent out to EU Member States and Candidate Countries. It was pointed out that one of the difficulties is the involvement of many different organizations in the collection of food safety statistics. At the same time a database of food safety statistics is created and indicators are defined. It is planned that a common methodology will be agreed and that areas for improvement will be identified. Task forces on priority areas will be set up. These priority areas are controls, products with distinctive marks, food consumption and risk assessment.

52. A supporting paper submitted by Russia analyzed the food situation from a statistical point of view bringing together information from different sources, such as trade statistics, administrative control data, production data and other survey information.

53. During the discussion, the issue of the comparability of household survey data and data derived from the macro balance sheet approach was raised. It was noted that the level of consumption measured is usually quite different but that both approaches generally show similar trends. Food balance sheets were considered to be better for the measurement of the level of consumption whereas household surveys provide better data on the composition of food consumption as well as allow analysis of consumption by different groups of the population.

54. Concluding the discussion, participants agreed that food quality is likely to be given more and more emphasis. There are many methodological issues in the field of food safety that need to be tackled.

Session 5: Classification systems and their adaptation to new needs (invited papers 15 and 16)
Discussant: Mr. Paul Johanis (Canada)

55. In the invited paper submitted by Australia the author noted that the changing demands on agricultural statistics result in a growing need to integrate production statistics with land use, environmental and economic data to provide a complete picture of agriculture. Six emerging policy areas for which new or modified data series are required were identified. These areas are globalisation of trade and markets, technology, the changing role of government, sustainable agriculture, the changing structure of the agricultural sector and rural communities.

56. Key weaknesses of the Australian agricultural statistics system in light of the changing policy issues are a lack of integration across data provided by different organisations, a need to link data across the various types of units that are relevant to agricultures, such as households, farm businesses and land, and a need for an information model for agriculture that should, among other things, outline the common standards such as definitions and classifications that should be used. Ultimately, the Australian Bureau of Statistics aims to close the gaps identified and aims to provide users with detailed integrated agricultural economic, social and environmental statistics.

57. It was stressed that the use of relevant classification systems is important. The Central Product Classification (CPC) provides a framework for international comparison of statistics dealing with goods and services. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has developed a classification that is based on the CPC but that takes account of their specific needs for more detailed breakdowns in certain areas. However, not all needs can currently be satisfied by a system based on the CPC. Two main areas were identified which should be considered in the CPC revision or dealt with in another way; organically produced and GM commodities. The International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) in its current version does not serve countries in the ASEAN region very well. It was suggested that further work should be undertaken to better reflect the activities in specific regions. Consideration should also be given to the treatment of aquaculture, GMO's and organic farming. Two other areas for which classification are needed were identified; statistics on regional and rural issues and land use.

58. The paper by Canada examined the needs of agricultural statistics programmes and how well standard statistical classifications respond to them. The need for revisions of the existing classifications and the possible need to develop new standard classifications were discussed. Revisions of the Central Product Classification (CPC) and the International Standard Industrial

Classification (ISIC) will be introduced in 2007. One aim of the revisions is to add detailed classes were necessary and align different classifications. The question was raised if it was useful to establish more explicit linkages between the CPC classification and the FAO commodity codes. Emerging policy issues could signal a need for adapting the relevant product classifications. One such issue are GMO's.

59. In agriculture activity classifications are used to a lesser extend than product classifications. Activity classifications include ISIC, NACE (used in the EU and ISIC based) and NAICS (used in North America and not ISIC based). It is expected that these three classifications will be much more structurally and definitionally aligned after the 2007 revisions. An important issue in activity classifications is how to treat units that produce a mix of products. Mixed farming is defined in different ways in ISIC and NAICS. Activities do not have to be product-based though. Other options are input or process based activity classifications. In a production-process based system organic farming could be easily included.

60. During the discussion, the issue of how to deal with the growing multifunctionality of agriculture in an activity classification was discussed. The current systems are based on the idea that each unit is mainly active in one area. Information on other than the main activity is lost. It was suggested to look at the activity and product classification for such units at the same time. The multifunctionality should be reflected in the range of products produced on these units. The classifications do not even reflect mixed farming appropriately. The opinion was expressed that unless activity classifications improve the current mixed farming class they are unlikely to be more relevant for agricultural statistics.

61. The lack of a classification of environmental services was also brought up. Currently, the product classifications do not include environmental services. It was argued that payments received for such services therefore have to be classified as subsidies. This will not reflect the true nature of these payments. There was general agreement that this issue should be considered when the classifications are revised.

62. The question of the appropriate statistical unit was also brought up during the discussion. Some participants felt that consistent classifications of real business and not of KAUs are needed. The advantages of statistics based on establishments rather than enterprises were also pointed out especially in light of the increased demand for regional data. A general lack of consistency in the terminology use was noted.

63. GMO's were felt to be an important issue with a possible place in a revised classification. However, some participants expressed some reservations about the usefulness introducing a GMO subclassification of commodities. It was argued that it difficult to distinguish GMO and non-GMO commodities. It was suggested that a non-GMO class, which would contain only certified non-GMO commodities, could be more useful.

64. It was generally agreed that a standard for the agri-food/agri-industry sector would be useful. Several countries have developed national standards for the agri-food/industry sector. The international organisations are going to present proposals for a standard for the agri-food/industry sector at the next meeting.

65. To conclude the topic, the participants noted the importance of the revision of the classification. Agricultural statisticians need to get involved in the discussions on the revisions of the classifications to make sure that their needs are understood and taken into account. Participants are to contact the classification experts in the National Statistical Institutes if they want to get involved.

Session 6: Implications of new technologies on production and dissemination of agriculture statistics (invited papers 17, 18 and 19)
Discussant: Mr. Jan Karlsson (UNECE)

66. The paper by the United States presented e-government initiatives in the United States Agriculture Department and more specifically the National Agricultural Statistics Service. E-government is about changing the way Government accomplishes its mission using enabling tools of technology. The use of new technology is expected to improve the services provided, to lead to great greater efficiency and to potential cost savings. The changes were driven by two main factors, the citizens and industry's expectations and the Government's own initiatives. The Congressional 'Government Paperwork Elimination Act' mandates that Federal agencies must give public and private entities the option of transacting business with these agencies electronically by October 2003 when practicable.

67. The United States Agriculture Department developed a 5-year Strategic plan. As part of the plan mission and vision statements were established, initiatives that deliver significant productivity and performance gains were identified and some initiatives were begun immediately in particularly those that had high impact, across-agency value and could demonstrate progress in a short period of time.

68. The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) was given the responsibility of developing a 5-year Tactical Plan. The first phase of the implementation of e-transforming NASS focused on electronic data reporting. The initial efforts were concentrated on Web data collection. An ambitious target of 51 per cent of NASS data collections to be available on-line by October 2003 was set. The longer-term target is that by 2007 all survey appropriate for electronic data reporting should be available on-line. The second phase of the implementation regards applications and data architecture. It has the goals of sharing data more effectively, standardizing data elements and data management procedures and simplifying applications, development and maintenance. One of the main challenges for the success of e-government is to convert staff to an e-government mentality despite competing priorities for time and resources.

69. The paper by the Netherlands described the electronic data collection initiative within LASER, the payment agency of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Fisheries. The pilot project for electronic data collection was started in 2000. In 2001, a first round of electronic data collection took place with a representative sample of 14,000 customers of LASER. Only about 5 per cent in the sample chose to send the data via Internet. After the 2001 round, it became apparent that more effort needed to be put into the development of the Internet site and into educating users. The development of the site was complicated by the fact that it was decided to combine data collection in the agricultural sector for statistical purposes with those for agricultural subsidies and environmental taxes. The response rate was again disappointing in 2002 even though the number of respondents that used the Internet facility increased slightly.

70. For the 2003 data collection round, a number of improvements have been made among others system of electronic signatures was added to secure and simplify the use of the site; the performance of the site was improved; a user-friendly wizard was included and customers can now print out their forms. A possible future development is the electronic linking of individual farm management systems to electronic applications of the Ministry.

71. The paper by Hungary showed how new technologies were used for the data collection and data dissemination of agricultural statistics in Hungary. Two comprehensive censuses were conducted at the turn of the millennium for which new tools were used in the preparatory phase, during the implementation of the censuses and for the dissemination of the results. In order to inform agricultural experts of the objectives and importance of a census a bilingual CD-ROM with the title 'Agricultural Census 2000' was prepared. The CD-ROM was distributed free of charge. After data collection, only two months were available before the release of preliminary results. New methods were used in the processing of the results. The preliminary results were announced in a press conference in June 2000. The final results were then published in 15 volumes and 5 CD-ROMs. A new publication was introduced after the census. This new publication targets census respondents. It informs the readers in plain language about the objectives and importance of statistical surveys, presents key results and explains their use for farmers.

72. The census of vineyards and orchards took place in 2001. A brand new tool was introduced for this census. The Institute for Land Surveying and Telemetry prepared 'spot maps' which were created using satellite surveys. Different colours marked vineyards and orchards as well as plots where a distinction could not be made on the basis of the satellite survey. The spot maps helped enumerators to identify plots and proved a valuable tool for quality control. At the end of the census, the results of the satellite survey, the results of the census and the figures in the land registry were compared. If substantial differences were found, a further investigation took place. So far, three volumes and one CD-ROM have been published with results of this census. The CD-ROM contains the results of the census as well as other relevant information about the sector.

73. During the discussion the cost-effectiveness of the Internet data collection was brought up. In the Netherlands no information is available to the exact cost of these developments. However, it was pointed out that it was seen as a necessary activity as the move towards more electronic data transmission cannot be stopped. The development of the new methods for electronic data collection is unlikely to be cost-effective in the short-term. However, in the long-term, it is hoped that savings will be made.

74. A question was also raised concerning the security of electronic data transmission in view of confidentiality requirements especially if financial business data are transmitted. So far the Netherlands do not collect financial data via the Internet. The system of transmission with the use of TAN was regarded as adequately secure.

75. How to give respondents incentives to use the Internet facilities was also discussed. It was not possible to give Internet respondents preferential treatment in any way such as early payment of the subsidies but promotion activities will focus on the advantages of the on-line form such as that it is faster to fill in the form on-line and that the data will automatically be checked

for inconsistencies. Thus, respondents are less likely to get their form sent back for clarification and correction.

76. To conclude, new technologies do not only have the potential for long-term cost savings but they also allow improving the quality of the data for example through in-built consistency checks in electronic form.

77. For full documentation of the meeting see UNECE website (http://www.unece.org/stats).
