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ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC
CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT
(OECD)

FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL
ORGANISATION (FAO)

Meeting on Food and Agricultural
Statistics in Europe

(Geneva, 23-25 June 1999)

REPORT

INTRODUCTION

1. The Meeting on Food and Agricultural Statistics in Europe, convened jointly by Eurostat, OECD, FAO and the UN/ECE was held in Geneva from 23 - 25 June 1999. It was attended by Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom and United States of America. The European Commission was represented by Eurostat and DG VI in Brussels. Australia attended the meeting under Article XI of the Terms of Reference of the UN/ECE.
2. The meeting adopted the provisional agenda.
3. Mr. P. Helm (United Kingdom) was elected Chairperson and Ms. M.L. Widén (Sweden) Vice-Chairperson.

ORGANISATION OF THE MEETING

4. The following substantive topics were discussed at the meeting on the basis of invited and contributed papers prepared and conference room documents that countries and organisations had contributed:

- (a) Development and improvement of economic statistics for food and agriculture;
- (b) Maintaining agricultural data collection systems;
- (c) Methodological applications and reoccurring methodological issues;
- (d) Joint data collection by international organizations and exchange of data.

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN CONCLUSIONS REACHED AT THE MEETING

5. Recommendations for future work are given below. Other conclusions that the participants reached at the meeting on the above topics will be presented in a separate report prepared after the meeting and distributed to participants and, on request, (in English only) to other interested persons. They will also be available on the web site for the meeting:

www.unece.org/stats/documents/1999.06.agri.htm

FUTURE WORK

6. The participants recommended that a further joint meeting on food and agricultural statistics be organised in 2001.

7. Participants were informed about preparations for the 7th IWG.AGRI Seminar on agricultural and food statistics (Luxembourg, 5-7 July 2000) and the Conference on agricultural and environmental statistical application, CAESAR, (Rome, 5-7 June 2001). They recommended that both events be organised as proposed in the meeting.

8. After discussing proposal by the program committee, the participants recommended that the following topics be included in the agenda of the next meeting:

A. Experiences and lessons:

- (i) the agricultural census 2000 (cost effectiveness in conducting censuses; processing methods and tools for presentation of the results; the next census and future data needs);
- (ii) interaction of agriculture with environment and rural space (synthesis of lessons from recent work in this area);
- (iii) risks and opportunities in the use of administrative and other non-survey data;

B. Methodological issues:

- (i) income statistics (macro level/micro level and interaction between the two; data needs for changing structure of agricultural business; changing support policies and structure of ownership); "green" accounts"; data needs for rural economy;
- (ii) productivity (measuring sectoral and farm productivity; labour, capital and total factor productivity; organisational changes in agricultural business and impact on productivity; changes in factor inputs and impact on productivity; trade off between productivity and environmental concerns;
- (iii) measuring and forecasting food supplies (basic statistics needed for measuring food supply and demand; basic statistics needed for measuring food quality and the role of statistics in assisting in food quality control; information on food prices, food quality, food consumption and nutrient intake; modelling food supply and demand;

C. Making agricultural information more user friendly

- (i) use of GIS in agricultural statistics;
- (ii) techniques for presentation of statistical results;

9. Participants stressed the need for comparable and up-to-date basic data to be provided on a permanent and regular basis to members of the IWG.AGRI. This continuous and harmonised data flow is a prerequisite for international work on synthesis, analyses and indicators.
