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Agricultural Economic Statistics
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**ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC
CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT
(OECD)**

Session III : Agricultural Price Statistics

DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO PRICE COLLECTION

Paper submitted by Azerbaijan, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Poland, Sweden
and United States of America

Issues for discussion

1. It is the perception of some that the United Nations Statistical Office used to provide a forum for discussion and leadership on such issues as statistical standards and methods but it has become relatively inactive in recent years. The OECD appears to be playing a larger role but it does not appear comfortable with the responsibility.

- Is there an appropriate international forum for reviewing agriculture statistics issues?
- The current approach to promote comparability of data between countries is somewhat ad hoc. Does that matter?

2. Consolidation and vertical integration of agribusiness is sweeping across many countries. The dividing line between the farm and the processing plant is not always clear. Many fruit and vegetable farms for example, undertake some food processing activities such as washing, grading and packaging their products before they are sold. There are also some livestock farms that are fully integrated with a slaughter plant. The prices of the products from such operations are prices for finished goods. This is somewhat analogous to the situation in other industries such as automobiles.

- Can agricultural statisticians learn something from the price determination work practiced by statisticians in the manufacturing sector?

3. There are now many well-established concepts, conventions and statistical models that countries are encouraged to follow in developing their price collection systems. Developing and transition countries have an opportunity to implement the most successful methods and "best practices" of established statistical systems. They are however challenged to advance and make adjustments in a very short time and simultaneously assimilate and keep pace with the rapid advances in data processing technology.

- Are there some lessons to be learned from past experiences that can assist in this process and advance efforts to improve the exchange of ideas and the transfer of technology among countries?