

Recent Developments in EU Statistics on Pesticides, Fertilizers and Water

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Abstract: One of the tasks assigned to the European Community in its founding Treaty is to promote a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment. The Cardiff Process launched by The European Council in June 1998, required the Commission to integrate environmental considerations into all Community activities, including agriculture. The importance of this integration is reaffirmed in the Sixth Environment Action Program (2002-2012) and its seven thematic strategies towards sustainable development.

The 2006 Commission Communication on the development of indicators for monitoring the integration of environmental concerns into the common agricultural policy resulted in the presentation of a set of 28 agri-environmental indicators and identified important gaps in the data required for the indicator calculations, especially concerning agricultural inputs such as fertilisers, pesticides and water.

In the framework of the Community thematic strategy on the sustainable use of pesticides, the Commission proposed a Regulation concerning statistics on plant protection products covering both sales and use. These statistics will be essential to calculate risk indicators and measure the progress of the strategy, especially in terms of risk mitigation and reduction in the use of PPP. As it is preparing the future Community surveys on the structure of agricultural holdings, Eurostat is also looking at the possibility to develop new surveys on production methods that would include specific questions on irrigation.

Eurostat also plans to collect fertiliser statistics and will therefore support pilot surveys in the Member States with a focus on two complementary approaches: Data collected on the total amount of fertilizers used at the farm level with a direct link to the farm structure and detailed data on N-P-K inputs by crops with the aim to calculate detailed balances. This paper describes the practical approaches adopted to address these three specific domains mentioned above.