

Agri-environmental reporting - a national experience

By **Ole Osvald Moss**,

Division for Primary Industry Statistics, Statistics Norway, NO-2225 Kongsvinger
ole.osvald.moss@ssb.no

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Statistics Norway has gained experience in compilation of annual agri-environmental statistics since the early 1990s. The main driving force has been the growing need for factual input to governmental policy development and monitoring of environmental performance at farm level. At the outset priority was given to the issue of nutrient run-off from agricultural land contributing to the pollution of coastal waters. Today, the annual report comprises indicators covering 10 environmental policy fields. Data are provided from several internal and external data sources, involving a considerable number of institutions. The results are presented both in a yearly publication (paper and pdf) to the central government, as well as a more detailed web-presentation serving regional and local authorities.

Over time, the following aspects have been of vital importance:

- Strong user needs
- Sufficient resources to co-ordinate data provision from several institutions
- Close co-operation between environmental and agricultural statisticians
- A step by step approach
- Sharing experience with other countries
- Support at European level

One should bear in mind that traditional agricultural data on livestock and land use are at the center of attention also for environmental assessments. Sometimes they need to be re-arranged by other regional units, or they may serve as indispensable input to the calculation of nutrient balances or emissions to air and water. Additional data collection should be restricted to areas where adequate administrative data sources are missing.

A future challenge is to combine the national needs with a growing demand of statistics at international level. At the same time the budgets for the production of agricultural statistics are shrinking, and we are constantly looking for more efficient methods and IT-tools; particularly in the area of geographic information systems. In this respect, we hope that the 2010 agricultural census will represent a leap forward.