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Title: "Identifying the core data needed for agri-environmental statistics: Eurostat "DireDate project"."

Abstract N.75:

This paper focuses on the need for quality information and cost-effective farm-level data collection for monitoring the relation between agriculture and the environment plus for calculating the 28 agri-environmental indicators (AEI) identified by the European Commission.

Agriculture has a great impact on the environment, and considering that alone in Europe the utilised agricultural area covers more than 40% of the total land area, it is imperative to analyse in detail both negative and positive developments in the domain.

A number of international initiatives have been created to calculate the impact of agriculture on specific issues:

- nutrient leaching to the waters (Joint Eurostat/OECD methodology);
- greenhouse gas emissions (UNFCCC/IPCC reporting requirements and guidelines);
- ammonia emissions (UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution);
- et al,

in addition to the regional ones (for example different policies within the European Union).

Eurostat is worried that the development of these separate data collections systems has created a clear risk of overburdening both the respondents (farmers) and the statistical services dealing with the data collection. In addition the data requirements have in some cases undoubtedly been listed without properly analysing the added value of each new item to be considered and without considering the costs of the data collection.

However, before agri-environmental data can actually be used by policy-makers, important issues such as representativeness, comparability, response burden for farmers and others respondents and the costs of collecting the data must be tackled. These constraints are linked to the different potential data sources and the need for relevant regional data, with sufficient precision, adequate periodicity, etc.

Eurostat has therefore commissioned a consortium to analyse and summarise the different data requirements, availability and gaps for AEI and other reporting needs, as well as the potential for their combination, harmonisation and optimization. The expected outcome is a set of recommendations for a sustainable system of data collection and reporting. Cooperation with the national statistical institutes and other national authorities (e.g. Ministries of agriculture, of environment) and with international organisations producing and using agri-environmental indicators such as the OECD and the FAO, is one key element of success for this tender."

Eurostat expects that the results of the project will help identifying a set of core data needed for analysing the agri-environmental issues that can be used at a global level.

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