

**ABARE titles and abstracts for the
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Theme 5 – Survey methodology and survey integration

Session 5.2 - Integrated Agricultural and Household Surveys (LSMS, Demographic and Health, Multiple indicator cluster surveys, gender dimension)

Title: Statistical integration in designing Australian farm surveys
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Abstract N.99

The agriculture sector plays an important role in the Australian economy; accounting for around 16 per cent of the total value of exports and is a major employer in rural and regional areas. Based on the 2005–06 Agricultural Census there were an estimated 154,500 agricultural businesses in Australia, of which around 98 per cent were family owned and operated. The annual farm surveys conducted since the 1940's by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE) play a key role in collecting and analysing high quality statistical data on the Australian agriculture sector.

ABARE farm surveys provide a broad range of statistics covering both the physical characteristics and economic performance of farms as well as management practises. The farm surveys provide the Australian Government, industries, consultants and researchers with a comprehensive and unique dataset that can be used to analyse current policy issues and monitor change in the productivity and profitability of agricultural industries in Australia.

In designing and conducting farm surveys, ABARE has integrated the use of statistics from a range of sources including, data drawn from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) major statistical collection for the Australian agricultural sector as well as information from regulatory bodies, industry and producer organisations. This paper presents the developments and changes which ABARE has made over the years to improve farm survey methods and collection techniques and sets out some of the likely challenges to be faced in collecting agriculture statistics in the future.

This paper also outlines the methods ABARE has used to access or develop population lists, design surveys, weight survey results and co-ordinate collections with ABS and other agencies. Data collection techniques are also discussed. ABARE has used a range of survey techniques, but continues to mainly use face to face interviews for its main farm surveys. This methodology is particularly suited for collecting data from family farms enabling a large data set to be collected while minimising response burden. Improvements to surveys that have occurred over the years are highlighted and the manner in which ABARE integrates different surveys and data sources in analysing and presenting survey results is outlined.
