



FARM STRUCTURE SURVEY 1999/2000
NATIONAL METHODOLOGICAL REPORT

Member State: NETHERLANDS

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SUMMARY

The farm structure survey 1999 included all farms that were registered in the National Farm Register (NFR). It is laid down by law, that all holdings (NGE>3) practicing agricultural activities have to register in this NFR. A complete post farm structure survey was organised by mail to circa 105 000 holdings registered in the NFR. The forms were sent by the end of March, just before the reference date of the national census, namely 1 April. After filling in the questionnaire the holders sent back their forms to LASER using pre-stamped return envelopes.

The threshold of 3 NGE has as a result that agricultural activities are included that contribute for about 99% of total gross agricultural production. As in many countries an attempt to capture the last percent would increase the number of 'holdings' substantially and therefore would ask for a considerable effort which in the Netherlands is regarded as not to be justified. The number of farm holdings decreased from 123 000 to 102 000 between 1991 and 1999 in the Netherlands.

The enumerators did not make direct contact with the farmers. The correspondents did fill in the forms and sent it back by mail. During the processing of the survey forms correspondents were contacted by the checking personnel in case of lack of clarity or incompleteness of the forms.

The data were entered by a data entry service and processed to digital files. At first, the forms are checked for a holders signature and possible mutations. The service enters the data twice by different persons to increase the reliability of the input.

The input of the data entry service was tested with random checks. Also, the submission of forms and files by the data entry service was monitored. The resulting digital files were checked for hard and soft errors, using special programmes checking on constraints. The checking personnel restores the errors corresponding with the holder that sent back the questionnaire. This procedure is repeated until no further errors are found. No imputation procedure was applied. After the control phase, the holders received print outs of their data, giving them opportunity to react. The errors can be divided into two types: *hard errors* and *soft errors*. Hard errors are data that can never occur in reality. Soft errors are data that are unlikely but not impossible.

Farmers that did not respond to the first request to fill in and send in the form received two postal reminders. If this did not lead to a reception of the questionnaire another official census questionnaire was sent to them by registered mail, and they were obliged to complete, sign and return it within 5 days. Refusers were visited by the Agricultural Inspection Service, which is a kind of agricultural police force. If the census would serve statistical purposes only the legal enforcement would probably not be so strict. Only because of the administrative purposes the census has a near to 100% response.

The data that have finally been accepted were forwarded to Statistics Netherlands where new data editing took place and the data were enriched with typology information. First results regarding areas of crops have been

published in July. There is a special need for having (provisional) data on this subject available at that time, because crop areas serve as a basis for the first harvest estimates, which are carried out in August. Final results were published from September onwards, both on paper and in the STATLINE publication on the Web site of Statistics Netherlands (www.cbs.nl).

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. History and scope

History

From 1934 there has been an agricultural census in the Netherlands every year. However, it is not a purely statistical project. It serves two purposes: on the one side production of statistics by Statistics Netherlands and creating a frame for sampling, on the other hand providing data on individual holdings for administrative activities of the Ministry of Agriculture. As both the Ministry of Agriculture and Statistics Netherlands have their responsibility for the census, it is held as a joint effort. The preparation of the census and the design and printing of the questionnaires is done by Statistics Netherlands. The maintaining of a farm register, the field work, preparing the data capture software, the actual interviewing of holders is done by the Ministry. A copy of the data file is sent to Statistics Netherlands, where this file is processed and statistical results are produced and disseminated.

In 1999, there were in the Netherlands about 101 000 farm holdings, which all together have some 2 000 000 ha of agricultural land. The difference between types of farming and specialisation is considerable. About 3 000 holdings do not have agricultural land at all. Farming is spread all over the country as are some important agricultural activities. However a number of crops is concentrated in parts of the country or in relatively small areas. The total cost of the agricultural census (direct costs and overhead) amounts to some 3.6 million Euro. This is 35 Euro per holding.

Generally speaking there is a difference between statistical data and administrative data. The aim of statistical data collection is different from the aim for administrative data. Statistical data are data giving peculiarities on a group of people, group of holdings, group of entities. They never give data on individual people, or individual holdings. The aim of statistical data is to make objective data, not influenced by the concerns of individuals. They are used a.o. for policy preparation, or policy evaluation. Administrative data are the opposite. They are clearly related to an individual person or an individual holding, with the aim to use these data for measures concerning this individual, e.g. with the implementation of all kind of regulations (the European Common Agricultural Policy, disease control and so on).

Combining the data capture for statistics and administration has advantages and disadvantages. From a statistical point of view it is clear that there is a risk of a bias in the data due to the fact that farmers are well aware of the possibility that these data are to be used as a basis for possible financial arrangements or providing permits etcetera. Statistics Netherlands indeed has to keep in mind what kind of biases might occur and intensify checks on these items. On the other hand administrative authorities do not rest before they have a 100% response. And this asks for resources and an approach that is not easily available for statistics. And last but not least, farmers, at least in the Netherlands, do not like civil servants ask them twice a year the same question, one time for administration and another time for statistics. They are

not so impressed by the theory behind it and this might endanger a proper response.

Statistics Netherlands has a register of all industrial and non-industrial commercial establishments, but the agricultural holdings are not included in this register. For agricultural statistics we rely therefore on the farm register in the Ministry of Agriculture. Farmers have the obligation to have themselves entered into this register. Referring to the register we in general only think of a computerised list with name and address of holders or holdings and a unique registration number. At the same time there is the data base with the same registration numbers and the related census information for a number of years. So one could also tell that the register consists of name and address and all the census items. The latter combination provides a magnificent possibility for stratification and efficient sampling. Changes in addresses are entered into the register throughout the year, changes in census data of course only once a year. It cannot be denied that a yearly census is a rather expensive exercise (even when only half of the cost is looked upon as expenses for statistics). At the same time the very up to date sample frame allows for relative small samples and thus reduction of costs. In countries where not a yearly census exists, in general a decision has to be taken about the farm characteristics that can be updated more or less frequently (at least more frequent than the bulk of census items).

1.1.1. Scope

The census is directed to all holders of agricultural holdings with an economic size above a certain threshold. Two questions arise from this formulation:

- What is an agricultural holding?
- What is the economic size of the holding?

The question 'what is agriculture?' can produce a lengthy discussion on what is included and what is not. For crops and certain types of animals it is obvious. E.g. growing cereals, cattle and pigs are generally considered to be agriculture. But what about forestry, breeding of dogs or ornamental birds or the multiplication of plants by histological laboratory techniques? To delimitate agriculture there seem to be at least two approaches. One can try to give a definition of agriculture in general terms. The other is to construct a list of all kinds of agricultural activities, crops, animals and products to make perfectly clear what is to be incorporated.

For the agricultural census in the Netherlands agriculture is defined by a 'list of agricultural activities'. An activity that is not on this list, is not counted for. However, the list of agricultural activities does not exist as such, it exists only in the mind. An agricultural activity is an activity related to a characteristic that is included on the list of characteristics of the census. This list is more concrete and of course the definitions of these are given in a small booklet.

Size classification involves rather complex problems. In the early seventies the EEC adopted the so-called Standard Gross Margin (SGM) as a measure for the size of agricultural holdings. This SGM can be described as the gross production minus the proportionally variable non-factor costs (e.g. seed, fertilizer, feed concentrates, fodder etc.). It is calculated per head of livestock

and per hectare of crop. However it is not derived from financial data of every holding but as averages calculated from a sample, thus constituting a set of coefficients. The standard gross margin of a holding in the census is then computed by multiplying the records on the census items with the SGM 's per head and per hectare.

In this way the list of characteristics together with the list of SGM 's contain implicitly the definition of agriculture. Within the framework of the census an agricultural activity is an activity for which an SGM has been fixed. Examples of activities to which no SGM as been assigned are: the keeping of bee's or the rearing of ostriches.

The SGM is expressed in Ecu (European currency unit). As this is a fairly small monetary unit the size of a holding need not to be very large to comprise several thousands Ecu. For practical reasons, therefore, the European Size Unit (ESU) was introduced in 1973 corresponding with 1 000 Ecu. Size class limits were set at 2,4,6,8,12,16,40 and 100 ESU.

This concept of size can also easily be used to set the threshold for holdings to be included in the census. In the Netherlands it is for already a rather long period 3 ESU. This threshold has as a result that agricultural activities are included that contribute for about 99% of total gross agricultural production. As in many countries an attempt to capture the last percent would increase the number of 'holdings' substantially and therefore would ask for a considerable effort which in the Netherlands is regarded as not to be justified.

The proportionate importance of the components of the SGM 's may change over time, due to changes in technical-economic production circumstances (e.g. more efficient use of fertilizer, mechanisation or yield improvements). Recalculation of the SGM per head and per hectare is therefore periodically necessary. For the census in 1999, which was at the same time the contribution of the Netherlands to the EEC Farm Structure Survey, the ESU amounted to 1380 Ecu.

In the Netherlands the NSU (in Dutch NGE: 'Nederlandse Grootte Eenheid') is used instead of the ESU. As inflation rates differ in the different Member States the upgrading of the ESU using an average inflation rate introduces some inaccuracies. Therefore the NSU is used for attuning the economic size of agricultural holdings to a realistic level.

1.2. Legislation

In the Netherlands there exists a Central Commission for Statistics. In this commission many sectors of the society are represented, government, trade unions, employers organisations, etc. This CCS is an independent body and has to approve of all official, government statistics. It decides on new statistical projects, on the continuation and discontinuation of current projects. Thus the CCS establishes the work plan of Statistics Netherlands. As the CCS covers the complete spectrum on statistics, it has advisory sub-commissions on the various subjects. One of these sub-commissions is the Advisory Commission on Agriculture.

An Agricultural Act provides the framework for all kind of rules and regulations regarding the agricultural production. Based on this law the Minister for

Agriculture issues a Decision to hold an agricultural census; over fifty years now in co-operation with Statistics Netherlands. Before he issues this Decision he consults the Advisory Commission on Agriculture.

From the above it follows that the agricultural census is based on the Agricultural Act. It is therefore compulsory and anyone to whom a census questionnaire is issued, is obliged to complete it faithfully and truthfully, to put his signature and to return it.

1.2.1. Identification, protection and obligations of counters

In the year 1999 the questionnaire has been sent by mail. The counters did not make direct contact with the farmers. The correspondents did fill in the forms and sent it back by mail. During the processing of the survey forms correspondents were contacted by the checking personnel in case of lack of clarity or incompleteness of the forms.

1.2.2. Right of access to administrative data

LASER – one of the executive services of the Ministry of Agriculture – is involved in the process of the agricultural census. With respect to individual data it has to comply with the Act on Registration of personal data. This goes not only for the personnel dealing with the farm structure survey, but also for all having access to the administrative data.

1.3. Main changes in the 1990's

1.3.1. Number of holdings

The number of farm holdings decreased from 123 000 to 102 000 between 1991 and 1999 in the Netherlands, as can be seen in the next table.

Changes in number of agricultural holdings in the Netherlands between 1991 – 1999.

Year t	Number of holdings in year t-1	Number of holdings closed down	Number of holdings becoming <3 NGE	New holdings	Number of holdings becoming >3 NGE	Deficit of holdings	Number of holdings in year t
1991							122 606
1992	122 606	1 599	3 902	939	1 940	951	120 935
1993	120 935	2 072	3 813	1 208	2 418	1 048	119 724
1994	119 724	2 321	4 327	788	824	1 496	116 184
1995	116 184	2 146	4 049	564	1 147	1 502	113 202
1996	113 202	3 294	1 724	541	1 106	836	110 667
1997	110 667	3 099	1 959	376	1 037	897	107 919
1998	107 919	3 006	2 099	399	947	713	104 873
1999	104 873	3 894	1 927	541	1 115	837	101 545

1.3.2. Procedure

The method of data collection changed over this period. In 1990, it was the last time a census was carried out by hand. On special meeting days, farmers were asked to go to a meeting place and the data of the correspondent were filled in manually by a counter on a questionnaire. In the period 1991 – 1995, these sessions still took place, but the manual procedure was gradually replaced by filling in the information in a computer file. In 1996, a correspondent could make a choice between coming to a special meeting place or filling in the survey form himself and returning it by mail. From 1997 on, a complete census was organised by post mail every year.

2. CONTENT

2.1. Characteristics

The list of characteristics that is used for the census is quite long. To maintain continuity in the data it is our aim to keep the list unchanged for as long a period as possible. But developments in agriculture of course are reflected in changes in the list. The bigger part of the list contains of:

- the animal species: cattle, pigs, poultry, horse, rabbits, fur animals (all together approx. 55 items);
- arable crops (30 items), horticultural crops (70 items), grasslands, rough grazing, fallow land;
- peculiars about the holder: year of birth, main and subsidiary occupation (other gainful activity);
- labour: family and non-family, regular and non-regular working, number of average working hours per week on the holding.

These are the topics that appear every year in the census.

For characteristics that do not change very fast, yearly data are not necessary. For instance the area of land in ownership and rented, the area of irrigated land, the presence of a successor to the present holder is included in a list with a lower frequency. Major additions of this kind occur in the years when the EEC Farm Structure Survey is held. We try to combine this as much as possible with our non yearly topics.

Although the EEC asks for additional items, for national purposes in the Netherlands the questions on horticulture are more detailed. In general an international classification can serve as a framework that enables comparisons of headlines. But almost every country has specific crops or types of holdings which need to be distinguished more explicitly.

2.2. Questionnaire

A copy of the 1999 questionnaire is annexed to this report.

3. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

3.1. Survey organisation

As already indicated the census is a joint effort of the Ministry of Agriculture – and especially its executive service LASER - and Statistics Netherlands. The work is divided between the offices of the 5 administrative agricultural regions in the Netherlands. In each office for the duration of the census temporarily enumerators are employed. They process the data that are collected. LASER Groningen manages the application tools and the implementation of the survey activities.

The following phases can be distinguished:

1. Determination of the content and format of the questionnaire.
2. Development phase questionnaire and instruction manual;
 development and testing of the software tools;
 implementation of the software tools.
3. Training phase training of employees.
4. Implementation phase mailing;
 processing of questionnaires;
 processing of data.

1. *Determination of the content and format of the questionnaire*

A number of organisations active in the agricultural files in the Netherlands is involved in this process. The data need is inventoried in a general session led by Statistics Netherlands. Then, the Advisory Commission on Agriculture is involved. This Commission has set up a permanent working group on the census characteristics. The working group meets every year in March or April to discuss the characteristics of the census of the next year. After discussions have been finalised a proposal is sent to the Advisory Commission on Agriculture for approval in its September meeting. A large number of questions is constant over the years. There is always some possibility for extra questions with a temporary character. In 1999, additional questions required for the EU Farm Structure Survey 1999/2000 were added to the list.

2. *Development phase*

Statistics Netherlands prepares the form and the instruction manual and takes care of the printing process. LASER submits the list of addresses of the National Farm Register (NFR). The instruction manual is intended to assist the enumerators who on request can give advice to farmers on how to fill in the form. LASER develops and adjusts the necessary software tools. Therefore external software houses are employed. LASER is responsible for the checking and testing of the end products.

3. *Training phase*

The management of the survey process is responsible for the training of the employees. Partly, this training is on forehand and “on the job”.

4. *Implementation phase*

Each holder receives a questionnaire, just before the reference date of the first of April. Farmers that do not respond to the first request to fill in and send in the form receive two postal reminders. If this does not lead to a reception of the questionnaire another official census questionnaire is sent to them by registered mail, and they are obliged to complete, sign and return it within 5 days. Refusers are visited by the Agricultural Inspection Service, which is a kind of agricultural police force.

The survey forms are processed by a data entry company, resulting in digital files. These files are read in and stored in the LASER data base. The paper forms are archived by LASER as well. Next the checking of the information in the questionnaires takes place using checking for hard and soft errors. The checking personnel restore the errors corresponding with the holder that sent back the questionnaire. After approval of a form the holder receives a print out of its data. Then it still is possible to pass on changes. By the end of August this process is ended, provided that at least 98% of the forms are received. The final data are sent to Statistics Netherlands for further checking and the processing of a large range of statistics.

3.2. **Work process**

Preparation started in 1998. The four phases mentioned in section 3.1 were carried out over the following periods:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Determination of the questionnaire | January 1998 - November 1998 |
| 2. Development phase | September 1998 - March 1999 |
| 3. Training phase | March 1999 - August 1999 |
| 4. Implementation phase | April 1999 - March 2000 |

3.3. **Preparing the survey operations**

The first preparations are made in the Advisory Commission on Agriculture. This Commission has set up a permanent working group on the census characteristics. The working group meets every year in March or April to discuss the characteristics of the census of the next year. After discussions have been finalised a proposal is sent to the Advisory Commission on Agriculture for approval in its September meeting. After this approval the drafts of the questionnaires and other forms can be finalised and sent to the printer. Also, a booklet is prepared giving explanations about the census. This booklet is intended to assist the enumerators who on request can give advice to farmers on how to fill in the form.

When preparing the census, there is an almost constant pressure to introduce new items in the questionnaire. Thus extending it bit by bit and constituting a threat for the project as such. Proposals for introducing new items ought to be accompanied by serious suggestions for deleting certain questions.

3.3.1. Population and frame

- **Population**

The farm structure survey 1999 included all farms that were registered in the National Farm Register (NFR). It is laid down by law, that all holdings (NGE>3) practicing agricultural activities have to register in this NFR. For 1999, this included circa 105 000 holdings.

- **Building the frame**

A condition for obtaining financial support is the registration of a holder in the NFR. In the case of new holders, they are requested to fill in registration forms whenever required. Only after a proper registration application for support can be taken in consideration. New holders who register after the first of April will not be surveyed over that year

Every year there are many mutations in the basis data. These are continuously processed in the NFR. These can be changes in address, telephone number, size of the holding etc.

On the farm structure questionnaire one can indicate whether there are mutations or not. These mutations will be processed first to ensure a proper connection of the census data and the relation number (the code for a holder).

In the period between the first of April and the end of August, the survey data of that specific year will be entered into a database. In the same period mutations will still be processed in the system. After the closure of the survey, end of August, new mutations are collected in a paper archive.

- **Frame errors**

In the questionnaire, it is explicitly described how to fill in the data for e.g. land or crops in case of lease contracts. However, it is very difficult to check whether this land or crop is double counted for in the case that both leaseholder and the lessor have filled in the same information.

A series of computer programmes are applied to check for errors or improbabilities in the survey data. These checks concern correlation in the data, checking of totals and comparison with minimum and maximum values. Some examples might illustrate this procedure:

- Filling in over 25 milk cows, without any young animals – would this be correct?
- The total area of a holding differs from the sum of the sub-areas.
- Filling in over 5 000 pigs – would this be correct?

A limited number of holders refuse to cooperate with the survey. A part of these will be visited by the Agricultural Inspection Service. In some cases

these holders then do fill in the forms after all. In other cases the farmers will be given a penalty.

3.3.2. Survey design

Each year, the agricultural census is carried out by a complete enumeration. The information of the farm structure survey provides the basis for sample enumeration of more specific agricultural research.

3.3.3. Informing and training the staff and respondents

The farm structure survey is a well-known phenomenon in the Netherlands and is organised every year. Preceding to the mailing of all the forms, a special Regulation signed by the Minister of agriculture will be published in the Official Journal of the Netherlands, de Staatscourant. Together with the questionnaire and an instruction manual, the holders will receive a special letter, informing them on the frame of the survey.

As already indicated the census is a joint effort of the Ministry of Agriculture – and especially its executive service LASER - and Statistics Netherlands. The work is divided between the offices of the 5 administrative agricultural regions in the Netherlands. In each office for the duration of the census temporarily enumerators are employed. They process the data that are collected. In 1997 the data was collected using forms that could be scanned by scanning equipment. It turned out however that this was not a cheap solution and therefore since 1998 a specialised private company takes care of the data-entry-process. After entering the data the forms and the data are being sent back to the regional offices of the ministry.

All 5 regional offices of LASER have been instructed on the 1999 census on the 18th of March 1999 during a central instruction meeting. Also an instruction manual is prepared by Statistics Netherlands. The LASER Groningen department functions as an `oracle` for the farmers during the phase they are filling in the forms.

3.4. Data collection

In 1999 a complete post farm structure survey was organised by mail. The forms were sent by the end of March, just before the reference date of the national census, namely 1 April. After filling in the questionnaire the holders sent back their forms to LASER using pre-stamped return envelopes.

- **Data entry modes**

The “heads up” data entry method was used by the data-entry firm IVA. Each form was entered twice, to ensure that no entry mistakes were made. The second time the typist was alerted on inconsistencies between the first and second data entry.

- **Data transmission to Statistics Netherlands (CBS)**

During the enumeration period the data of the completed enumerations is delivered to the CBS.

This is done four times until at least 98% of the population has been completed. A specific programme produces the data and this data is printed on a CD-rom and submitted to the CBS.

3.4.1. Control of the data

- **Control at data-entry**

The data are entered by a data entry service and processed to digital files. At first, the forms are checked for a holder's signature and possible mutations. The service enters the data twice by different persons to increase the reliability of the input.

- **Quality control of the input by the data entry firm**

The input of the data entry service is tested with random checks. The paper forms and the input by the data entry service are then compared. Also the submission of forms and files by the data entry service is monitored with lists from the National Farm Register.

- **Error control**

After the survey forms have been processed by the data entry company - resulting in digital files - these files are read in and stored in the LASER data base. Next the questionnaires are checked for hard and soft errors, using special programmes checking on constraints. The checking personnel restores the errors corresponding with the holder that sent back the questionnaire. This procedure is repeated until no further errors are found.

- **Printing of the results**

After the control phase, the holders receive print outs of their data. If necessary, they will still be in the position to pass on changes to these data. The form then goes through the full procedure once again.

3.4.2. Non-response

Farmers that do not respond to the first request to fill in and send in the form receive two postal reminders. If this does not lead to a reception of the questionnaire another official census questionnaire is sent to them by registered mail, and they are obliged to complete, sign and return it within 5 days. Refusers are visited by the Agricultural Inspection Service, which is a kind of agricultural police force. If the census would serve statistical purposes only the legal enforcement would probably not be so strict. Only because of the administrative purposes the census has a near to 100% response.

In 1999 it was agreed to visit the maximum of 250 refusers. Holders who send back incomplete forms will be contacted by telephone.

3.5. Data processing

The census is held in April every year. The census date is the first of April, which means that the situation on this date on the farm has to be described on the form.

In each regional office computer controls are performed on the data and when necessary additional information is collected from the farmers by phone. Generally speaking there are errors between questionnaires and within questionnaires.

between questionnaires

In this case data of one holding appear twice, but under different registration numbers. This can happen when a holding is transferred, e.g. from father to son, and the data are both entered by the father and by the son. This can be checked by comparing the number of holdings received at the statistical office with the number of holdings at the provincial register. Clearing this up is usually time-consuming.

Within questionnaires

In this case inconsistencies between data in one questionnaire exist.

The errors can be divided into two types: hard errors and soft errors. Hard errors are data that can never occur in reality. For instance the total area of holding does not equal the total of the various crop areas and other areas of the holding; there are sows with piglets, but there are no piglets; the age of the holder is over a certain limit. Soft errors are data that are unlikely but not impossible e.g. the recording of a certain crop that is very uncommon in the region; a number of animals that is extremely high; the amount of labour is not in line with the size of the holding.

The data that are finally accepted are forwarded to Statistics Netherlands where new data editing takes and the data is enriched with typology information. First results regarding areas of crops are published in July. There is a special need for having (provisional) data on this subject available at that time, because crop areas serve as a basis for the first harvest estimates, which are carried out in August. Final results are published from September onwards.

Every holder has a unique registration number and if a holder has more than one holding all data are related to this same registration number. So the register of holdings is actually a register of holders. To each holder a municipality is assigned. This is usually the place where the most important buildings of the holding are located. In the tabulation of results all the data of a holding are calculated to belong to this municipality. In some extreme case it therefore happens that the figure for the total agricultural area in a municipality is higher than the total area of the municipality within its boundaries.

- **statistical confidentiality**

To maintain statistical confidentiality, no individual holding data may be disclosed by the published results. This is especially important in the lower regional tables; e.g. a table shows that there is one holding with pigs in a certain region, and another table shows that there are 100 pigs in that region, when you encounter a holding with pigs, you know it must have 100 pigs. A solution could be to apply the rule of dominance that is to hide the contents of table cells where the data are from few holdings. This is a very complicated operation. Very often a hidden cell value can be recalculated by difference from data in other tables so once you start to adapt tables by making changes

in some cells, you have to continue this in other tables and the hiding operation spreads throughout the table set like an oil spill. Therefore we have chosen for an easier pragmatic approach: tables with a danger of disclosing individual data are published only at country or province level. Usually these are the tables where holdings are grouped according to some characteristic, e.g. number of pigs, number of cows, or area of a crop; also tables with two dimensions e.g. agricultural area and type of holding, are not published for the lower regional levels. We do have these tables at our office for special studies, but they are not regularly published.

4. PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION

Statistics Netherlands has a central press department to maintain contacts with the general press. Apart from that the agricultural statistics department has its information section, which takes care of the dissemination of the results towards the more agriculturally specialised press and other parties. The first preliminary results of the census are published in July with press releases about arable crops, livestock and horticultural crops. As tables of the final results become available from September onwards they are sent to a number of interested parties by our information section. Through the years a list of about 200 to 300 addresses has been built up to where these results are sent.

The most important results of the census are published in a yearly publication. In 1993 for the first time we succeeded in getting this publication issued in the same year as the census concerned.

Apart from the tables and maps printed on paper, the results are published on the Web-site of Statistics Netherlands (www.cbs.nl) in the STATLINE publication on the Web. For all appropriate characteristics we have the total per municipality. To prevent disclosure of individual data the number of holdings having certain characteristics are only published in an aggregated form.