
AUSTRIA - Census of Agriculture 2010 – Explanatory Notes

1. Historical Outline

Austria conducted its first census of all agricultural and forestry holdings in 1902. Subsequent agriculture censuses were held in 1930, 1939 and 1951, and every ten years from 1960 to 1990. The European Union intended the Farm Structure Survey to be carried out in the form of a complete enumeration at the end of the decade; in Austria, the last two Agricultural Censuses took place in 1999 and in 2010.

2. Legal Basis and Organization

The legal basis for implementing the 2010 Farm Structure Survey (Census of agriculture) and the survey on agricultural production methods was Regulation (EC) No 1166/2008 of the European Parliament and the Council of 19 November 2008. The definitions of characteristics are given in Regulation (EC) No 1200/2009.

Statistics Austria has responsibility for the Census of agriculture. At national level, Austria's Federal Minister for Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management adopted Regulation (Bundesgesetzblatt (BGBl) II No. 122/2010) on the basis of the Federal Statistics Act 2000, BGBl. I No 163/1999, as last amended by BGBl I No 111/2010.

The Agricultural Census and the Survey on agricultural production methods of 2010 were conducted in the form of a complete enumeration.

The Federal Statistics Act 2000 provides for the creation of Advisory Committees for the various statistical activities. The Farm Structure Survey comes under the aegis of the Advisory Committee on Agricultural Statistics, which comprises experts from various Austrian institutions in the agricultural field. The Advisory Committee was tasked with providing Statistics Austria, which bears ultimate responsibility for the survey as such, with mainly technical advice and support in the planning and implementation of the census.

3. Reference Period or Date

Reference dates are:

Livestock data - 1 April 2010

Ownership and land-area-related survey characteristics - 15 May 2010

All other Farm Structure Survey characteristics - 31 October 2010

Reference periods are:

Land use, Labour force, other gainful activities and agricultural production methods - 1 November 2009 to 31 October 2010

Landscape features, rural development support and average irrigated area - January 2008 to December 2010

4. Enumeration Period

The census documents were sent out by post in October 2010 to both the municipalities and the respondents. For the farmer these consisted of a survey folder with the most important information including an outline for the use of the electronic questionnaire. The enumeration period ended on 31 March 2011.

5. Definition of the Statistical Unit

EC Regulation 1166/2008 defines the statistical unit as an agricultural holding. „Agricultural holding“ or „holding“ means a single unit, both technically and economically, which has a single management and which undertakes agricultural activities listed in Annex I to the European Parliament and Council Regulation (EC) No 1166/2008 within the economic territory of the European Union, either as its primary or secondary activity. In addition, the EU regulation determines thresholds of size.

In line with Regulation (EC) No 1166/2008, Austria applied the following definition: Census includes agricultural holdings that reach one of the following thresholds:

- 1 hectare utilized agricultural area (UAA);
- Wine growing holdings with at least 25 areas under market vines;
- Holdings with at least 15 ares of intensively utilized fruit orchards, or 10 ares under berries, strawberries, vegetables, hops, flowers or decorative plants, or under vine or forest or nurseries;

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- Holdings which operate greenhouses (high/low glass or foil) covering at least one are, the majority of the produce being grown for market;
 - Livestock holdings with at least three head of cattle, five pigs, 10 sheep, 10 goats or 100 head of poultry of any type.

In addition, according to a national regulation, statistical units include forestry holdings with at least three hectares of wooded area.

6. Geographic Coverage

Covered the entire country.

7. Exclusions and Cut-Off Thresholds

None noted other than those stated as the minimum threshold of agricultural activity in the national definition of an agricultural holding.

8. Methodology

Use of the FAO Modular Approach

No

Frame

The population of the Agricultural Census 2010 essentially comprised the 208,952 active holding units in the Agricultural and Forestry Register. Quality is ensured by the routine maintenance of the Agricultural and Forestry Register, which is continually updated with data from the agriculture survey program and administrative data.

Complete or Sample Enumeration Methods

Enumeration of all agricultural holdings.

Sample Design

Not applicable.

Collection Method

The 2010 Agriculture Census data were collected using an Internet based questionnaire. Farmers were able to submit their return either directly at the computer after entering their user ID and password (direct respondents) or via a computer at their municipality offices. The census took the form of a personalized questionnaire in which the name and the address of the holdings were already entered and farmers were only asked to verify the information and if necessary make corrections.

Other individual characteristics were also covered by using administrative data, if available. Other surveyed characteristics were collected by questioning all statistical units with the electronic questionnaire.

The following administrative data were used:

- (1) Integrated Administration and Control system (IACS, ÖPUL) – data on crops grown,
- (2) cattle register – number of cattle by category,
- (3) Register of organic farms,
- (4) Measures for rural development,
- (5) Veterinary Information System (VIS) – number of livestock (except cattle),
- (6) Petroleum Tax Refund (MÖST).

A dedicated free hotline and email address was set up by Statistics Austria to answer any questions that arose during the survey.

Questionnaire(s)

EU Regulations require information on holding location and geo-coordinates, legal status, ownership and type of tenure, land use and crops grown, irrigation, livestock, organic farming, machinery (mandatory in 2013 FSS), renewable energy installations, other gainful activities, socio-economic circumstances (full and part-time farming), labour force (family, non-family, contractors), agricultural and vocational training of the manager, inclusion in rural development support programmes, soil tillage methods, crop rotation, and erosion protection, livestock keeping places and keeping methods, animal grazing, manure application and manure storage and treatment facilities, establishment and maintenance of landscape features.

According to national data needs additional information was collected on tourism (accommodation services), extensive fruit farming and horticulture and field vegetable cultivation, including annual consumption of fuel and energy in horticultural holdings.

Personalized Internet based questionnaire was used. Due to an exclusive use of the electronic questionnaire, no separate data collection was necessary. The IT department took the data directly from the questionnaire and imported it into a database. Only the data of a few holdings, that submitted their questionnaire by mail or fax to Statistics Austria, had to be entered manually into the electronic questionnaire.

Controls to Minimize Non-Sampling Errors

Personalized Internet based questionnaires containing the most recent farm information for farmers to review and verify and only make corrections and additions where necessary.

Innovative Methodologies

The Agricultural Census data were collected using an Internet based questionnaire. The questionnaire was personalized and prefilled with available administrative data. Farmers were asked to verify the information, complete missing data and if necessary make corrections.

Individual characteristics were obtained from existing administrative data, when available.

9. Data Entry, Edits and Imputations, Estimation and Tabulation

The characteristics collected as primary statistics during the Farm Structure Survey were subjected to plausibility check at the micro record level and key characteristics were also compared with any available data.

The electronic questionnaire was designed in such a way that it could only be sent once the compulsory fields had been correctly completed. This made it possible to reduce the item-non-response rate. In the paper-based questionnaires in previous surveys, characteristics frequently came back uncompleted. Similarly, to prevent individual pages of the questionnaire being inadvertently missed-out, a marker was placed on each page of the Internet questionnaire, which had to be set to signify that the page had been completed ("The entries on this page are complete"). In addition, various monitoring measures were carried out in the plausibility check.

10. Data Dissemination and Use

Statistics Austria is obliged to make the main results available via the Internet free of charge. They are available at www.statistik.at.

The results of the 2010 Farm Structure Survey were released as follows:

- (a) Key data were available in the form of a press release containing preliminary national information on October 10, 2011. The press release was made available on the Internet at www.statistik.at.
- (b) Final results were released on May 31, 2012.
- (c) Regional Data (LAU2) were published in summer 2012 (fee-based).

11. Census Data Quality.

Once the processing was complete, the results were then checked at the macro-level and compared with the results of the 1999, 2003, 2005 and 2007 Farm Structure Surveys, and with other available sources such as the Cattle Register, subsidy data, Livestock Register, and information on organic farms. Comparison of the items revealed a very good match. The differences that were identified were mainly due to differences in definitions, units and methodology.

The differences with the Integrated Administration and Control System (IACS) data on macro data level were caused by differences in definitions and methodology (not all holdings are applying for subsidies etc.). For example, IACS data includes the data of 132,653 subsidy applicants (11,7% less than the number of agricultural holdings in the Agricultural Census 2010) with 2.760.257 hectares total utilized agricultural area (4.1% less than in the Agricultural Census 2010) with 1,362,411 hectares arable land (0.6% less than in the Agricultural Census 2010). There were practically no differences with the crop production survey. Differences with animal surveys were small and caused by different reference dates.

Inspections are carried out regularly at farmers' premises as part of the IACS and false declarations are punished with penalties so the administrative information tends to be accurate. The use of a digital cadastral map (DCM) is also expected to yield accurate information on areas.

12. Data Sources

Eurostat:

http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Agricultural_census_2010

Final report:

http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/749240/749313/AT_NMR_FSS_2010.pdf/07599769-455a-4da6-b0dc-b04e795e3fa4

13. Contact

Statistics Austria, Directorate Spatial Statistics Agriculture and Forestry (Bundesanstalt Statistik Österreich)

Address: Guglgasse 13, 1110 Wien

Telephone +43 (1) 711 28-0

Fax +43 (1) 711 28-7728

E-mail: info@statistik.gv.at

Website

Statistics Austria: http://www.statistik.at/web_en/statistics/index.html