

Brazil Agricultural Census 2006: Innovations and Impacts

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Abstract: In its first agricultural census of the new millennium, Brazil's Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) is innovating data collection in 2007 by introducing electronic questionnaires into Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) integrated with Global Position System (GPS) to achieve geo-referenced information on all of the approximately five million farms in the country, covering 8,514,877 km² in 5,564 municipalities.

Real-time edits and automatic jumps performed during enumeration will ensure a faster and more reliable interview. The PDA's Bluetooth® technology allows direct data transmission to IBGE's central mainframe by each of the seventy thousand enumerators on a weekly basis. This eliminates the cost and time of transporting, scanning or keying data from paper questionnaires and allows supervisors to immediately address problems while data are being collected.

The final results of the 10th Brazilian Agricultural Census are expected to be released at the end of 2008. The database of geo-referenced farm addresses will provide a comprehensive list for future surveys. In addition, an area frame, based on IBGE's enumeration sectors, will be constructed. Presently, IBGE does not conduct sample surveys in agriculture, so these programs are expected to result in a great improvement in Brazilian Agricultural Statistics.

This paper covers the main innovation in Brazil's agricultural census, their motivations and consequences. Data quality improvements and new horizons offered by geo-referenced agricultural data at the farm level, including sample surveys, are also discussed.