

How to Build an Integrated Database in Agriculture and Food: The Farm Income and Prices Section Database – A Case Study

Denis Chartrand
Statistics Canada
Ottawa, Canada
Email: denis.chartrand@statcan.ca

Abstract: The Farm Income and Prices Section in the Agriculture Division of Statistics Canada is responsible for a regular program of collecting, compiling, analysing and disseminating aggregate agriculture economic statistics. Data from these series flow to several divisions in the Canadian System of National Accounts Branch to form the agriculture sector's contribution to GDP, as well as too many key users outside Statistics Canada both in government and in the private sector, and together are considered vital indicators of the health of the farm sector. In producing these data sets, the Section integrates a tremendous volume of data on a monthly, quarterly, semi-annual and annual basis from a wide range of sources within the Agriculture Division, other divisions in Statistics Canada, other federal and provincial government departments and agencies, producer marketing boards and industry associations.

The rapidly changing structure of the industry, with its escalating complexity and diversity, as well as a loss of critical administrative data sources, has increased the difficulties of data collection and estimation. In an environment of resource constraint, ensuring an efficient production process that leverages advances in technology to permit sufficient time for analysis to ensure the high level of data quality essential in meeting users' requirements is a challenge.

This paper provides an overview of the issues, the strategy and the considerations surrounding the development of a new database to be used in the Agriculture Division to facilitate the process.