



AUSTRALIA

**Institutional Arrangements For Effective
Coordination of Agricultural And Rural
Statistics**

Overview of National Statistical System (NSS)

- There is a website which provides details of the National Statistical System: <http://www.nss.gov.au/>
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is a centralized statistical office, with a few exceptions
- Agriculture and rural statistics responsibilities
 - ABS – all government censuses and most intercensal surveys except for
 - Australian Bureau of Agricultural & Resource Economics & Sciences (ABARES)
 - Australian agricultural and grazing industries survey (AAGIS) covers detailed financial, physical and socioeconomic information for the broadacre sector
 - Australian dairy industry survey (ADIS) covers detailed financial, physical and socioeconomic information for the dairy sector
 - Forecasts of annual production of a wide range of key commodities
 - Department of Agriculture
 - Publishes information on the volume and value of a wide range of fish species
 - Publishes information on forest area by type and the volume and value of harvested logs
 - Commodity specific organisations and cooperatives also produce statistics based on information collected from their members or through their production facilities
 - Meat and Livestock Australia
 - Dairy Australia
 - Horticulture Australia

Overview of National Statistical System (NSS), ctd

- Agro-Environment related statistics
 - ABS conducts an annual Rural Environment and Agricultural Commodities Survey (REACS)
 - Information on agricultural land management and farming practices including cropping and pasture management, water use, fertiliser use, wetland protection and farm management
 - Developed in conjunction with Dept of the Environment
 - ABARES
 - 2001-02 resource management survey was designed to investigate the perceptions of, and responses to, land degradation by Australian broadacre and dairy farmers, and to assist in the ongoing evaluation of a number of natural resource management programs.
- Dept of Agriculture
 - Reports data from various forestry and fisheries regulatory programs

Highlights of legislation

Legislation establishes the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), whose functions include:

- to constitute the central statistical authority for the Australian Government;
- to collect, compile, analyse and disseminate statistics and related information; all sub-sectors are covered
- to ensure co-ordination of the operations of official bodies in the collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics and related information
- To conduct a population census in the year 1981 and in every fifth year thereafter

Legislation establishes the Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC), whose functions are to advise the Minister and the Statistician in relation to:

- the improvement, extension and co-ordination of statistical services provided for public purposes in Australia;
- annual and longer term priorities and programs of work that should be adopted in relation to major aspects of the provision of those statistical services; and
- any other matters relating generally to those statistical services

Identifying the changing needs of data users

- ASAC fills this role at the broad level
- There is also an Australian Government Statistical Forum, which provides a vehicle for senior staff in Australian Government agencies to discuss key national and international statistical developments. The role of the forum is to:
 - (a) Advance the NSS and consider strategic matters of importance to the effective operation of the NSS.
 - (b) Consider matters of relevance to producers of statistical services within the Australian Government.
 - (c) Share information on developments in each agency's activities, with regard to national statistical information, and identify opportunities for collaborative work
- For agriculture and agri-environment statistics
 - An informal “Agriculture Statistics User Advisory Group” meets at least annually to guide ABS on priorities in this area
 - Bilateral relationships are maintained with relevant
 - Federal Departments
 - State Departments
 - Commodity based agencies

Coordination and Cooperation

- **Statistical Clearing House**
 - mandatory central clearance point for business surveys that are run, funded, or conducted on behalf of the Commonwealth Government.
 - works to reduce the load of Commonwealth Government surveys on Australian businesses, and ensure surveys are fit for their purpose.
- **ABS and ABARES**
 - ABS provides the frame for use by ABARES in their farm surveys
 - ABARES provides aggregate financial data back to ABS
 - Work closely on a range of development issues
- **ABS and Dept of Agriculture**
 - Work closely in relation to deciding user needs
 - No working relationship in areas of forestry and fisheries
- **ABS and Commodity based agencies**
 - ABS uses data from these agencies to help validate agriculture census and survey results

Funding for statistical activities

- Government provides a budget to ABS
 - Allocation to subsectors is largely determined by ABS
- ABARES and Department of Agriculture are also funded by government
 - There is no specific allocation for statistics in their budgets
 - Allocation to statistical activity is based on their assessment of relative needs

Conclusions

- Mechanisms set up to enable coordination can be effective
 - Need to get the right people on relevant committees
 - Need to meet regularly

Thank You