

I. Introduction

Agricultural census 2010 belongs to the system of exhaustive surveys in agricultural holdings, which have been conducted every ten years since 1930. These surveys had been organized by the International Institute for Agriculture (IIA) until 1950 and by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) since then. The Statistical Office of the European Union (EUROSTAT) has followed FAO's recommendation since 1970 and, furthermore, has also carried out intermediate surveys every 2-3 years. These surveys can already be designed as sample surveys. Agricultural census 2010 is conducted in all the European Union countries and, in addition, in Norway and Switzerland.

In the Czech Republic, the first survey of this type was conducted exceptionally in 1995; it means during the period of huge structural changes in agriculture due to privatisation and transformation of agricultural holdings. The following Agricultural census 2000 was already organized completely according to the European Union rules. It should be noted that FAO also owns data for the former Czechoslovakia for years 1970, 1980 and 1990. However, these dataset were not obtained in specialised surveys but by modifying data from other surveys.

Agricultural census 2000 was followed with sample surveys - Farm Structure Surveys - in 2003, 2005 and 2007. Further sample surveys are planned in 2013 and 2016.

The aim of Agricultural census 2010 is to obtain detailed and complex information about the whole scale of the Czech agriculture, i.e. about the size, structure and development of agricultural holdings, about their equipment, specialisation of their production and other gainful activities. This time the survey questionnaire contains a new part called Survey on agricultural production methods (SAPM), which covers variables such as tillage methods used, animal housing capacity, establishing of landscape features, etc. A large part of the SAPM variables is surveyed for the first time; it refers especially to variables bringing information on the environmental impact of agriculture (e.g. the above-mentioned establishing of landscape features or tillage methods, soil cover in winter, methods of manure application, water consumption for irrigation, etc.).

The survey also serves as a data source for update of the Farm Register, which is a basis for yearly surveys in agriculture. Results will be used for agricultural policy forming not only in the Czech Republic but also in the European Union.

Legislation

Agricultural census 2010 is conducted in all the European Union member countries following requirements of EU/EC legislation. The most important legal act is the Regulation (EC) No 1166/2008 of the European Parliament and the Council of 19 November 2008, on farm structure surveys and the survey on agricultural production methods and repealing Council Regulation (EEC) No 571/88. The implementing regulation for this legislation is the Regulation No 1200/2009 of 30 November 2009.

In the Czech Republic, the survey is conducted on the basis of the Act No 89/1995 Coll., on the State Statistical Service, as amended; and of the Programme for Statistical Surveys for the year 2010 (Decree No 386/2009 Coll.), published in the Collection of Laws of the Czech Republic, chapter 125, of 13 November 2009.

Definition of the agricultural holding

Agricultural holding means a single unit, both technically and economically, which has a single management and which undertakes agricultural activities based on the common statistical classification of economic activities (CZ-NACE), either as its primary or secondary activity. Among these activities belong: growing of non-perennial crops (01.1); growing of perennial crops (01.2) including wine production from self-produced grapes; plant propagation (01.3); animal production (01.4); mixed farming (01.5); support activities to agriculture and post-harvest crop activities (01.6). Agricultural holdings raising other animals (01.49) are excluded, except ones raising and breeding ostriches, emus and rabbits, and dealing with bee-keeping and production of honey and beeswax. Furthermore, all agricultural holdings carrying out activities under 01.6 of CZ-NACE are excluded, except holdings exclusively maintaining agricultural land in good agricultural and environmental condition.

A threshold value of at least 1 ha of utilised agricultural area was set for Agricultural census 2010. At this level, only small agricultural holdings representing up to 2% of utilized agricultural area and up to 2% of livestock units¹ were excluded.

Tables in the publication summarize data for agricultural holdings utilising at least 98% of the agricultural area and raising at least 98% of the total amount of livestock units.

Threshold values for the survey:

- Acreage above 5 ha of utilised agricultural area (own or rented);
- Or more than 1 ha of orchards, or 3,500 m² of vineyards;
- Or sum of acreages for vegetable, strawberries and flowers above 2,500 m²
- Or breeding of 5 heads of cattle, or 10 heads of pigs, or 10 heads of sheep and goats;
- Or 100 heads of poultry including ostriches.

Questionnaire and Reporting duty

Legal persons and large natural persons obtained the questionnaires by post. Small natural persons and self-suppliers were interviewed by trained interviewers.

Pursuant to Act No. 89/1995 Coll., on the State Statistical Service, as amended, the reporting unit shall supply all requested data.

Natural persons reaching threshold values but not entrepreneurs were obliged to fill in the following parts of the questionnaire: Identification data, information on the manager and also parts focused on land use, acreage of utilised agricultural area by cadastres, organic farming, areas under crops, livestock numbers, using of machinery and equipment including equipment for renewable energy production, animal housing and establishing or maintaining of landscape features. Filling in of the remaining parts was voluntary for this group of respondents.

With effect from 1 May 2009, the legal form "private farmer" recorded in last Farm Structure Surveys was repealed. Natural persons formerly registered under this category who continued in their agricultural activities had to reregister as agricultural entrepreneurs according to the Law No 252/1997 Coll., on agriculture, as amended.

Contrary to the last Farm Structure Survey 2007, some data in Agricultural census 2010 could have been obtained from administrative sources and therefore the questionnaire was reduced. It concerned especially data on rural development support. Moreover, data obtained in standard surveys "Areas under Crops Census" and "Livestock Census" were used to reduce respondents' burden. Holdings which had already filled in these questionnaires were not obliged to fill in the same information again.

Farm Structure Survey results in international comparison

All the member countries of the EU are obliged to organize and conduct Farm Structure Surveys according to the legislation of the EU/ES (Regulation (EC) No 1166/2008). The member countries provide EUROSTAT with anonymized data. Eurostat collects results from all countries and compiles a publication *Statistics in Focus – Farm Structure Survey* summarizing main characteristic features of agriculture in each Member State. The publication is available on EUROSTAT internet pages: (<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home>).

EUROSTAT provides on its website a database which is intended to serve for the comparison of the Farm Structure Survey results on an international level; it contains aggregated tables in a demanded structure (<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/agriculture/data/database>).

¹ Livestock unit means a standard measurement unit that allows the aggregation of the various categories of livestock in order to enable them to be compared. 1 Livestock unit represents 500 kg of live weight of an animal.

Several methodological differences should be taken into account when using data from the EUROSTAT database:

- According to the EU definitions hop is included in crops grown on arable land. In the Czech Republic, however, hop or hop-gardens are reported as permanent crops according to the Law No 252/1997 Coll., on agriculture, as amended. Due to this different approach data on total arable area and permanent crops in EUROSTAT database differ from the data published on the national level. Data on total utilised agriculture area (permanent crops + arable land) are identical.*
- According to the EU definition, nurseries are included in permanent crops. In the Czech Republic, on the contrary, nurseries are reported as crops grown on arable land. Due to this fact data in EUROSTAT database differ from the data published on the national level likewise.*
- According to the EU definition, temporary grasslands are included in permanent grasslands in the frame of organic farming while on the national level they are included in perennial fodder crops.*