



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL

**on the implementation of the Eurofarm project
(in accordance with Article 13 of Council Regulation (EEC) No 571/88)**

INTRODUCTION

Council Regulation (EEC) No 571/88¹ on the organisation of Community surveys on the structure of agricultural holdings defines the Eurofarm project as a "set of data banks to be used for processing Community surveys on the structure of agricultural holdings for the requirements of national and Community agricultural policies".

Article 13 of the Regulation states that every three years the Commission shall submit to the Council a report on the operation of the Eurofarm project and shall propose any necessary changes to the Regulation.

The last report on the implementation of the Eurofarm project was adopted by the Commission on 24 February 2003² and considered by the Council's Special Committee on Agriculture on 31 March 2003.

This report covers the period 2003 to 2005 and provides information, in particular, on the execution of the 2003 survey, on the preparatory work for the 2005 survey and on the functioning of the Eurofarm software system.

2003 SURVEY

With a view to the 2003 survey, the following legal acts were adopted by the committee procedure laid down in Article 15 of the Basic Regulation:

- Commission Regulation (EC) No 143/2002³ laid down the list of characteristics to be surveyed in the 2003 survey;
- Commission Regulation (EC) No 1444/2002⁴ contained the definitions of the characteristics to be surveyed;
- Commission Regulation (EC) No 68/2003⁵ set the time limits for transmission of the 2003 survey data to Eurostat and authorised Member States to use data from administrative sources for certain characteristics.

All EU-15 Member States, the 10 new Member States as well as Bulgaria, Romania and Norway conducted a survey based on the EU standards and sent the results to Eurostat. These results were validated and approved by the following dates:

¹ Council Regulation (EEC) No 571/88 of 29 February 1988 published in OJ L 56 of 2 March 1988, p. 1 et seq., as last amended by Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council (EC) No 1435/2004 of 22 June 2004, published in OJ L 268 of 16 August 2004, p. 1 et seq.

² COM(2003)86 final.

³ Commission Regulation (EC) No 143/2002 of 24 January 2002 published in OJ L 24 of 26 January 2002, p. 16 et seq.

⁴ Commission Regulation (EC) No 1444/2002 of 24 July 2002 published in OJ L 216 of 12 August 2002, p. 1 et seq.

⁵ Commission Regulation (EC) No 68/2003 of 16 January 2003 published in OJ L 12 of 17 January 2003, p. 5 et seq.

Country	Due date	Date of approval	Delay ⁶
BE	31 Aug 04	14 Jul 04	-48
CZ		6 Apr 05	
DK	31 Aug 04	10 Sep 04	10
DE	31 Dec 04	01 Mar 05	60
EE		11 Feb 05	
EL	31 Dec 04	09 May 05	129
ES	31 Dec 04	17 Feb 05	48
FR	31 Dec 04	20 Dec 04	-11
IE	31 Aug 04	1 Sep 04	1
IT	31 Dec 04	3 Feb 05	34
CY		19 May 05	
LV		15 Sep 04	
LT		4 Feb 04	
LU	31 Aug 04	19 Apr 04	-134
HU		5 Aug 04	
MT		21 Jun 04	
NL	31 Aug 04	29 Nov 04	90
AT	31 Dec 04	20 May 05	140
PL		16 Mar 05	
PT	31 Dec 04	24 May 05	144
SI		30 Apr 04	
SK		15 Feb 05	
FI	31 Aug 04	25 Aug 04	-6
SE	31 Aug 04	2 Sep 04	2
UK	31 Aug 04	7 Sep 04	7
BG		16 Sep 05	
RO		26 Apr 05	
NO		23 Jun 05	

The fact that by the end of June 2005 data from 27 countries had been validated and the results were publicly available in Eurostat's dissemination database constitutes a major improvement compared with the situation in the past.

The previous Eurofarm report contained a detailed analysis of the delay between the date of delivery of the first version for the 1999/2000 survey and the acceptance of the final version. It reported an average delay of 253 days for the 15 Member States. For the 2003 survey the average delay for 27 countries was 112 days.

To a large extent, this improvement is due to the Eurofarm system which was brought into operation by 2002.

First results were published a few days after approval of the survey data.

A set of 78 tables covering the main aspects of the Farm Structure Survey was made available on Eurostat's public website.

⁶ Delay is calculated here as the number of days between the due date and the date of approval. A negative delay indicates that the data were approved before the official due date.

In addition to this online publication an 8-page leaflet was published for each country.

A document entitled “Main results of the farm structure survey 2003” containing comprehensive EU tables was due to be published in autumn 2005.

A number of ad hoc tables were calculated at the request of DG Agriculture and other DGs or for consultants on contracts with Commission departments.

2005 SURVEY

Two legal acts were adopted in order to prepare the 2005 survey:

- Commission Regulation (EC) No 2139/2004⁷ contained the list of characteristics for the 2005 survey. It also contained the definitions of those characteristics not previously surveyed and set the time limits for transmission of the data to Eurostat;
- Commission Decision 2005/124/EC⁸ authorised Member States to use data from administrative sources for certain characteristics.

Based on these legal acts, the Eurofarm database was prepared for processing the 2005 data. The Data Supplier Manual, which describes the technical format in which data have to be transmitted to Eurostat, was submitted to the Working Group on Structure and Typology of Agricultural Holdings in June 2005.

EUROFARM SOFTWARE

The Eurofarm database contains individual farm data for a large and ever-growing set of countries from 1990 onwards and provides a unique source of information for the agricultural sector (see Annex).

A UNIX/Oracle-based application is used for processing the data from the different surveys.

The richness of the data together with the functionality of the software make the Eurofarm database a unique source of information about the agricultural sector in Europe.

At the beginning of the reporting period, the task of developing this software and bringing it into operation was completed.

Since then the system has been available without major interruptions and the expectations placed in its development have essentially been met.

During this period of CAP reform and EU enlargement, the flexible system to define and calculate statistical tables has made it possible to meet the requirements of Commission

⁷ Commission Regulation (EC) No2139/2004 of 8 December 2004 published in OJ L 369 of 16 December 2004, p. 26 et seq.

⁸ Commission Decision 2005/124/EC of 10 February 2005 published in OJ L 39 of 11 February 2005, p. 55 et seq.

departments for ad hoc analysis, while the metadata-driven approach allowed easy adaptation for a new survey and the addition of new countries.

Although the functionality is regarded as satisfactory, the large volume of data and the strong demand for statistical tables pose a permanent challenge to improve the performance of the system.

The dynamics of the software market, with system software providers regularly deciding to phase out “old” versions of their products and forcing users to switch to new versions, call for continuous migration efforts. In 2003 the migration of the Oracle database software (to the new version 9) was completed.

As announced in the previous report, web-based access to the Eurofarm tabulation system has been developed and tested. This system is currently being installed in the Commission’s computer centre.

The previous report to the Council mentioned the project to give the data providers access to the Eurofarm validation system. The program to provide this functionality has been developed and installed in a test environment. As this program gives access to confidential data referring to individual farms further clarifications are needed before it can be brought into operation.

The phase-out of the Oracle products used to provide the user interface in the Eurofarm system necessitates a major migration of these programs. This task will be carried out with the help of external contractors and will require a significant effort (first rough estimate: 500 man-days). It should be finished in 2007.

The Oracle database will migrate to version 10 in 2006. This new version provides novel features which will be examined in order further to improve the performance of various programs.

The budget allocated to the EUROFARM project (maintenance and development) amounted to 444.785 euros for the whole 2003-2005.

ANNEX

Number of records (holdings) in the Eurofarm data base

Country	2003	2000	1997	1995	1993	1990
BE	54 942	61 705	67 182	70 977	76 327	85 038
CZ	16 060					
DK	25 348	57 831	25 866	24 323	24 505	25 507
DE	95 926	471 959				
EE	7 524					
EL	88 447	817 059	82 139	77 382	81 915	850 138
ES	51 979	1 287 418	45 379	46 805	48 977	1 593 638
FR	73 956	663 807	52 868	56 113	59 985	66 700
IE	54 062	141 527	52 017	50 646	55 380	170 578
IT	45 179	2 153 724	73 040	78 099	72 887	2 664 554
CY	45 199					
LV	43 850	140 835				
LT	272 106					
LU	2 450	2 814	2 976	3 180	3 401	3 945
HU	280 294	966 916				
MT	1 465					
NL	85 501	101 545	107 919	113 202	119 724	37 451
AT	34 458	199 469	34 512	221 750		
PL	2 172 205					
PT	37 401	415 969	54 250	57 658	61 457	598 742
SI	13 706	86 467				
SK	23 551	71 038				
FI	74 952	81 190	33 504	35 850		
SE	67 890	81 407	31 601	30 098		
UK	280 625	233 246	233 149	69 732	75 066	65 252
BG	665 548					
RO	4 484 893					
NO	58 231	70 740				
Total	9 157 748	8 106 666	896 402	935 815	679 624	6 161 543