

## MAJOR NEW INITIATIVES PLANNED BY ORGANIZATIONS

### Information note by FAO

#### **Modernization of FAOSTAT**

The FAOSTAT<sup>2</sup> proposal has been approved by the World Agriculture Information Centre Committee (WAICENT), FAO and now has full project status. Work is now proceeding on data management and statistical methodology aspects. FAOSTAT2 will:

- Provide an improved user interface, streamlined system processes, and a stable and reliable technical environment for the FAOSTAT working system;
- Improve the quality of the data by providing robust tools for compiling, validating, estimating and analysing data both at FAO headquarters as well as at the country level;
- Incorporate new user requirements for system functionality and access to new data sets;
- Improve user access to FAOSTAT data by enhancing and creating new mechanisms for data dissemination, including access to data across domains, and digital maps and codes to the second sub-national level;
- Enhance data integrity by ensuring that appropriate methodologies and data standards are consistently applied.

FAOSTAT2 will be implemented using a phased approach. The project would be divided into three sub-projects (working system, dissemination system and integrated corporate database). Work on these sub-projects would proceed relatively independently of each other. Initial outputs of the project would focus on improvements to the current system and resolution of the most pressing problems.

#### **Agricultural Trade Matrix**

The recent development by FAO Statistics of analysis software that generates Agricultural Trade Matrices is a major advance for agricultural commodity trade analysis. The software queries the FAOSTAT database and produces matrices that allow the flows (imports and exports) of agricultural commodities between countries, regions or on a world basis to be mapped and summarized. In addition, it provides a key tool in improving data quality by allowing easy comparisons of mirror statistics with discrepancies and data gaps being easily identified. Access to the Agricultural Trade Matrix program for external users should be available in the first quarter of 2003.

#### **Agricultural Metadata**

The Agricultural Bulletin Board on Data Collection, Dissemination and Quality of Statistics project (ABCDQ)<sup>2</sup> is being extended to cover agricultural prices and agricultural inputs (fertiliser, machinery and pesticides) and water (resources, use, irrigation and drainage development).

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<sup>1</sup> *Modernization of FAOSTAT*, <http://www.fao.org/es/ESS/faostat1.htm>, FAO, Statistics Division.

<sup>2</sup> *The Agricultural Bulletin Board on Data Collection, Dissemination and Quality of Statistics project (ABCDQ)*, <http://faostat.fao.org/abcdq/abcdq.jsp>, FAO, Statistics Division.