Perspectives on SEEA Agriculture, Canada
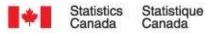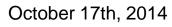
20th London Group meeting

New Delhi, October 2014

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Statistics Canada

October 17th, 2014

Overview

- Agriculture in Canada

- Statistics Canada's involvement in the pilot project

- Data availability

- Partners involved

- Institutional and policy perspectives

- Future plans

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Agriculture in Canada

- Primary agriculture production accounted for less that 1.7 % of Canada's GDP in 2012
  - total Agriculture and Agri-Food system accounted for 6.7%
- Half of the value of primary agriculture production is exported, either as primary commodities or as processed food and beverage products
- United-States is Canada's principal trading partner
- Total farm area accounts for about 7% of the total land base in Canada (2011 Census of Agriculture)
- Over the last two decades we count fewer but larger farms, and we observe aging of farm operators

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Statistics Canada's involvement

- Project presented at the Nov 2013 London Group meeting
  - FAO was looking for countries to help
- Next issue of our Human Activity and the Environment (HAE) publication on Agriculture
  - StatCan has a lot of data on agriculture
  - Have proposed to help FAO and use some findings in our HAE publication.
    - Focus on Physical Supply and Use table on crop
- Testing done by staff working on env. statistics, with help of colleagues working on agricultural statistics.

Data availability - I

- **Agriculture Census (yyy1, yyy6)**
  - Number of farms, farm area, fertilized area, area treated with irrigation, pigs (number), financial data, ...

- **Annual surveys:**
  crop/fruits/vegetables/honey/milk/poultry/aquaculture
  - Total production, marketed production, farm gate value, area seeded, area harvested, ...

  greenhouse/tobacco/sod/nursing/Christmas trees
  - Production (metric or number), value, area, ...

- **Energy and water use/GHG physical supply and use (PSU) tables (per industry)**

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Data availability - II

- ## Supply and disposition of food / of crops (cost recovery)
  - Physical unit (monetary data available but not released)

Challenges –

- Volume of data to assess and collaboration
  - Subject new to me, metadata information not enough detailed. Get collaboration was not as easy as expected (find the right analyst...)

- Conceptual issues
  - Our S&D categories do not always match those in the SEEA Agri proposed tables. How to account for a commodity that serves for both food and non food? How to account land use for greenhouse prod?

- Environmental data are generally not available at the commodity level.

Partners involved

- ## Statistics Canada

  - Environmental statistics: commented on the conceptual aspect of the first set of tables

  - Agriculture statistics: helped understand their data (definition, data availability) and commented on conceptual aspects

- ## Outside Statistics Canada

  - Colleagues from Agriculture and Agri-food Canada (AAFC) and Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO): commented on the tables and spoke about the policy angle.

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Institutional and policy perspectives - I

- In addition to providing feedback on the proposed tables, the following questions were asked to AAFC and DFO

- Is there a **national standard** or regular set(s) of **key indicators** covering agri-environmental, forestry and fishery issues?
- What are the key **current policy frameworks** relevant to the consideration of agricultural, forestry and fishery production and the environmental sustainability of this production?
- What **data gaps need to be filled** to meet basic data requirements for the main areas of policy focus?
- What **next steps** might be taken to **advance work on SEEA Agri** and the general improvement of agricultural statistics?

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Institutional and policy perspectives - II
Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)

- **Current main areas of policy focus:**
  - Eco-certification, stock rebuilding, species at risk, ecosystem approaches to fisheries management

- **Data gaps:**
  - Accounts are at macro level. How to increase their relevance to guide policy analysis and address policy issues, many of which require micro-level information?
  - Water tables - Considerable amount of data would have to come from scientific databases

- **Next steps to advance work on SEEA Agri:**
  - Define the longer-term expectations for these accounts
    - Are they expected to be of significant use to fisheries policymakers or just as general "signals"?

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Institutional and policy perspectives - III
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)

- Current AAFC Agri-Environmental indicators are largely model-based and focus on risk (rather than state)
  - Soil quality, water quality, air quality, biodiversity, food and beverage industry, environmental farm management

- Data (Combined table):
  - Overall they would support the FAO and StatCan in this effort for compiling all of these data in one place

- Commented on conceptual issues:
  - Asked questions about how to treat greenhouse production, how to classify commodities, number of calories produced (discontinued AAFC data series - would need a policy demand to restart)

- Both DFO and AAFC, would be happy to review the SEEA Agriculture draft

Institutional and policy perspectives – IV

Challenges to be aware of –

- No legal requirement to produce environmental accounts in Canada

- Environmental statistics are collected by various departments, often for specific purposes

- As noted in the UNCEEA implementation strategy, we think implementation should be a demand-driven process

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Future plans - I

- To be discussed and determined

- Short term –

  - Answer to what will be asked during this meeting and debrief StatCan Environment and Agriculture on outcomes

  - Establish a working group with StatCan's Agriculture division to involve them actively in SEEA Agri future steps

  - Gather internal and external comments on the 2nd draft of SEEA Agriculture (Nov – Dec 2014)
    - Bring on-board NRCan (Canadian Forest Service)

  - Communicate to FAO any comments received on the Crop PSU table in our HAE publication (release Nov 2014)

Future plans - II

- ## Medium/long term – potential strategies:
  - Determine policy interest on SEEA Agriculture
    - Consult to determine StatCan priorities on the topic, interest to keep working on it
    - Consult to determine other departments interest on the topic
    - Create a large group of experts to discuss; establish a coordination mechanism among data producers.
    - Help policy makers understand the potential of SEEA Agriculture accounts (publication of a research paper?)...
  - Implementation of the SEEA Agriculture accounts; which countries are interested in being the first implementers?

Questions?

Thank you

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