

1. HISTORICAL OUTLINE

Belgium participated in all the rounds of the WCA. The first agricultural census was conducted in 1846. Between 1846 and 1960, eight censuses were conducted, at intervals of 10 to 15 years. As one of the six founding countries of the European Union (EU), Belgium has been organizing censuses of agriculture harmonized with EU standards and requirements since 1960. The metadata review and data presented here refer to the Agricultural Census (AC) 2010, which was carried out together with the SAPM.

2. LEGAL BASIS AND ORGANIZATION

Legal framework

The legal framework for the AC 2010 included:

- the Law of 4 July 1962 concerning public statistics (“Statistical Law”), amended by the Law of 1 August 1985;
- the Royal Decree of 12 March 2008; and
- the relevant EU legislation.

Institutional framework and international organization

Statistics Belgium (Directorate General for Statistics and Economic Information or STATBEL), under the Federal Public Service for the Economy, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs), the Self-Employed and Energy, is in charge of the AC. The AC activities are part of the regular activities performed by the agricultural statistics unit of the DGSEI. Municipal authorities are responsible for collecting the survey data. The actual conduct of the census is the responsibility of mayors, as representatives of the central authority and senior officials of the municipalities.

Census staff

The census data collection was conducted by municipal census officials.

3. REFERENCE DATE AND PERIOD

Reference day: 1 May 2010, for inventory items, such as livestock numbers and area for outdoor crops.

Reference periods:

- the 12 months preceding 1 May 2010, for agricultural labour, the area of crops under protective cover, etc.
- three years preceding the survey year, for rural development data, some indicators in the SAPM, etc. and
- the year 2010 or the last 12 months, for the collection of other SAPM items.

4. ENUMERATION PERIOD

The enumeration period for the agricultural census was one month, from 1 May to 31 May 2010.

The enumeration period for the SAPM was from the end of February to mid-April 2011.

5. SCOPE OF THE CENSUS AND DEFINITION OF THE STATISTICAL UNIT

Census scope

The AC 2010 covered agricultural activities (crop and animal production).

Statistical unit

The statistical unit in the AC 2010 is the agricultural holding (farm), defined as the holding (of at least 1 are) producing “farm products or horticultural products” for sale as principal or secondary activity, or keeping animals, whether or not they produce goods for sale. Experimental or research establishments, nursery services of public bodies producing agricultural products for their use, schools, religious communities, prisons and other similar establishments were also covered by the census.

6. GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE

The AC 2010 covered the entire country, both urban and rural areas.

7. CUT-OFF THRESHOLD AND OTHER EXCLUSIONS

The AC covered the holdings that: (i) produce agricultural products for sale, without any minimum size limits; (ii) operate at least one are (0.01 ha); or (iii) keep animals, whether or not they produce goods for sale.

8. METHODOLOGY

Methodological modality for conducting the census

The classical approach was used in the AC 2010. Data on rural development aid were obtained from administrative data sources.

Frame

The frame of agricultural holdings is based on the Register of Holdings held by the STATBEL, which includes the farms producing agricultural products with a view to selling them. The register is updated annually using the data provided by the municipalities carrying out the farm surveys.

Complete and/or sample enumeration method(s)

The AC 2010 was conducted using complete enumeration. The SAPM was a sample survey.

Sample design (if sampling was used)

The SAPM was conducted using stratified random sampling of 2 407 farms (5.7 percent sample).

Data collection method(s)

Agricultural census data were collected by the census enumerators, either at the farmer's residence or that of his or her representative, or at the offices of the municipal authorities after an interview had been arranged. The municipal authorities could choose between a printed form and an electronic "Blaise" form for data collection. Data on rural development aid were obtained from administrative data sources.

The SAPM data were collected using the self-interviewing (CAWI) method.

Questionnaire(s)

The information for the AC was collected using a single form, except for farms with a large number of workers (holdings with more than ten familial or non-familial workers), which received an additional questionnaire specifically devoted to agricultural labour. The questionnaire was prepared in three languages (French, Dutch and German). The information for the SAPM was collected using a single form.

The census covered all 16 core items recommended in the WCA 2010.

9. USE OF TECHNOLOGY

In the SAPM, the CAWI method was used along with the mail-out/mail-back method. The respondents were provided with the opportunity to respond using an online Internet application, and their login and password information were sent with their survey documents in the mail. Approximately 18 percent of farmers provided their questionnaire responses using the CAWI method.

10. DATA PROCESSING AND ARCHIVING

Following data collection, the municipalities provided the paper-based forms to the relevant decentralized offices for data processing. The data were encoded on PCs using a Blaise application. The data collected using electronic forms were placed in the same database. At regular intervals, the data from each decentralized office were entered in a Blaise database on a central server. Imputations were rare as there were few nonresponses and missing data issues were normally addressed by contacting the respondent. In the few situations where imputation was necessary, it was done using data from a previous year's survey. The data were then transferred to an SPSS database to perform further analysis and calculation of results.

11. CENSUS DATA QUALITY

The response rate was 99.7 percent. A comparison between the survey results and the administrative data was made, for analysis purposes only (to prepare for the future task of replacing survey variables with administrative data) and not for statistical use.

12. DATA DISSEMINATION AND USE

A summary of provisional results based on approximately 53 percent of questionnaires was published in August 2010. The final census results were published in March 2011. The census results are available to users free of charge on the STATBEL website. User access to anonymized individual data is subject to rigorous conditions, outlined in an agreement signed by parties.

13. DATA SOURCES

Eurostat. 2019a. Archive: Agricultural Census in Belgium. In: *European Commission: Eurostat* [online]. Luxembourg. [Cited 23 August 2019]. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Archive:Agricultural_census_in_Belgium

Eurostat. 2019b. Database, Agriculture, forestry and fisheries. In: *European Commission: Eurostat* [online]. Luxembourg. [Cited 26 August 2019]. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>

STATBEL. 2011. *National Methodological Report: "Agricultural Census and Agricultural Production Methods 2010"*. Luxembourg. (also available at https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/749240/749313/BE_NMR_FSS_2010.pdf/acbfefb3-5bf4-4529-acd4-803f14e19aec)

14. CONTACT

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BELGIUM – AGRICULTURAL CENSUS 2010 – MAIN RESULTS¹

NUMBER OF HOLDINGS AND AREA, BY LEGAL STATUS		
	Holdings	Area (ha)
Total	42 850	1 384 880
Civil persons	38 600	1 218 260
An individual (sole holder holdings) ²	38 600	1 218 260
Juridical persons (legal entities)	4 260	166 620

LAND TENURE		
	Holdings	UAA (ha)
Total	42 850	1 358 020
Legal ownership and owner-like possession (owned land)	37 350	446 950
Rented from others (land rented)	32 450	895 640
Other form of tenure (shared farming or other modes)	1 460	15 420

DISTRIBUTION OF UAA, BY LAND SIZE CLASSES		
	Holdings	UAA (ha)
Total	42 840	1 358 020
Holdings without UAA	950	
Holdings with UAA	41 910	1 358 020
Less than 2 ha	4 270	4 290
2–4,99 ha	4 450	14 870
5–9,99 ha	5 190	37 620
10–19,99 ha	6 800	98 990
20–29,99 ha	5 080	125 130
30–49,99 ha	7 090	276 030
50–99,99 ha	6 780	466 910
100 ha and over	2 260	334 160

LAND USE		
	Holdings	Area (ha)
Total	42 850	1 384 880
UAA	41 910	1 358 020
Arable land	34 670	836 670
Land temporarily fallow	4 270	9 590
Land under permanent crops	2 560	21 530
Permanent meadows and pastures	32 020	499 690
Kitchen garden	1 160	130
Other land	42 600	26 860
Wooded area	950	4 870
Unutilised agricultural land and other areas	42 600	21 990

MANAGERS BY SEX ³		
	Number	UAA operated (ha)
Total	42 850	1 358 020
Male	36 410	1 217 750
Female	6 450	140 270

MEMBERS OF HOLDER'S HOUSEHOLD, BY SEX ⁴	
	Number
Total engaged in agricultural activities on the holding	27 920
Male	10 460
Female	17 460

LABOUR FORCE OF THE HOLDING	
	Number
Total	80 940
Male	53 700
Female	27 240
Family labour force	66 510
Male	43 370
Female	23 140
Regular non-family labour force	14 440
Male	10 340
Female	4 100

MANAGERS BY SEX AND AGE ³	
	Number
Total	42 850
Male	36 410
Female	6 450
Less than 35 years	2 060
Male	1 810
Female	250
35–44 years	8 000
Male	7 050
Female	950
45–54 years	13 780
Male	11 990
Female	1 790
55–64 years	10 470
Male	8 880
Female	1 600
65 years and over	8 550
Male	6 690
Female	1 860

LIVESTOCK		
	Holdings	Heads
Total holdings with livestock	31 820	
Cattle	24 950	2 592 630
Sheep	3 300	120 460
Goats	950	32 020
Pigs/swine	5 890	6 429 570
Equines (Equidae)	5 920	37 100
Poultry (1 000 head)	n.a	n.a
Poultry - broilers	920	21 900
Laying hens	2 710	11 680
Others	620	790
Other animals	n.a	
Rabbits (breeding females)	560	174 420
Other	270	
Insects		
Bees (hives)	270	3 240

METHODS OF IRRIGATION		
	Holdings	Irrigable area (ha)
Total holdings with irrigable area	1 430	13 560
Holdings with irrigated area⁵	920	4 260
Surface	410	n.a
Sprinkler	1 840	n.a
Localized irrigation (drop irrigation)	550	n.a

¹ Data source – Eurostat database, available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/agriculture/data/database>

² The categories in brackets are presented as indicated in the Eurostat database (if different from the WCA 2010).

³ According to Eurostat, managers include holders that manage the holding themselves, and managers that are not holders, including of legal units

⁴ Data are presented without holders.

⁵ Excluding kitchen garden and area under glass.