



# **ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE OF AGRICULTURE IN OECD COUNTRIES SINCE 1990:**

## **European Union Website Information**

This Website Information is related to the OECD publication (2008) *Environmental Performance of Agriculture in OECD countries since 1990* which is available at: <http://www.oecd.org/tad/env/indicators>

**EUROPEAN UNION**  
**WEBSITE INFORMATION**

**1. Development of EU wide Agri-environmental Indicators (AEIs)**

***Background***

The Cardiff European Council in 1998 endorsed the principle that the environmental dimension should be integrated in all Community policies. The Helsinki European Council in 1999 acknowledged that the strategy for integrating the environmental dimensions into the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) had been agreed by the Agricultural Council. This Council integration strategy for agriculture recognises that agri-environmental indicators provide a tool for evaluating the impact of the CAP on the environment and the efficacy of the measures of the integration strategy. It also stresses the need to further develop these indicators, to cover both positive and negative effects of agriculture and to ensure a sufficient regional differentiation in their formulation, so as to respond to the regional diversity of environmental conditions and the site-specific effects of agricultural production systems and structures.

The European Commission identified a set of 35 agri-environmental indicators and presented an analytical framework for their development and elaborated further on the indicator concept and identified potential data sources and information needed to make the indicators operational. The use of existing data and other information already available within the Commission, the EEA and the Member States was to be optimised to advance the work on agri-environmental indicators.

The IRENA operation (Indicator Reporting on the Integration of Environmental Concerns into Agriculture Policy) was launched in 2002. The purpose was to develop and compile, for the EU-15, the set of 35 agri-environmental indicators identified in the Commission Communications. The operation was finalised at the end of 2005 and based on its findings, the Commission chose 28 indicators for further development.

The Commission is continuing the work on the set of 28 AEI-indicators for the EU-27 in close cooperation with the relevant institutions of the Member States, extending their coverage to the new Member States, correcting certain weaknesses, and setting up a permanent and stable arrangement needed for the management and long-term functioning of the indicator system.

***The use of AEIs***

The primary aim of the system of agri-environmental indicators is to provide information:

- to assess the impact of the agricultural policy decisions on the environment, so as to identify shortcomings in current measures and needs for new policy initiatives and, where appropriate, to improve the targeting and tailoring of the measures to local conditions;
- to monitor agri-environmental trends that may impact on natural resources and have implications for the environment and for other EU policy fields; and,
- to evaluate the efficacy of the integration strategy, with a view to adjust and deepen it if necessary.

The system of agri-environmental indicators will help fulfil the Commission's information needs as regards this aim.

## ***The Current Situation and Future work***

The set of agri-environmental indicators is composed of 28 indicators within six categories: public policy, farm management practises and patterns, input use, agricultural trends, landscape and land use and pressures. The Driving force — Pressure — State — Impact — Response (DPSIR) model developed by the European Environment Agency was used to help identify appropriate indicators and characterize relationships between major agri-environmental themes: water, land use and soil, climate change and air quality, and biodiversity and landscape. The selected storylines are coherent with the specific objectives of the Agricultural Council's strategy on environmental integration and sustainable development in the CAP.

Some of the indicators are methodologically fully matured and ready, some are under development. A website for the indicators is under construction. The indicators will be compiled at least every three years, at the minimum for the years when farm structure surveys are carried out. Where appropriate, other frequencies may be applied, for example due to availability of data or to better show trends linked to meteorological or similar conditions.

The basic level of regional breakdown will be NUTS2. A more or less detailed regional breakdown may be applied, depending on the availability of data to build the indicators and on the political relevance. The decisions to these questions will be taken in the coordination meetings.

In providing data for indicators, efforts will be made to maximise the use of existing sources, supplemented, where appropriate, by modelling or other techniques. Only where these possibilities cannot meet the requirements, and where it is deemed a priority to do so, will new data be collected.

### **2. Databases**

- Eurostat [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?\\_pageid=0,1136206,0\\_45570464&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=0,1136206,0_45570464&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)
- European Environment Agency <http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/agriculture/datasets>

### **3. Websites**

#### ***Governmental Organisations***

- European Union [http://europa.eu/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/index_en.htm)
- European Commission [http://ec.europa.eu/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm)
- Eurostat <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>
- Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/agriculture/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/agriculture/index_en.htm)
- Directorate General for Environment [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/environment/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/environment/index_en.htm)
- Joint Research Centre of the European Commission <http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/jrc/index.cfm>
- European Environment Agency <http://www.eea.europa.eu>

- European Environment Agency (2006), *Integration of Environment into EU Agriculture Policy: The IRENA Indicator-based Assessment Report*, EEA Report No. 2/2006, Copenhagen, Denmark: [http://reports.eea.europa.eu/eea\\_report\\_2005\\_6/en](http://reports.eea.europa.eu/eea_report_2005_6/en) ;  
[http://reports.eea.europa.eu/eea\\_report\\_2006\\_2/en](http://reports.eea.europa.eu/eea_report_2006_2/en)
- European Court of Auditors [http://eca.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eca\\_main\\_pages/home](http://eca.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eca_main_pages/home)

#### ***Non-Governmental Organisations***

- Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP) <http://www.ieep.eu/>
- BirdLife International Europe <http://www.birdlife.org/regional/europe/index.html>
- European Centre for Nature Conservation (ECNC) <http://www.ecnc.nl/>
- WWF European Union  
[http://www.panda.org/about\\_wwf/where\\_we\\_work/europe/what\\_we\\_do/epo/index.cfm](http://www.panda.org/about_wwf/where_we_work/europe/what_we_do/epo/index.cfm)