

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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Brussels, 12 October 1978

R E P O R T

on the experience gained in the surveys and estimates made

by the Member States

in the field of pig production

- Report presented by the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament in application of Article 10 of the Council Directive of 20 July 1976 (76/630/EEC)

(Third Report)

Summary :

"Pending a revised version of Article 8 of the basic Directive, the Commission considers that the current situation with regard to the harmonization of survey methods and drawing up forecasts is adequate for providing a constant flow of good information on the state of the pig population and short-term trends in pig production.

The proposal for Article 8 involves introducing into the Council's text the precise definition of production and extending the forecasting period from 10 to 12 months, which corresponds exactly to the work carried out in constant collaboration by the Member States and EUROSTAT.

The Commission's departments would like to have longer-term forecasts on the basis of breeders' intentions regarding the future development of their stock. In order to meet this requirement, the Commission is to propose to the Council that as part of the Community surveys on pig population all keepers of sows should be asked to state the number of breeding animals they intend to have 4, 8, and 12 months after the date of each survey."

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Article 10 of the Directive adopted by the Council on 20 July 1976 (76/630/EEC)¹⁾ lays down that :

"Every three years, starting in 1978, the Commission shall submit to the European Parliament and the Council a report on the experience gained in surveying and forecasting pig production."

The present report on the experience gained during the period 1976-1978 is the third such report since the first Community survey was carried out by the Member States in the field of pig production in December 1968²⁾. The Commission here stresses the main points of the working document drawn up by its departments, which gave rise to an exchange of views between the Member States in June 1978 as part of the activities of the Committee for Agricultural Statistics.

1. Experience gained
2. The Commission proposals

1) OJ N° L 223 of 16.8.1978, page 4.

2) First report SEC (71)-4735 final of 10.1.1972.
Second report COM (75)-698 final of 12.1.1976.

1. Experience gained :

- Over the period there has been no change in the survey techniques used by the Member States. However, France has introduced sampling of holdings taken from the Community survey on the structure of agricultural holdings in 1975. Proper interpretation of the results of these sample surveys has not been very easy but this finally seems to have been achieved following the repetition of the sixth survey of this type in December 1977.
- In accordance with Article 5 of the basic Directive, estimates of sampling errors are communicated regularly by the Federal Republic of Germany, but less frequently by the other Member States on account of the difficulties of computer programming for error calculations. Suitable measures for making a permanent improvement in the sampling frame have been limited in France and Italy on account of the heavy burden of national statistical programmes.
- With regard to the transmission of monthly slaughtering statistics, certain Member States have difficulties in keeping to the time limit of six weeks after the end of the month concerned; in future, reliable provisional data within the time limit set by the Council have been promised by Italy, the Netherlands and Ireland. It is always possible at any moment to replace provisional values by definitive values in the EUROSTAT data bank, so that the Commission's departments have constant access to recent data on the market situation.
- The experience gained shows that there is no prospect of reducing the time taken to transmit survey results and forecasts, since the times laid down by the Council are actually necessary for processing and preparing the data. These time limits are now exceeded by the Member States only in very exceptional cases (strikes, computer failure). At the end of the sixth week following the survey month, EUROSTAT is in a position to inform the Commission's departments of the probable survey results.
- Under a system of consultation and permanent collaboration with the Member States, the results of surveys and forecasts and their significance are examined jointly after each survey on pig population. The individual information on each herd is confidential and the whole - results and interpretation - is the subject of a communiqué to the press, i.e. to the agricultural profession, generally in the course of the eighth week following the survey month, as requested by the Committee on Agriculture of the European Parliament³⁾.

3) EP 44824/fin. of 14 June 1976.

- There are still long delays with regard to the time limits for providing, every two years, centralized results by size category of pig herds. All the Member States have been asked to make an effort to keep to the limit of 15 March laid down by the Council.
- The statistical section of the report discusses the coherence and significance of the results of surveys and forecasts in order to develop harmonization between the methods of interpretation used by the Member States. At any rate, the material provided by the Member States is reliable and should improve in quality as further experience is gained.

2. The Commission proposals

As long as there is no integration of national statistical systems, it does not seem necessary to further develop, within the restricted framework of the surveys on pig population alone, the harmonization of the conditions for carrying out statistical work which already provides a good understanding of short-term production trends.

In view of the probable enlargement of the Community, and in order to avoid any misunderstanding in the future, it would be very useful to introduce into the Council texts firstly the precise definition of pig production and secondly the principle of forecasting over a period of 12 months instead of 10 months as hitherto - this means a revision of Article 8 of the basic Directive to reflect closely the work carried out by EUROSTAT over the past three years in constant collaboration with the Member States.

In order to meet the requirements of preventive market management, taking account of the probable pattern of production over one or two years, the Commission's departments would welcome the extension of forecasts for pig production beyond 12 months from the date of the survey. It would appear to be possible to extend the 'pipeline' effect¹⁾ by asking breeders, under Directive 630/76, about their intentions on the future development of their breeding herd. To this end, all keepers of sows covered by the Community surveys are to be asked to state the number of breeding sows they intend to have in 4, 8 and 12 months. In order to

1) The "pipeline" effect corresponds to the production already initiated as a direct result of the level of stock and the types of animal recorded at the time of the survey.

meet this requirement, the Commission is to propose to Parliament and the Council a suitable extension of the basic Directive. The interpretation of the results would naturally be coordinated by EUROSTAT in close cooperation with the Member States and the Commission's departments.

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