
Methodological, technical support to agricultural censuses

(IPS 085-Laczka)

During the 150 years of history of the independent Hungarian statistical office 11 (general) agricultural and 7 vineyard and orchard censuses were carried out. The first agricultural census took place in 1895 and the first vineyard and wine census in 1872, both censuses had been designed by Károly Keleti, the first president of the statistical office. In the latter case besides the implementation of the plantation survey, on the request of the International Statistical Institute it was the Hungarian statistical office that elaborated the methodology of European vineyard statistics. The importance of agricultural censuses does not need to be highlighted, they have always formed the backbone of agricultural statistics, serving as the basis for the compilation of regular agricultural statistics.

In relation to agricultural censuses, the **use of administrative data sources for statistical purposes** has always been a key issue. At the beginning its most important function was to determine the sampling frame/survey population of the surveys and support the organisation of the data collections. During the decades, administrative data sources acquired a growing importance in the validation of the collected data, which is valid still nowadays. In the past years the need to reduce respondent burden became a central issue, and as a consequence subject groups of the census questionnaires were increasingly replaced by administrative data. The greatest change was the vineyard survey in 2009 when two third of the survey data was based on administrative data sources (only one complementary sample was needed). The vineyard survey of 2015 will be based in its entirety on administrative data sources.

In the Hungarian practice we can also find good examples for cases when the **census population cannot be defined neither from statistical nor from administrative sources**. The solution was designed for the full scope vineyard and orchard survey of 2001 when we also relied on the use of remote sensing data developing a special topographic map.

Technical development supports nowadays the process of data collection as well, in the Hungarian Central Statistical Office the system of **electronic data collection** was introduced at the beginning of 2013 and is gradually extended to other institutions of the Hungarian statistical system. Similarly to other European countries, the use of this highly developed technique in agricultural statistics has nevertheless not become yet a general practice.

The processing of the great volume of census data has always been a great challenge for statisticians. The processing of the data of agricultural censuses has been implemented in the past ten years with the use of an electronic data processing system (called HOMBÁR), in which processing is governed by statisticians supported by IT experts. Data processing is quicker than previously, better documented and spares important human resources.

Last but not least I would like to share my experiences concerning the **communication of census data**. We elaborated 15 years ago a procedure allowing the publication of comprehensive analysis of census data already some months after the implementation. Nowadays dissemination uses tools like interactive graphs, applications using GIS data as well and new mapping techniques.

Éva Laczka

