



## Contemporary changes in the sampling frame for agriculture statistics in Canada

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As Canada's national statistical agency, Statistics Canada is mandated under the *Statistics Act* to "... collect, compile, analyse, abstract and publish statistical information relating to the commercial, industrial, financial, social, economic and general activities and condition of the people ..." . The Act further specifies that "...the Chief Statistician shall, under the direction of the Minister, collect, compile, analyse, abstract and publish statistics in relation to all or any of the following matters in Canada: (a) population; (b) agriculture; ... ." . The Act also stipulates that "A census of agriculture of Canada shall be taken by Statistics Canada (a) in the year 1971 and in every tenth year thereafter; and (b) in the year 1976 and in every tenth year thereafter, unless the Governor in Council otherwise directs in respect of any such year." Together, these form the legal basis for a national agricultural statistics program.

For many years, the Statistics Canada Farm Register (FR) served as the list frame for the Census of Agriculture, as well as the sampling frame for the agricultural survey program. Statistics Canada has, also for many years, maintained a Business Register (BR), the central repository of information on businesses in Canada, used as the frame for most economic surveys. As part of its Corporate Business Architecture initiative, Statistics Canada has created a new sampling frame for agriculture by merging the FR into the BR. This transition project occurred between April 2010 and March 2013, with the first agricultural surveys adopting the new BR-based frame in late 2012. The 2016 Census of Agriculture will also use this new frame. The new frame is now entering the "maintenance" phase.

The paper will briefly describe the history of agricultural sampling frames used in the agriculture statistics program and cover the recently-made transition from the previous frame, the FR, to the new one, the Statistics Canada's BR. It will discuss some of the issues related to the transition and describe the activities that are in place and planned to keep the frame up to date, both for the ongoing current survey program (e.g., the annual and sub-annual surveys) as well as the Census of Agriculture, conducted every five years. Maintaining the accuracy of the frame, in a cost-effective manner, is of critical importance in managing and reducing