

# Improving Community agricultural statistics

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In its report on the establishment of a database on payments under the Guarantee Section of the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund, the Commission draws the following conclusions: - although some additional improvements may be required, in particular as far as data quality, completeness of reporting and validation of results are concerned, the current "Clearance Audit Trail System" (CATS) database appears capable of providing a basis for responding to the information needs expressed by the European Parliament and the Council; - in order to enable CATS data to be used for "monitoring developments and providing forecasts in the agricultural sector" the necessary legal amendment has been adopted and entered into force in March 2002. Another amendment to the current legislation has also been adopted in order to implement a fully comprehensive system of "unique identifiers" for beneficiaries across all Member States. This requirement is coming into effect from 1 January 2003, although this will not prevent the production of indicative figures before that date; - subject to the condition that Member States are able to communicate the required data and in compliance with the constraints set out in the applicable legislation, the Commission will make available a set of tables showing, for each Member State, the distribution of payments per size-class of aid received, once the underlying data concerning the previous financial year will have been validated; - the accounting and financial management system AGREX will be further improved and refined. This also includes aspects concerning how to record individual financial transactions, if desired, and issues related to a possible integration of information available in CATS and AGREX.