OECD WORKSHOP:

AGRI-ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS:
LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

23-26 March 2010
Leysin, Switzerland

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Contact: Kevin Parris Kevin.Parris@oecd.org

Please visit the OECD website related to OECD work on agri-environmental indicators at: http://www.oecd.org/tad/env/indicators
The OECD Committee for Agriculture’s Programme of Work and Budget (PWB) for 2009-10 [TAD/CA(2008)3/REV1] notes that, “data on the environmental performance of agriculture and policies addressing agri-environmental issues provides important information for policy makers and for use in policy analysis. The publication in 2008 of the OECD study on the environmental performance of agriculture marked the completion of an extensive effort to provide comparative agri-environmental indicators (AEIs) for OECD countries, based on agreed methodologies. ….. an OECD workshop will be organised to review the lessons learned and the uses made of the agri-environmental indicators by policy makers and stakeholders. Updated 5-year averages of core agri-environmental indicators will also be prepared, based on the results of the questionnaire prepared under the auspices of the OECD Working Group on Environmental Information and Outlooks, which is the established channel to update OECD environmental indicators. … Completion of the indicators …. is planned for Q4 2010. Publication of the 2nd edition of the Environmental Performance of Agriculture: At a Glance will be in 2011…”

The JWP’s work on AEIs over 2009-2010 has to a major extent been influenced by the:

i. JWP’s Washington Workshop (March 2007), which reviewed progress to date on developing AEIs, the agri-environmental policy inventory, and modeling the linkages between agricultural policies and the environment [COM/TAD/CA/ENV/EPOC/(2007)18];

ii. Working Group on Environmental Information and Outlooks (WGEIO) discussions on how to further progress work on AEIs [ENV/EPOC/SE(2007)8; and,


The main conclusions of Washington Workshop (as they related to AEIs) were as follows:

i. Define a limited set of specific OECD wide indicators where more effort is needed to meet the needs of OECD policy analysis work.

ii. Identify those indicators that could be updated with minimum additional resource cost on a regular basis in the future.

iii. Make greater use of the indicators in analytical policy studies in OECD work.

iv. Improve the interpretation and communication of results so that they are clear to non-specialists.

Discussion at meetings of the JWP and WGEIO during 2007-08 concluded that future work on AEIs should focus on the following areas:
i. Further develop AEIs covering: water (quality and quantity), biodiversity indicators, and farm management indicators, for which, as indicated in footnotes 1 to 3, the JWP has already undertaken some work across these different areas.

ii. Establish a biennial OECD Questionnaire on the State of the Environment – managed jointly by the JWP, WGEIO and Eurostat – to incorporate those indicators that already meet the OECD indicator criteria and can now be regularly updated. The JWP and WGEIO has already discussed, and in broad terms accepted, this proposal including which AEIs should be included in the questionnaire, listed in Annex 1. The questionnaire will be circulated to Member countries in 2010 (see also the details under the PWB in paragraph one above).

iii. Request that the Working Group on Pesticides reconsider its previous work on pesticide risk indicators, toward developing a uniform indicator(s) calculation methodology of pesticide environmental and human health risks that would meet the OECD indicator criteria, in particular providing an indicator that is comparable across OECD countries. Subsequently the Risk Reduction Steering Group of the OECD Working Group on Pesticides (WGP) has begun to explore the further development of pesticide risk indicators with the aim of reviewing existing risk indicators rather than developing new ones, and will provide a brief progress report at the next WGP meeting 29-30 June 2009 [ENV/JM/PEST/A(2009)1], including a report on countries’ approaches on the collection of pesticide sales (use) data [ENV/JM/PEST/(2009)13].

The publication of the OECD report (2008) on AEIs - Environmental Performance of Agriculture in OECD countries since 1990 (and the summary report Environmental Performance of Agriculture: At a Glance) includes the full list of AEIs used in the report, plus discussion of other AEIs of regional importance and/or under development. In addition, the PWB for the JWP has given high priority to work on climate change and agriculture, in particular, land use changes and their implications for climate change analysis.

The proposed objectives of the Workshop are to:

- Examine the current set of OECD set of agri-environmental indicators (AEIs) in terms of their strengths and weaknesses, lessons learned, and uses made of AEIs by policy makers.
- Review future directions for agri-environmental indicators to meet the demands of policy makers, with emphasis on recommendations for the future direction of OECD AEI work.
- Communicate the results and recommendations of the Workshop to the JWP meeting 28-30 June 2010, but also to other OECD Working Parties.

---

1 Under the OECD Horizontal Water Programme, OECD is organising a Workshop, to be hosted by Spain in Zaragoza early May 2010, that will examine the need to improve the information base to better guide water management decision-making.