

# Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute

## STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH CODE OF PRACTICE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) is responsible for collecting, compiling, processing, analysing, interpreting, and disseminating data on pesticide usage in agriculture and horticulture.

Our statistics are produced in accordance with the principles and protocols set out in the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#).

A complete publication list, designated as 'National Statistics', can be found at

<http://www.afbini.gov.uk/pesticide-reports-table>

The following practices demonstrate how National Statistics produced by AFBI comply with the principles and protocols within the Code.

### **Principle 1: Meeting user needs**

1. AFBI regularly engages with users at meetings. Users are from diverse sources, including the general public, government, research institutes, advisory boards and the UK Advisory Committee on Pesticides.
2. AFBI responds to the needs of the above users, providing data in a format that informs the relevant decision-making processes.
3. Pesticide usage surveys are designed to obtain impartial, accurate data using methods that have been peer-reviewed.
4. Reports are published according to a published timetable that reflects the user needs. Release dates for AFBI National Statistics outputs are pre-announced via the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Publication Hub.

### **Principle 2: Impartiality and objectivity**

1. Reports are published in an orderly manner when completed without delay.
2. The timetable for publication releases are agreed annually and published in advance
3. Reports are published and can be accessed from the National Statistics Publication Hub.

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/hub/search/index.html?newquery=pesticide+usa+ge+in+Northern+Ireland>

4. Statistical methods for collecting, compiling, processing and analysing data are described in the published reports.
5. There are currently no exemptions to the Code.
6. Errors discovered in published reports are promptly amended on website.
7. Reports are published on the website without charge to the user.

### **Principle 3: Integrity**

1. Reports are published without accompanying statement or comment, based on prior knowledge, issued to the media in advance of publication.
2. The reports are published on the website by AFBI personnel who are protected from political pressure that might influence presentation of the data.
3. The Chief Executive of AFBI has overall responsibility for deciding the statistical methods, standards, procedures, content and the timing of statistical releases.
4. Data collection is controlled under the Food and Environment Protection Act (Northern Ireland) 1985 and the European Community Regulation 1185/09. Statistical methods for collecting, compiling, processing and analysing data are peer-reviewed and described in the published reports.
5. Complaints relating to professional integrity and quality standards will be reported to the National Statistician.

### **Principle 4: Methods and Quality Assurance**

1. Pesticide usage statistics are produced according to peer-reviewed, robust statistical methods. These methods are published in each report and are continually under review.
2. Users are consulted in regular meetings to determine their requirements and publications are adapted accordingly.
3. AFBI is a member of a UK working party, which continually reviews the systems and procedures involved in pesticide usage monitoring.

4. The standards used to compile pesticide usage statistics provide a template for similar data collection by other member states in the European Community.

#### **Principle 5: Confidentiality**

1. Pesticide usage statistics comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. These statistics are calculated at the regional level and it is not possible to identify individuals or organisations, or to derive personal information relating to them.
2. All confidential data is maintained within secure databases. Staff are public servants, committed to confidentiality under the terms of the Official Secrets Act 1989.
3. Survey participants are advised of confidentiality arrangements during interview questionnaires.

#### **Principle 6: Proportionate burden**

1. Survey costs are reported annually and methods, particularly relating to data collection are continually reviewed to ensure minimum disruption to the individual participants and overall industry.
2. Participation in surveys is on a voluntary basis and statutory powers would only be used under exceptional circumstances.
3. Currently, data for use in pesticide usage statistics cannot be derived from administrative sources.
4. A cost-benefit analysis is undertaken to evaluate new data requirements.

#### **Principle 7: Resources**

1. Pesticide usage monitoring is funded by a levy imposed on pesticide manufacturers at pesticide registration. Monitoring costs are annually reviewed to ensure a minimum inflationary increase. Consequently, appropriate funding is provided to ensure adequate staff, and associated resources are available to complete the work to the required standards.
2. Statistical planning, the work programme, resource allocation and the outcomes are directed and recorded at UK working party level.
3. Expenditure for statistical surveys is monitored and reported annually.
4. Currently, data for use in pesticide usage statistics cannot be derived from administrative sources.

## **Principle 8: Frankness and accessibility**

1. Statistical data is presented descriptively in tables and figures, with analysis commentary. All reports comprise an executive summary, introduction, methods, results, discussion and bibliography.
2. All reports are available from the AFBI website, without charge and are also listed on the ONS Publication Hub.
3. For the purposes of clarity, principal data are provided in the form of tables, graphs and maps.

## **Protocol 1: User engagement**

1. We promote discussion with both data providers and users at regular meetings.
2. Statistical releases are published in accordance to the pre-release timetable and are also listed on the ONS Publication Hub. All reports are available from the AFBI website without charge.
3. Responses to enquiries and queries are provided in a timely and professional manner.
4. Different users have different needs and we try to accommodate the requirements of all our users.
5. We undertake bespoke analyses to meet individual user needs and to maximise data use.

## **Data Users**

Our main data users are:

- Minister and policy makers within DARD
- Policy makers within other government departments (e.g., DOENI, DEFRA)
- Local government
- Political representatives (e.g., MPs, MLAs and MEPs)
- Special interest groups (e.g., farmers unions, environmental groups, rural development bodies)
- Industry
- Academics
- Students
- Media
- Public

**Protocol 2: Release practices**

1. Statistical releases are published in accordance to the pre-release timetable and are also listed on the ONS Publication Hub.
2. The timetable for statistical releases is agreed twelve months in advance and is published on the ONS Publication Hub.
3. Statistical releases are issued at 9.30am on a weekday.
4. Pre-release access is limited to personnel essential for production, publication, quality assurance and operational purposes.

**Protocol 3: Use of administrative sources**

1. Currently, we do not use administrative data sources and all data for pesticide usage surveys are taken directly from personal interviews.