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2. Background

ABS Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs (ACF)

The ABS Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs (ACF) collection provided detailed statistics on the apparent consumption of foodstuffs in Australia. They were derived using information relating to the supply and utilisation of foodstuffs and are an estimate of foodstuffs available for consumption in Australia, after allowing for other losses and uses. This series was originally produced in 1936-7 and was compiled annually until 1998-99.

In the later years of the series data quality concerns were raised by industry stakeholders. As a response to stakeholder concerns, the ABS conducted a review of the Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs collection in 2001.

The review found a number of data quality issues:

- Some items were incorrectly classified
- There was some suspected underestimation both for home production and processed food
- There was also some double counting particularly in relation to processed food

More detail on these issues can be found in later sections.

The ACF was discontinued following the 1998-99 publication due to unavailability of funding at the time to address the data quality issues.

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Appendix 1 - Data quality issues

Foodstuffs 1999	Derived used	Data quality issue	Recommendation of 2001 review	Data source available
Canned meat	✗	This information was collected but not published . Not used by the ABS.	Not to collect canned meat as information is available in ACNielsen Australia Homescan data.	✗
Bacon and ham	✗	Manufacturing Production Survey question needed modification to ensure correct classification of foodstuffs.	Amend survey question form.	✗
Fresh and frozen Aust fish	✓	The benchmarked home production estimate was considerably lower than other recreational fishing data. ABS currently used an estimate of 18% of the commercial catch.	Survey of Recreational Fishing in New South Wales by the NSW Recreational Fishing Association in 2001 estimated total recreational catch was about 30% of the total commercial catch. Recommend this adjustment in absence of any updated information.	✓
Aust seafood otherwise prepared	✓	To provide accurate data this export information should be converted to drained weight in line with production data.	Data item is of unacceptable quality and recommended that Australian information should only be published as 'total fish' and 'total crustacean and molluscs' with no separate record for 'fresh' and 'otherwise prepared' seafood.	✗
Imported fish otherwise prepared	✓			✗
Imported crustacea and molluscs otherwise prepared	✓			✗
Full cream condensed and sweetened milk	✗	Manufacturing Production Survey question needed modification to ensure correct classification of foodstuffs. No data available to revise years before 1997 resulting in a break in series.	Amend survey question form for 'condensed, concentrated and evaporated milk'.	✗
Skim condensed milk	✗			✗
Infants and invalids food	✗	Manufacturing Production Survey question needed modification to ensure correct classification of foodstuffs.	Drop from the collection.	✗
Yogurt and cream	✗	This information was collected but not published . Manufacturing Production Survey question needed modification to ensure correct classification of foodstuffs.	Need to collect all cream produced or just table cream that is not going on to further manufacturing.	✗
Processed - Apples	✗	Some of the process fruit production is being understated does not include fruit that is processed and then sold in bulk to another processor, for example a baker.	Amend survey question form.	✗
Processed - Mixed fruits	✗			✗
Processed - Peaches	✗			✗
Processed - Other	✗			✗
Orange juice	✗	This information was collected but not published . Identified double counting where manufactures import concentrated orange juice and dilute this product to single strength within Australia. These quantities are appearing both as production and as imports.	This information is not essential for the production of the nutrient information and it is therefore recommended these items be removed from the manufacturing collection.	✗

Processed vegetables	✓	This information was collected but not published . For vegetable types where processed production is not collected by manufacturing, the ABS has estimated the processed production.	Processed vegetables no longer to be collected.	✗
Eggs	✗	Underestimation of egg production figures. Egg carton production by manufactures is 15% greater than would be necessary given the ABS production data.	To inform clients of this underestimation it is proposed the explanatory notes be amended to identifying the expected percentage under estimation. Close contact should also be maintained with the industry with a view to improve the accuracy of the data collected.	✓
Tea	✗	There is an omission of herbal teas . Import and export details would be inaccurate due to definitional problems.	Continue to publish data on black tea. Explanatory notes be amended to clearly specify that this figure does not include herbal tea.	✗
Home production beer	✓	Underestimate of home production . This estimate is calculated by multiplying the total commercial production by 2%, an estimate derived in the ABS following the 1992 home production survey.	The apparent consumption of Alcohol has made an adjustment on these figures.	✓
Flour	✓	The calculation for flour was incorrect .	Further contact will be necessary with the Flourmillers Association. 'Flour' entry on the publication be amended to read 'Wheaten flour'	✓
Breakfast cereals	✓	Data on the production of bran not collected and rolled oats data missing .	Amend survey question form to include bran. Footnotes need to note breakfast bars have been excluded from the calculations	✗
Sugar		Methodology used to calculate the consumption of refined sugar is flawed.	Methodology for calculating sugar be amended	✓

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- Replacement of Apparent consumption of foodstuffs
The 1998-99 issue of the Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs series (4306.0) was the final in that series, with the decision to cease collection based on concerns regarding the quality of derived consumption data and the costs to improve the methodology. The cessation of the series has left a high level of unmet demand among public health policymakers and researchers, as well as sections of the food industry. In 2015, the Commonwealth Department of Health provided funding for ABS to conduct a feasibility study into resuming the series, taking account of costs, timeliness and accuracy. The preliminary investigations to date on how particular foods or food groups might be measured conclude that the contemporary nature of the food supply is increasingly complex with growth in local and imported processed foods, and the costs of redeveloping rigorous methodology will make reliable accounting of many foods unfeasible. However, the use of classified and coded transaction data as described above may to an extent obviate the need for Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs, albeit with some coverage caveats.

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New publication proposal
Health WDB

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11/07/2018 03:00 PM

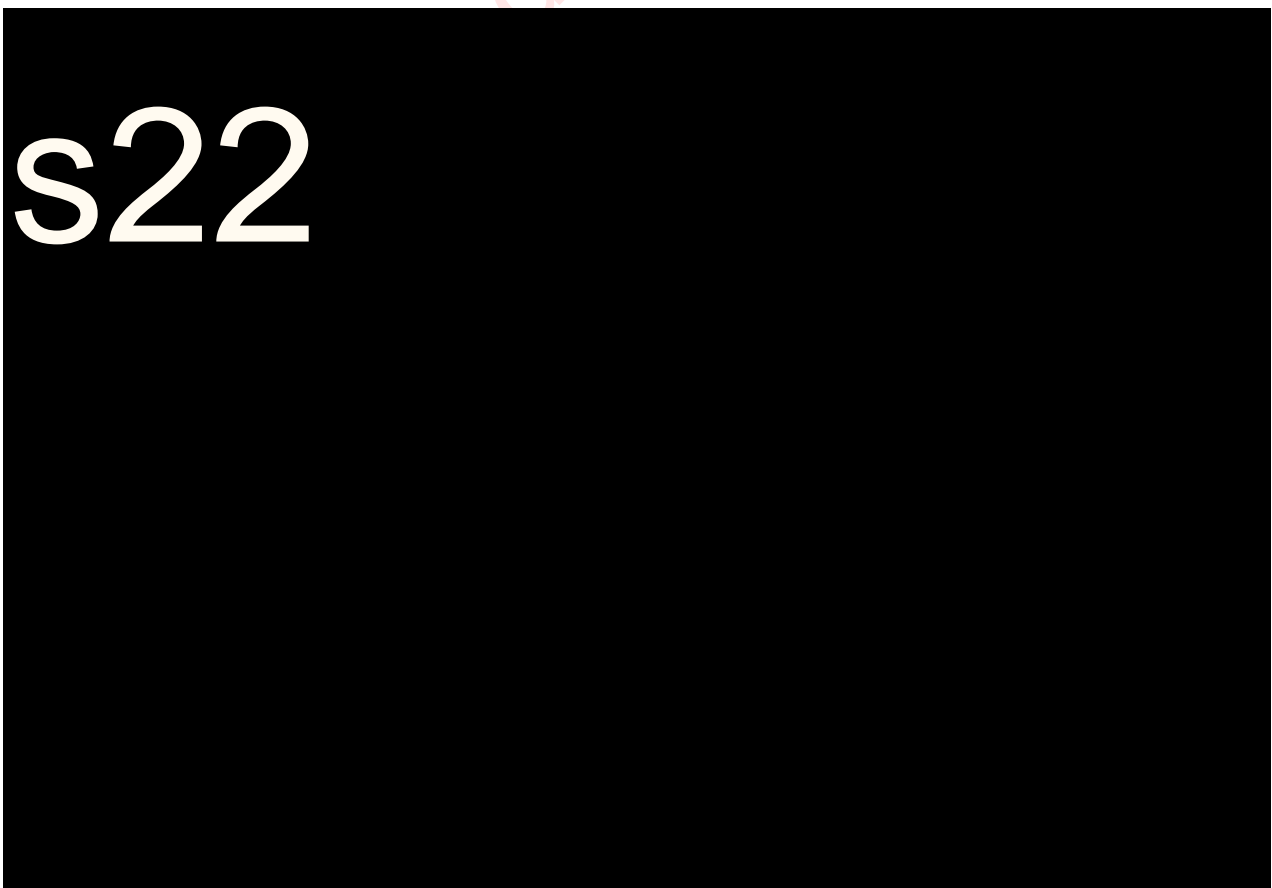
Basics

Protective Mark	UNCLASSIFIED		
Information management markers	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal privacy <input type="checkbox"/> Legal privilege <input type="checkbox"/> Legislative secrecy	Caveat	<input type="checkbox"/> NATIO

Proposal: Selected consumption of foodstuffs publication

Background

1. ABS ceased [Apparent Consumption of Selected Foodstuffs \(4315.0\)](#) in 1998 and [Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs, Australia \(4306.0\)](#) in 2000. The discontinuation of the publications was due a number of significant methodological issues that did not have identified cost-effective solutions (see  for a review of the issues).



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19/10/2015 12:06 PM

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Staff/ABS

19/10/2015 02:47 PM

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Subject	s22
Protective Mark	UNCLASSIFIED
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Categories	Collections\08 Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs - old series s22

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Below is an outline of the project, material on the previous review conducted in 2000, s22

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Initial investigations - previous review in 2000

Findings

The Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs (ACF) series has been conducted on a regular basis since 1936-37. The collection provides estimates on the apparent consumption of various food commodities, based on the available supply of the commodity for consumption. The relevance and quality of the data produced by the collection has been questioned in recent years.

Up until now, these issues have been addressed when they have come to the notice of the ABS either through users questioning the data, or through ad hoc investigations undertaken by ABS staff. The objectives of the review were to:

- document current users and uses made of the data and identify any unmet statistical needs
- identify possible alternative sources for data
- assess the quality of the published data
- assess any impact of the replacement of the annual Agriculture Census with the Agriculture Commodity Survey
- assess the suitability of the system currently used to compile estimates
- provide an estimate of the approximate cost of conducting the survey on an annual basis
- Make recommendations based on these investigations

Recommendations

Publication frequency:

It is recommended that:

- we continue to publish the apparent consumption of Foodstuff series data on an annual basis.
- we cease the production of the preliminary publication.
- include final 1997-98 data in the publication containing final 1998-99 data, to be released in October 2000. Any users who wish to obtain 1997-98 data prior to October 2000, will be serviced via a special data service.

Publication Output:

It is recommended that:

- we no longer produce the breakup between processed and fresh vegetable consumption.
- we no longer publish the 'offal and meat n.e.i.' food group.

- we no longer collect the details on production of canned bacon and ham, canned corned beef, canned mixed meat and vegetables as this information is not published.
- the food group 'infants' and invalid's food' be dropped from the collection
- processed production for commodities like pickled onions, gerkins and cucumbers, mushrooms and olives no longer be collected.
- Australian fish information should only be published as 'total fish' and 'total crustacean and molluscs' with no separate record for 'fresh' and 'otherwise prepared' seafood.
- we continue discussions with ADC and the Manufacturing area to ascertain the viability of collecting production details for cream and icecream.
- we commence collecting data on apparent per capita consumption of mangos, avocados and broccoli.

■ (Subject: Reviews of Apparent Consumption of Foodstuff collection; Database: Health WDB; Author: ■^{s22}; Created: 18/07/2014; Doc Ref: LBER-9M59FM)

■ (Subject: Apparent consumption; Database: Health WDB; Author: ■^{s22}; Created: 08/07/2014; Doc Ref: DCOO-9LT5YW)

■ (Subject: Analytics for 4306.0; Database: Health WDB; Author: ■^{s22}; Created: 09/12/2014; Doc Ref: LBER-9RM855)

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Kind regards

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Health Section | Population, Labour and Social Statistics Division | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

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The Australian Bureau of Statistics acknowledges the traditional custodians of country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and elders, both past and present.

Letter re decision on Apparent Consumption (Response to: 2002-03 alcohol data)

New Ag Program WDB

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21/10/2004 09:53 AM

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This letter contains evidence of the decision by Mr Trewin to not proceed with the Apparent Consumption Series in the future. It is the only documentation available on this decision.



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04/21 PST



**PARLIAMENTARY
SECRETARY
TO THE TREASURER
The Hon Ross Cameron, MP**

The Hon. Grant McBride, MP
Minister for Gaming and Racing
Level 13
55 Hunter Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

PARLIAMENT HOUSE
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Telephone: (02) 6277 4821
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parlsec.treasurer.gov.au

Dear Minister *Cameron*

Thank you for your letter of 27 April 2004 to the Treasurer concerning the availability of information on the current per capita consumption of alcohol. Your letter has been referred to me for response as the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) falls within my portfolio responsibilities.

The Australian Statistician advises me that the Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs series, which provided the above information, has been discontinued. This decision was taken due to substantial changes in data availability for a number of components, methodological issues and the limited number of users of the information. There is no intention to resume the series.

However, the Statistician also advises that the production of relevant data for alcohol consumption may be straight forward and if it is, the ABS will produce an estimate for your enquiry. When the alcohol estimates were last released, the primary source of data was the Australian Customs Service, which no longer produces the required data, but it may be possible to obtain data from the Australian Taxation Office and/or other sources.

The Statistician has undertaken to investigate the data availability and comparability issues further and he will write to you directly with the results of his investigations.

It should be noted that it will not be possible to provide any product level information or consumption figures by age group.

I hope the above is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

S47F

ROSS CAMERON

- 6 JUL 2004

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Proposal to cease the Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs series

Background

The Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs (ACF) series was originally produced in 1936-37 and was compiled annually until 1998-99. The collection provides estimates of the apparent consumption of various food commodities, based on the available supply of the commodity for consumption. While the series is largely derived from data collected as part of the Agriculture Census/survey and import/export trade, quantities of manufactured food were collected specifically for this series.

Calculations of per capita consumption of an extensive range of commodities were published annually in Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs (Cat no 4306.0). Up until 1994 this publication included nutrient intake information which had been derived by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) from the consumption data. The AIHW has since taken up responsibility for the publication of this nutrient data but to date has only published data up to and including the 1995-1996 reference period.

For a number of years, the ABS had received queries from users highlighting concerns with the collection. While it is generally agreed that the series was a valuable source of a consumption trend, it is believed that large household consumption surveys are a far better source of accurate individual consumption data. These household surveys also allow for the dissemination of information by various categories eg location, age, sex etc while the apparent consumption series can only provide a national per-capita consumption estimate.

Evaluation of the series

Review of Apparent Consumption Series

Findings of the Review

A review of the collection was undertaken in 2000. This review found that:

- there are a small number of significant users of the collection, including DAFF, ABARE, AIHW, the Dairy Australia (previously the Australian Dairy Corporation (ADC)) and the Australian and New Zealand Food Authority (ANZFA). The published data was used for a range of functions from research, which was mostly conducted by the Government bodies, to marketing analysis by individual

industry organisations. Two organisations considered the data important enough to consider contributing funds for the collection to be undertaken

- a preliminary publication was not warranted. The explanatory notes in the final publication be expanded to better explain the deficiencies of the data for use in estimating nutrient intake, and to better explain the scope of the collection.
- some data previously published could be dropped altogether, (as this information was available commercially from alternative sources), and some new commodities should be added to the collection.
- a number of data items were of poor quality. Where the quality of these data items could not be improved, or the data was not considered important, the review recommended that they be dropped from the collection. In a number of cases where the data was obviously important, for example data relating to flour consumption and sugar consumption, the review recommended changes to the methodology. These changes were implemented in the most recent publication and considerably improved the data quality of these commodities.
- the replacement of the annual Agricultural Census with the Agricultural Commodity Survey did not have a significant effect on the quality of ACF data published. This is because any data from the ACS used as input to ACF collection is at a broad enough level to have relatively small sample errors
- the current system of Excel spreadsheets, while not sophisticated, is probably the most suitable system for storing and processing ACF data
- the annual cost of conducting the survey was approximately \$73,000 (assuming the cessation of the preliminary publication)

The review also made a number of recommendations which required further investigation and action. These included:

- undertaking an analysis of results from the proposed 2002 Home Production survey, with a view to improving the method of extrapolation from year to year. (The Home Production Survey was last conducted in 1992 and is used as a basis for estimating the quantity of fruit and vegetables grown in home gardens as a proportion of commercial production. This information is used to calculate total supply.)
- undertaking an analysis of seafood data following a study of recreational fishing to be conducted by DAFF
- reviewing the wording and definitions used on a number of manufacturing forms used to collect data for ACF (Some of this work has been undertaken by the manufacturing section yet staff have experienced considerable difficulty developing suitable product definitions)
- arranging for input from nutritionists to ensure that, given the reduction in commodity production details collected as part of the Agricultural Census, the series remained relevant to users.

This work has largely not been undertaken due to other higher priority tasks being identified since the review was conducted. It is estimated that the cost of undertaking this work would be in the vicinity of \$100,000.

Changes made following the 1999 Review

Following the review it was decided by management that an annual collection could not be justified given the other significant high priority issues which were arising within the agriculture program at that time. This resulted in the cessation of an annual publication following the release of data for the 1998-99 reference year. From that time, it was decided that the series would only be prepared, in Agriculture Census years,

when production data for minor commodities would be most accurate. As it was expected that the ABR frame would be introduced in the 2000-01 Agricultural Census reference year, it was decided that the next publication would relate to the 2005-2006 reference year (this was to allow the bedding down of the ABR frame).

Users were contacted and advised of these decisions and the resources previously used in the preparation of the annual apparent consumption series were redirected to higher priority work in the Agriculture program.

Recent developments

More recently, a number of significant issues have come to light which has caused us to again review the future of the collection. The most important of these is the decision, by the AIHW, not to release their prepared nutrient intake publication, which is based on the apparent consumption series. This decision arose because the AIHW was unable to find anyone, within the industry, prepared to validate the data (because of concerns regarding the methodology and quality) and assist in the launch of the publication. As the use of the apparent consumption data by AIHW was one of the key drivers to retain this series the ABS became concerned given the 'experts' issues with data quality.

When the ABS became aware of the AIHW's concerns with the data, a meeting was organised. From discussions with staff at AIHW and, through them, with the Strategic Inter-Governmental Nutrition Alliance (SIGNAL), it again became apparent that, while users realise the individual commodity information is not very accurate, the apparent consumption series did provide some useful trend information. In addition the SIGNAL members were concerned that, by discontinuing the apparent consumption series, the ABS would not be fulfilling an United Nations FAO obligation to provide data for the FAO Food Balance Sheets. (This concern is unfounded as the FAO does not use the apparent consumption series to produce this dataset).

Signal were asked if they would be willing to contribute towards the costs of conducting the ACF series, however, to date, ABS has not received a response to this request.

Conclusion

The review identified that the only key users of the apparent consumption series were AIHW and Australian and New Zealand Food Authority (ANZFA). In collaboration, these organisations used the ABS consumption series as the base data for the nutrient intake series. In 2002 the AIHW/ANZFA project completed the nutrient intake series, based on the most recent apparent consumption data, yet failed to release the information because of concerns about the quality of the data. The AIHW has now decided the nutrient data will be circulated as an information paper for comment. This lack of confidence in the accuracy of the ABS apparent consumption data (as a tool to derive nutrient intake information) has further caused the ABS to question the value of the existing apparent consumption series.

For the ACF to be a useful and quotable source, considerable improvement in the quality and relevance of the data is necessary. This work includes:

- a. establishing updated information for estimating the per capita intake of fat consumed as part of cooking. This would require input from a recognised industry expert
- b. improving the identification and collection of information relating to modern commodities based on milk and milk products, soybean based products etc.
- c. identifying alternative sources for commodities such as tea, coffee, 'other vegetables' and 'other fruits', now that these are no longer available from the Agricultural Census

It is estimated that it would cost approximately \$100,000 to improve the methodology to enable data of acceptable quality to be produced. The ABS has asked the key users if they would be prepared to pay for the expansion/improvement of the series, but to date has not received any offer of support.

Given the concerns regarding the quality of the derived consumption data, the ABS believes that it cannot continue to produce the data using the existing methodology. It is estimated that the cost of producing the 2005-06 publication will be in the vicinity of \$200,000, which would cover the costs of work required to improve the quality of the data to an acceptable level and, at the same time, maintain as close as possible, a similar data set to the one produced by the ABS in 1999. This cost however would only allow for limited expansion of the series to include items that would be identified as essential and currently missing from the data set. Obtaining some understanding of the significance of these new items in the Australian context is difficult and would require some input from nutritionists to identify the importance of these commodities to consumption data. The cost does not cover the expense of conducting the Home Production Survey (originally intended to be undertaken in 2002) which would be required to update the series.


As this series is largely derived from collections which will continue to be undertaken by the ABS, consumption data for a large number of commodities could be prepared by users themselves when required. Currently users can, and do, calculate their own consumption data using the same methodology as that used by the ABS, and that way, they are more aware of the shortcomings of the data.

Recommendation


Unless user support (both financial and intellectual) is forthcoming, it is recommended that the Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs series cease.

Released under FOIA

Attachments

 (Subject: Review of apparent consumption series; Database: New Ag Program WDB; Author: s22; Created: 22/12/2000; Doc Ref: KTON-4S94XM)

 (Subject: Outcome of ACF Review; Database: New Ag Program WDB; Author: s22; Created: 17/08/2001; Doc Ref: KTON-4ZP7K8)

 (Subject: Comments from Signal; Database: New Ag Program WDB; Author: s22; Created: 23/09/2003; Doc Ref: JWLN-5RNAZD)

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Re: hi [REDACTED] ..here's a better draft...keen to correct any errors, if any...rgds, [REDACTED]

Industry Agriculture and Land Stats WDB

[REDACTED]

01/03/2012 11:43 AM

Basics

[REDACTED] /Staff/ABS 01/03/2012 12:00 PM

Send	To [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@gmail.com> cc Industry Agriculture and Land Stats WDB@ABS bcc
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Categories	Agriculture\Client contact and other collaborations\Industry and international

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Here are some words in relation the discontinuation of the Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs collection.

In 2002 the ABS, in conjunction with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, undertook a review of the Apparent Consumption of Foodstuff series. This review highlighted a need to revisit a number of the assumptions required to produce the estimates (in particular assumptions relating to the quantity of home production and the components of various foodstuff contained in imported foods) and a need to recalculate a number of the ratios used in estimating these components. As the funds required to update the many assumptions and ratios contained in the publication were not available, and following consultation with users, the series was discontinued.

In relation to the FAO data I am aware that both ABS and ABARES provide information to a number of FAO statistical compilations. I do not know which of these agencies provide the data for the series you reference in the paper. As discussed the FAO would be best paced to advise on their source data.

regards s22

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Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs series

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Review of Apparent Consumption Series

A review of the collection was undertaken in 2000, and recently there have been a number of discussions with users. This document summarises recent findings and makes recommendations for future work.

Main Users and Uses

While a number of users refer to the data, there are only two key users, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) and the Australian and New Zealand Food Authority (ANZFA). These two users work in collaboration to compile a nutrient intake series which uses ACF series as base data.

However, no nutrition information has been published since 1996. In 2002 the AIHW/ANZFA project completed the nutrient intake series, based on the most recent apparent consumption data for the years 1995-96 to 1997-1998. This data was not published due to concerns over data quality. It is now intended that the AIHW will circulate the data as an information paper for comment. Clearly the data is not considered to be fit for its main purpose - ie the derivation of nutrient intake.

The other main use of the ACF series is by industry associations for market analysis.

Data Quality Concerns

It is well accepted, by industry users, that the apparent consumption series is out of date. These issues are outlined below and are divided into groups based on the components of the apparent consumption methodology.

Commercial production -For raw commodities, this information is based on data collected as part of the Agricultural Census. Since 1999, and the introduction of the use of OCR technology, there have been a number of changes to the layout of the collection form. This has resulted in the loss of production information relating to less significant (in terms of VACP) commodities. As a result the ABS will need to find a new production data source for the commodities - tea, coffee, other vegetable and other fruits.

Estimated Home Production-A home production survey collects details relating to home garden production. This information has been used in the past to calculate a home production component of supply as a percentage of commercial production. Traditionally this survey is conducted every 10 years with the last one being undertaken for the 1992 reference year. This collection will need to be completed before the next release of apparent consumption.

Imports and Exports-The level of detail with which import and export data is collected has reduced significantly over the years. Classifications are continuously being amalgamated and this greatly affects the ABS's ability to accurately measure the components of goods being exported and imported. For the past 30 years the same

conversion factors have been used to calculate the proportion of commodities, identified in the apparent consumption series, that appear in goods traded. As food groups become amalgamated these factors become less accurate. In addition, the components of products have changed over time and, while the outdated factors may not significantly effect trend data they do have a more obvious effect on the specific commodity consumption.

Non food use and waste- These factors are currently only available for oranges, some vegetable, bread and peanuts. In all cases but peanuts these factors are based on a percentage of commercial production. The rationale behind how these percentages were developed has long been lost. The accuracy of this information is questionable and ranges, depending on the commodity, between 2-5% of commercial production. No effort is made to account for the non food use of meat, fish or milk. This is probably acceptable if the apparent consumption series is to look at trends in consumption but does mean that actual consumption levels of these commodities may be overstated, especially given the number of pets in Australian households that consume these goods.

Processed foods-Where processed food information is collected as a special service by the ABS manufacturing area the information is published. However the AIHW requires a more comprehensive set of processed food data to calculate the nutrient intake information. Since the AIHW is not prepared to undertake a separate collection to ensure accurate data is obtained and as there has been a decline in comprehensiveness of the manufacturing collections this has meant that since the 1970s the ABS has estimated the processed production of a number of products based on a percentage of fresh production. These factors This information is not identified separately in the apparent consumption publication but is used to calculate the nutrient intake information. To date this has hampered the ABS's ability to collect details on some key processed foods such as orange juice, yogurt to ensure no double counting

As part of the methodology for calculation apparent consumption the ABS measures supply. For raw commodities this is derived by adding the commercial supply (obtained from the Agriculture Census)

- with other data and factors needed to derive nutrient intake

Work required to improve quality to acceptable levels

- outline each stream of work, cost and elapsed time

Options

- user to fund required work
- ABS to fund required work
- series to cease

Future of the Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs series - recommend to cease

New Ag Program WDB

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s22 /Staff/ABS 20/11/2003 12:46 PM

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Subject	Future of the Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs series - recommend to cease
Protective Mark	DOCUMENT NOT YET CLASSIFIED
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Categories	Collections\Apparent Consumption\Documentation

fyi
thanks

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----- Forwarded by s22 /Staff/ABS on 20/11/2003 12:46 PM -----



s22 20/11/2003 12:37 PM

To: s22 /Staff/ABS@ABS, s22 /Staff/ABS@ABS
 cc:
 Subject: Future of the Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs series

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FYI (no action required) - the NSC is proposing to cease apparent consumption.

----- Forwarded by s22 /Staff/ABS on 20/11/2003 12:37 PM -----



s22 19/11/2003 03:54 PM

To: Denis Farrell/Staff/ABS@ABS
 cc: s22 @ABS, s22 /Staff/ABS@ABS, s22 @ABS
 Subject: Future of the Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs series


This series has seen a number of changes in the last few years and we have just


finished a review of that collection, including contact with the key users.

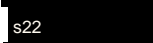
This document summarises the findings and recommends that the series be ceased unless user funding is provided to improve a number of data quality issues.

 (Subject: Future of the ACF; Database: New Ag Program WDB; Author: ; Created: 14/11/2003; Doc Ref: KCON-5TA4G3)

For your consideration please.


Director
Agriculture, Mining and Manufacturing
Goods and Services National Statistics Centre

ph (02) 

fax (02) 

mobile 

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Draft Evaluation of Non ABS Sources of Data (Response to: Non - ABS Sources of Data)

Industry Statistics Branch WDB

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01/05/2003 09:30 AM

Basics

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	Caveat		<input type="checkbox"/> NATIO

Draft
Evaluation of non-ABS agricultural data

3 Findings**3.1 General agriculture data holdings****3.1.1 (Name of data holding and contact details)****Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs (ACF)**

NAME OF ORGANISATION

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS Contacts)

Survey Manager: s22

Telephone: 02 s22

Fax: 02 s22

E-Mail: <mailto:s22@abs.gov.au>Web address: <http://www.abs.com.au>

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[Overview \(Put in as optional\)](#)


The annual Apparent Consumption collection provides a general overview of the supply and utilisation of approximately 130 basic foodstuff groups for the resident mean population in Australia. The information in the series focuses on the major food groups and covers:

- The quantity of food available (supply);
- Where the food supply goes (utilisation);
- The amount of food apparently consumed by each person.

The broad data groups include meat and meat products, poultry, seafood, dairy products, fruit and fruit products, vegetables, grain products, eggs, nuts, oils and fats, sugars, and beverages. The term apparent consumption is used because it is assumed that all the foodstuffs available are consumed.

3.1.1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this collection is to provide details on the supply and utilisation of the major food groups. In the past the Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs (ACF) publication has included a Nutrition Table identifying the nutrient intake of Australians. This is no longer published by the ABS however in 1999 the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), in conjunction with the Australian and New Zealand Food Authority (ANZFA), undertook to produce nutrient tables from the Apparent Consumption of Foodstuff series for the four years 1994-95, 1995-96, 1996-97 and 1997-98.

A recent review of the collection  (Subject: Review of apparent consumption series; Database: New Ag Program WDB; Author: s22; Created: 22/12/2000; Doc Ref: KTON-4S94XM) revealed that the published apparent consumption data was used for a range of functions including research, which was mostly conducted by Government bodies, and marketing analysis by individual industry organisations. In the case of the AIHW, and the ANZFA, both rely heavily on this information, and other unpublished data, to enable the production of tables outlining the nutrient intake of Australians as discussed above.

Further to this, two organisations, the Australian Dairy Corporation (ADC) and the Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics (ABARE)) stated that the data was essential to achieve the mission of their organisation.

3.1.1.2 Data detail

The Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs series is compiled by collecting data from a number of different sources, including ABS and non-ABS sources. As such, the scope and coverage are determined by these collections.

The major collections sourced from within the ABS and utilising ABS data being the Agricultural Census (AC)/ Agricultural Commodity Survey (ACS), the Manufacturing Survey of Inventories and Production, Merchandise Imports and Merchandise Exports, and Livestock Products collections. (The scope for these data sources is excluded here.)

In terms of Non-ABS sources of data - it is important to summarise here the types and sources of non-ABS data that are used to compile the Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs publication. The ABS Agriculture section sends out data requests to the following organisations and collects the following information:

SUMMARY OF NON ABS SOURCE DATA FOR COMPILATION OF APPARENT CONSUMPTION			
COMMODITY	OPENING & CLOSING STOCKS	PRODUCTION (QTY)	PROCESSED (QTY)
Meat	Meat & Livestock Australia		
Seafood		Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE):Fishery Statistics	
Milk Products		Australian Dairy Corporation.	
Fruit	Apple & Pear Association	Aust Dried Fruits Association.	
Grain		Rice Growers Co-operative.	
Eggs			
Nuts	Peanut Company of Australia Limited	Peanut Company of Australia Limited	
Sugars	Sugar producers	Sugar producers	Sugar producers
Oils & Fats		Australian Dairy Corporation.	

Some specific examples include the following:

Grain: A Rice Consumption in Australia form is sent out to the Rice Growers Co-Operative Ltd asking for the amount of rice received by mills and the amount of rice sold for human consumption in Australia - for table rice, breakfast food manufacture, other food manufacture and other manufacture (non-food).

Sugar: A Sugar Statistics, Australia form is sent out to three sugar producing organisations (refineries) such as Sugar Australia and Bundaberg Sugar Ltd, asking for opening and closing stocks of sugar (refined & raw), production data (refined & raw), imports and exports (refined & raw) and domestic deliveries of (refined & raw) sugar to manufacturers of alcoholic & non-alcoholic beverages, dairy products, confectionary foods and bakery products etc.

Dairy: The information supplied to the ABS is by request and includes - domestic sales of milk, domestic sales of cheese, domestic sales of butter and domestic sales of dairy blends.

3.1.1.3 Quality of data

Apparent consumption of foodstuffs is estimated using the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) measurement for availability of foodstuffs. The apparent consumption equation is as follows:

- Commercial production
- Estimated home production
- Imports
- Opening stocks

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- Exports
- Use for processed food
- Non-food use

- Wastage
- Closing stocks

Per capita apparent consumption is total apparent consumption divided by the mean resident population for the period.

Population data are derived from those published in Australian Demographic Statistics (ABS Cat No. 3101.0). Figures are revised as more recent data becomes available.

The consumption equation is not used in those instances where certain components of the general equation are not available. These include milk, some milk products, cheese, rice, bread, butter, sugar, wheaten flour and dried fruits which are estimated on the basis of domestic deliveries, and beer, wine and spirits which are compiled using excise duty and import clearance data.

Based on the ACF review, it can be stated that a number of Non-ABS sourced data items are of good quality and some of acceptable quality. (See table below).

More specifically stocks of red meat data obtained from Meat and Livestock Australia is of acceptable quality. Seafood production data in the calculation of 'Australian - fresh and frozen fish' is obtained from catch information published by ABARE and is of acceptable quality as well. According to the Seafood Industry Council, AFFA and the Fishery Research Corporation, the seafood production data is correct and of a acceptable quality.

The proportion of the 'dairy products' data for example market milk, powdered milk and cheese data which all come from the Australian Dairy Corporation (ADC), is also of a high and acceptable quality.

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	High quality	Acceptable quality
Carcass meat - Beef		X
Veal		X
Lamb		X
Mutton		X
Pigmeat		X
Total meat and meat products		X
Seafood - Fresh and frozen Aust fish		X
Powdered milk-full cream		X
Powdered milk-skim		X
Cheese	X	
Market milk	X	
Apples		X
Pears		X
Dry vine fruit, currents, raisins, saltanas		X
Dry tree fruits	X	
Table rice	X	
Nuts-peanuts		X
Oils and fats-butter		X
Dairy blends		X
Sugars-cane sugar-refined		X
Sugar In manufactured food		X

3.1.1.4 Importance to National Statistical Service

The Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs series is an important ABS collection which has been conducted on a regular basis since the mid 1930's. With respect to Non-ABS sources of data there are currently no alternative sources available which could replace these sources and there are no alternative sources available which could replace the ACF collection completely.

More specifically some Non-ABS (external) clients of the Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs data, such as the ADC and Food Science Australia have identified supermarket sales data as an alternate source for the information they require, however other clients of the data could not identify any alternate data sources for their requirements. Discussions with AC Nielson, the largest of the companies providing supermarket scanning data, reveals that, while expensive, these companies provide extremely good coverage of product sales through supermarkets. A range of information is available from "one off" data item details (for example the sales of canned beetroot), to copy's of the Marketing Information Digest (currently valued at \$6,950), which is an annual publication providing information on 130 categories of both processed food and grocery items. As the information collated by AC Nielson is collected from the major supermarket chains it does not provide reliable data for sales of fresh produce, i.e. meat, fruit and vegetables as supermarkets are not the only/major sales outlet for these commodities.

Other more general publications "The Australian Grocery Industry Marketing Guide" and the "Foodweek Industry Yearbook and Directory" do provide a very general view of grocery sales but are not a useful source for the information the ABS requires.

In 1999 the ABS also published some Food Eaten data that was published by the ABS (Cat.No. 4804.0) as part of information collected under the National Nutrition Survey. This survey collected annual consumption information during 1995 from a household survey of 38,000 people across Australia. From this survey consumption figures, for a number of commodities, on a per capita basis were compiled, however the data could not be compared to per capita data published in the Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs publication because of different methodologies.

3.1.1.5 Cost of producing and maintaining data

As at the 22/12/2000 the cost of conducting the survey was in the order of \$73,000. A preliminary publication *Apparent Consumption of Selected Foodstuffs, Australia*, Preliminary (Cat.no. 4315.0) which was usually produced before the release of final estimates but which was not produced for 1998-99 cost the ABS roughly \$18,000 annually as well. All non-ABS sources of data have incurred no direct cost.

3.1.1.6 Availability

Currently the *Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs, Australia* (Cat.no. 4306.0) is not being compiled on an annual basis and the next publication, expected to be published will cover the reference period 2005-2006.

All non-ABS sources of data for the previous collection (apart from seafood production data) are available annually, free of charge and by directly approaching the relevant organisation via letter and requesting the required data. For instance the 'dairy products' data has been provided by the Australian Dairy Corporation annually and is free of charge. The seafood production data is published by ABARE in *Australian Fisheries Statistics* (Tables 2-5) and there is no problem in accessing this information at no cost.

Sugar and rice data are also obtained via direct request, with a letter and questionnaire sent to the NSW Ricegrower's Cooperative and three sugar refiners. For peanuts, cool store apples and pears and dried vine fruit data, contact is made with the various organisations via letters and data is forwarded by mail.

As the collection of Non-ABS data for the next reference period (2005-2006) is not scheduled for another two to three years - a number of availability and confidentiality issues will need to be taken into consideration. For instance the collection and publication of sugar data may be affected by the number of sugar refiners in the industry. For example if the industry loses one of the three existing refineries,

confidentiality issues may affect the use of and release of sugar data as is already the case. Currently only *Apparent total consumption* and *Apparent per capita consumption* of sugar are available for release. (i.e. publication). Another issue of concern would be if the industry expands in the North West - it would be wise to ensure no refineries have been established in WA.

In relation to dairy data, with the recent restructuring of the dairy industry and the ADC - it would be wise to keep a watching brief on the Australian Dairy Corporation and whether they would make the same data available or whether they would still collect it at the time. At the moment there is one rice Co-operative in NSW and it would be wise to ensure no other cooperatives have been established over the period since the collection was last undertaken.

With respect to statistics relating to rice, peanuts, apples & pears, dry fruit and red meat products, it would be wise to keep a watching brief on the organisations that have supplied us data in the past and to contact them from time to time in order ensure that their contact details are up to date, and that the data they have supplied us for the production of the Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs time series is still being collected by them and still available to the ABS.

3.1.1.7 Recommendations

Currently the ABS collects a proportion of the information in the Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs publication from Non-ABS sources and it is important to continue to search for and pursue other possible sources of data - if in the event that the organisations currently providing data can no longer do so in the future. A watching brief and regular contact should be maintained on all the Non-ABS sources of data for this collection. It is recommended that we continue to collect the existing Non-ABS sources of data relating to the apparent consumption of fresh food and major processed commodities for which data is and can be accurately collected.

When the next publication comes out in 2006 or 2007 we should entertain the thought of doing an article on the apparent consumption of foodstuffs over the past 100 years or so. We have good time series data that goes back to the 1930's and it would tie in well with the publication of the next reference period (2005-2006).

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Info to go to Signal (Response to: Discussions with AIHW)
New Ag Program WDB

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08/07/2003 08:27 AM

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	Caveat		<input type="checkbox"/> NATIO

Thanks for that ^{s22} [REDACTED] I have made a couple of changes mainly based on the fact that we are not currently conducting a formal review.

^{s22} [REDACTED]

Thank you for the offer to include some of the Apparent consumption series key clients in your mailout of the working paper. I will forward some names in the next couple of days.

kind regards ^{s22} [REDACTED]

Apparent consumption of foodstuffs

The ABS is currently reviewing its ~~Apparent consumption of foodstuffs~~ series. At present the ABS is planning to release the next publication of the **Apparent Consumption of Foodstuff series** in 2007 based on data collected in the Agricultural census in 2005/06. The ABS is concerned though that the value of this series is diminishing. These concerns are based on what they suspect are a limited number of users and more importantly the usefulness of the publication as a reflection of food 'consumption' patterns and trends in Australia.

In response to these concerns, staff from the ABS and AIHW met recently to discuss the matter. The ABS advised AIHW that a substantial case will need to be made to justify

continuing the series in its current form. It was suggested that a more accurate picture of 'consumption' patterns in Australia could be obtained from retail scanned data supplemented with a sample from the apparent consumption series--meat, alcohol and fruit and vegetables in particular were suggested as needing supplementation. But other commodities may also be required. The implications for producing the complementary Apparent consumption of nutrients publication will also need to be considered if this option were chosen (see below).

Hence advice is sought from SIGNAL members on one of two options:

1. Retain the *Apparent consumption of foodstuffs* in its current form (substantial justification of its current value will need to be made if this option is chosen) OR
2. Produce an *Apparent consumption of foodstuffs* report ~~based on scanned retail data supplemented with additional commodity data where needed.~~ **using the current methodology which would contain a smaller selection of commodities. This data could then be supplemented by scanned retail data, as required, by users.**

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note to **s47F** 27/04/04 (Response to: Discussions with AIHW)
New Ag Program WDB

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27/04/2004 10:14 AM

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	Caveat		<input type="checkbox"/> NATIO

Hi **s47F**

The status of the collection remains unchanged with, to date, no management decision on whether the release of the Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs should be continued in 2005-06.

As flagged in our previous contact, the ABS has now looked at the use of the Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs data in the 'food score cards' currently used in SA. As a result we are working through some queries PIRSA have highlighted with the ABS consumption data.

Unfortunately we have not received any offers of financial support, which would be required to improve the quality of the release for 2005/06.

Have you received any comments arising from the release of your working paper on nutrient intake? The ABS would be interested in any that may relate to the Apparent Consumption series.

I will keep you informed of any decisions, sorry I can't clarify the situation any better.

regards **s22**

Note to s47F - 06/07/04 (Response to: Discussions with AIHW)
 New Ag Program WDB

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13/07/2004 04:14 PM

Basics

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Unfortunately the news is not good.

The ABS has received no feedback from food and nutrition groups following highlighted concerns relating to the relevance and usefulness of the apparent consumption series, nor have we been able to secure any funding to support the collection and collation of the apparent consumption series for the future.

As a result the 'Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs' will not be compiled in 2005-06 and the ABS will be sending a letter to relevant groups informing them of this decision.

I am aware you will be disappointed by this decision but, without the funds to improve the collection, the ABS is not in a position to continue the compilation of this series. Should another organisation be keen to compile this data themselves the ABS is happy to provide assistance.

regards s22

Agriculture (Response to: Monthly Reports for June 2004)
Industry Statistics Branch WDB

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13/07/2004 04:01 PM

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Progress Report for Agriculture: May/June 2004

Client/Stakeholder liaison

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[Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs \(Karen\)](#)

- A decision has been taken to discontinue the Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs series, due to substantial changes in availability for a number of components, methodological issues and the limited number of users of the information. The intention to resume the series. AIHW, the main user of the data, has been notified [redacted] (Subject: Note to Bonnie - 06/07/04; Database: New Ag Program WDB; Author: Karen Connaughton; Created: 13/07/2004; Doc Ref: KCON-62U9CD)

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Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates

19 – 20 October 2011

Question No: SBT 223
Topic: Statistics on Food Consumption
Hansard Page: Written

Senator Colbeck asked:

223. The Australian Bureau of Statistics used to compile statistics on apparent consumption of selected food in Australia every ten years, but the latest data for vegetable consumption is 1998-99.
- Why did this information cease being compiled?
 - Who has responsibility for this information now?

Answer:

A) Why did this information cease being compiled?

In 2002 the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), in conjunction with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, undertook a review of the Apparent Consumption of Foodstuff series. This review highlighted a need to revisit a number of the assumptions required to produce the estimates (in particular assumptions relating to the quantity of home production and the components of various foodstuff contained in imported foods) and also a need to recalculate a number of the ratios used in estimating these components. The funds required to update the many assumptions and ratios contained in the publication were not available, and following consultation with users the series was discontinued.

B) Who is responsible for this information now?

The ABS continues to collect, compile and produce details relating to commercial production of agricultural commodities as well as the import and export of foodstuffs. Therefore, for a number of commodities, the data that is currently collected can support good estimates of apparent consumption information. This work is undertaken by users of the data on an ad-hoc basis and relates largely to unprocessed food produce which is largely grown in Australia.

In addition, as part of our international obligations, the ABS provides these details to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations who compile food balance sheets and consumption series see <http://faostat.fao.org/site/368/default.aspx#ancor>.

Information relating to food consumption is also collected through the household survey program. As part of a long running regular health survey program, the ABS collects information relating to usual consumption of key food groups such as fruit and vegetables and other products of health interest such as alcohol and milk.

The ABS is currently consulting with Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) in the conduct of the 2011-13 Australian Health Survey (AHS). This collection includes a sophisticated dietary recall measure designed to collect detailed consumption data for use in nutrition and food monitoring research. The AHS will support comparisons against the previous 1995 National Nutrition Survey and is expected to be repeated on an irregular basis.

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4. Why did ABS stop collecting this data in 1998/9? In particular was this due to an increased complexity of sources of sugar in food consumed in Australia and availability of reliable data?

The decision to discontinue the publication, *Apparent Consumption of Foodstuffs* was taken in 2000 by the ABS after an internal methodological review. The unpublished review concluded that the methodology for estimating virtually all foodstuffs in the collection needed updating. Improvements to the methodology for sugar, like most other foodstuffs, were recommended. At the time, the ABS was unable to secure public funding to update the methodology for the entire collection and continue to publish data about apparent foodstuffs. The decision was therefore taken to discontinue the publication.

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