
Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir Michael Scholar KCB

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Dear M Demarty

THE USE MADE OF EUROPEAN AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

Thank you for your letter of 7 May 2010 in response to my earlier letter dated 13 April to Dacian Ciolos.


I welcome your confirmation that the European Commission is committed to finding the correct balance between information needs and costs, and that the 2013 reform provides a further opportunity to evaluate what is required. In your letter you helpfully identified a number of issues that you intend to take forward to modernise agricultural statistics.

I understand that the CAP Simplifications Experts Group discussed the importance of agricultural statistics at their recent meeting, and that there was widespread support for the concerns expressed by the UK about the scale and detail of what is required. The concluding thoughts on the need to review requirements, and to improve communications through explaining the specific uses of the information, seem absolutely right to me. It is clear that a number of organisations have, or will be facing, similar challenges. I would encourage all those involved to engage in radical thinking to ensure that the systems meet the needs for the future. At present, it is difficult to establish precisely the uses made from these statistics, and it will be extremely important in reviewing public expenditure on statistical work for such uses to be identified.

My letter of 13 April set out that the UK Statistics Authority operates independently of the UK Government. The Statistics Authority will continue to monitor developments in this area as government officials take forward discussions with the Commission and other Member States.

I wish you every success in taking this important work forward.

Yours sincerely



Sir Michael Scholar KCB