# What is a farm?

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## Producer of agricultural products

According to the EU-regulation 1166/2008 a farm is defined as a unit producing agricultural products, either crops or livestock. The regulation has a long list of crops and animals which a farm structure survey (FSS) has to cover. Generally the list is in accordance with a normal understanding of agricultural activities.

It means that farms with for example cereals, pulses, root crops, fruits, berries and animal fodder crops should be covered as well as livestock farms with cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, horses and poultries.

Some cases often give rise to discussion or misunderstanding. It could be mentioned that these activities do not have to be covered in the FSS:

* Fur animals
* Forestry
* Aqua culture
* Agricultural service

However, any EU country is free to cover these aspects in the FSS for national reasons.

Among questionable cases which have to be covered the following items could be mentioned:

* Bee hives
* Rabbits
* Christmas trees

It is not of importance whether a farm produces for the market or not. The question of survey thresholds will be dealt with in chapter 5 but here it should just be emphasized that a farm with for example cows should be included in the FSS whether the milk is sold to the diary or consumed by the farmer’s family.

Likewise farms should be covered by the FSS both if the land is owned or leased, and also if the land is partly owned and partly leased.

## Location of the farm

Regional statistics about agriculture are most often of great interest among the users. Very often they demand even very detailed statistics with figures for municipalities.

Thereby every farm should have a municipality code which indicates where the agricultural activity takes place.

Normally it is pretty easy to determine the municipality code of the farm. It is simply the town where the farm is located. But there might situations where there could be doubt. If a farm has land in more than one municipality it should have the municipality code where the farmer has his house. If the farmer lives somewhere else the municipality code should be where the farm has its biggest area. It should be noticed that the farmer’s private address might differ from the address of the farm.

## Different types of organisations

Normally the statistical definition of a farm does not conflict with the intuitive understanding: One man owns or rents some land and cultivates the crops and has some animals, for instance cattle and pigs. He is the leader and runs the farm with the help of his family and might also have one or more non family workers if the farm is big.

It means that in most cases there can be no doubt about the statistical unit. The following list concerns special cases:

* **Two farmers have a close co-operation**. There is no exact rule as to when the co-operation is so close that the case in fact should be considered as one farm. For big farms a criterion could be common book keeping but it would hardly make much sense for small farms with no formal book keeping system.
* **Collective and state farms** should be included in the FSS.
* **Private companies** with agriculture**.**
* **Farms with livestock but no land** should also be included. They might have bought or leased a pig or cattle stable from another farm so that the land and the livestock of what used to be one farm unit now are two farms.
* **Agro scientific research farms** are also farms. They have most often land and livestock which easily can be recorded in the questionnaire. Labour force questions are more difficult because most of the staff is not traditional agricultural workers.
* **Common land farms** are special farms which hardly can be seen as real farms. The problem concerns cases where livestock farms in a village have access to an area with common grass land. The land cannot be attributed to any specific farm; one farmer cannot know how big an area he uses of the common land.
* Other special cases are agricultural land owned by **religious societies**, **prisons**, **hospitals**, **homes for disabled persons**, **schools** and **military barracks**. Such farms should also be included in the FSS.

## Holder/Farmer

When conducting a farm structure survey in accordance with the EU standard the following persons should report their working time:

* The farmer (holder)
* The manager (if there is no personal holder or if the holder does not work at the farm).
* The wife of the farmer
* Family workers
* Non family workers

It is thus of importance to decide who is the farmer and who should be recorded somewhere else. For a traditional farm the farmer is the person who owns the land and runs the farm, very often together with his family.

In the following are listed the cases where doubt might arise:

* Man-wife farms: Here the farmer should be the spouse with the biggest responsibility. If the children take part in the work of the farm it could occur that for example the oldest son might be the best choice as the farmer, especially if the parents are not quite young anymore.
* Farms run by two or more partners: Again the partner with the biggest responsibility should be chosen.
* The owner/tenant of the land does not work at the farm: in these cases a manager should be chosen, who is hired by the farmer to take care of leading of the farm. Such a case it very rare.
* The farmer is not a natural person: This is the case for farms owned by government institutions and farms run by companies. For such farms one person should be selected as the manager.

If it is difficult to determine who has the biggest responsibility at a farm other criteria might be used, for instance to choose the oldest person working at the farm.

## Thresholds, defining the population of the AC

In the farm structure statistics it very common to exclude the smallest farms as long as they do not contribute very much to the agricultural land and the livestock.

Also the EU regulation deals with so-called threshold which means that EU countries are allowed to exclude very small farms. The rules might be a bit tricky:

A country should include either:

1. All farms which have at least 1,0 hectare of agricultural land.

Or

1. If another threshold is selected – say 3,0 hectares – all farms with at least 98 per cent of the area and at least 98 per cent of the livestock (livestock units) should be covered.
2. Irrespective of 1) and 2) all farms which fulfil just one of the following criteria should be included:
3. At least 5,0 hectares of agricultural land
4. At least 0,5 hectares with vegetables, fruits and berries
5. At least 0,1 hectares with green house crops
6. At least 0,5 hectares with tobacco, hops or cotton
7. At least 10 cattle
8. At least 20 sheep
9. At least 20 goats
10. At least 50 pigs
11. At least 20 sows
12. At least 1.000 poultries

So it should be noticed that there never can be any freedom from including farms which fulfil just one single of the criteria a-j.