

BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

This document reports a breach of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, or the relevant Pre-release Access to Official Statistics Orders, to which the Code applies as if it included these orders.

1. Background information

Name of Statistical Output (including weblink to the relevant output or 'landing page')

Cereal usage by Millers, Brewers, Distillers and Maltsters UK
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/cereal-usage>

Name of Producer Organisation

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

Name and contact details of the statistical Head of Profession (Lead Official in an Arm's Length Body) submitting this report, and date of report

Peter Helm, Head of Profession for Statistics, Defra, 8th January 2015

2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2 – Release Practice 4

Date of occurrence

8 January 2015

Nature of breach (including links with previous breaches, if any)

- The UK Cereal Usage statistics are published monthly. The release was due to be published at 09:30 on Thursday 8 January 2015.
- GB Animal Feed Production statistics were also due to be published at 09:30 on Thursday 8 January 2015.
- An external user (a cereal trader) contacted the department at 09:38 to say that the Cereal Usage statistics had not been published, but that the Animal Feed Production statistics had mistakenly been duplicated and published in its place.

Reasons for breach

Human error. The incorrect publication had initially been uploaded for publication. This mistake was then not identified by a second person responsible for checking and approving the publication.

3. Reactions and impact (both within the producer body and outside)

- Immediate action was taken to resolve the error. The Cereal Usage statistical publication was correctly published at 09:55.
- The Head of Profession (HoP) was not available on 8 January. The breach was discussed with a member of his team and the HoP advised on his return the following day.
- At the time of writing this report, no further complaints have been received.

4. Corrective actions taken to prevent reoccurrence of such a breach (include short-term actions, and long-term changes made to procedures)

This breach was as a result of human error.

Publication of statistics releases is now handled in 2 stages, by different members of the publishing team: 'preparation' and 'approval'. As a result of this breach, the lead statistician emailed members of the publishing team to explain the error that led to the breach and reminded them of the importance of thorough checking of releases by approvers and their responsibilities under the Code.

5. Links to published statements about this breach

This breach resulted in a minor delay to the publication. No statement was published.