

## BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

A breach of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics occurs where one or more provisions of the Code were not followed in situations where an exemption or exception had not been approved by the UK Statistics Authority's Head of Assessment, as required in paragraph (xii) of the Code's preamble. Rules on pre-release access to statistics are covered in the relevant Pre-Release Access to Official Statistics Orders; the Code applies as if it includes these orders.

### 1 Background Information

Name of Statistical Output (including web link if relevant)

Pesticide Usage Survey Reports

<http://www.fera.defra.gov.uk/scienceResearch/science/lus/pesticideUsageFullReports.cfm>

Name of Producer Organisation

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

Name and contact details of person submitting this report, and date of report

Peter Helm, Head of Profession for Statistics, DEFRA, 7 June 2012

### 2 Circumstances of Breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2 Release Practices 2, 3 and 4.

Date of occurrence

Reports published prior to 2012.

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

Reports were not listed or pre-announced on the ONS Publication Hub or published at the standard time of 09:30.

## Reasons for breach

This was an oversight due to indirect and complex governance arrangements which are shared across two Government departments (DEFRA and the Health and Safety Executive). The omission came to light with closer working relationships through joint working practices on pesticides and fertilisers.

### 3 Reactions and Impact

Main users were notified of the availability of the report through other established routes. For example:

- Pesticide Usage Survey information is disseminated via the Pesticide Forum Annual Report (see <http://www.pesticides.gov.uk/Resources/CRD/Migrated-Resources/Documents/F/FINALPFAR2010pdfforwebsite.pdf>)
- A link to the final pesticide usage survey report (or an offer of a hard copy) is supplied to all survey participants.

No requests for information or complaints were received.

### 4 Corrective Actions Taken (include short-term actions, and long-term changes made to procedures)

The 2011 Report which is due for publication in 2012 has been listed on the ONS Publication Hub and has been pre-announced. Publication (due in August 2012) will be to the standard time of 09:30. A timetable of releases for 12 months ahead will be maintained. Governance arrangements with clear lines of responsibility for this publication have also been established.

This is a unique situation, since for all our other National Statistics publications, DEFRA statisticians take the lead responsibility and the outputs are published on the DEFRA website.

We will build on lessons learnt through this experience to inform procedures should a similar situation for production of statistical output occur in future. The most effective way to achieve this is via the individual project managers, who are DEFRA statisticians and so aware of requirements of the Code of Practice.

As a result of the structural changes DEFRA is undergoing, Peter Helm will be meeting with lead statisticians across the DEFRA network. It is proposed that the meetings will be held quarterly, shortly after the Heads of Profession meetings. The first meeting should be late June / early July. The aim of these meetings is to check how the changes are working combined with maintaining awareness of responsibilities for compliance with the Code of Practice.

**5 Any other relevant supporting material (including link to published statements about this breach)**

'Pesticide Usage Survey Reports' published prior to 2012 were not listed or pre-announced on the ONS Publication Hub or published at the standard time of 09:30. This breach of the Code of Practice has been addressed for future releases. The Pesticide Usage Survey Reports are published on the Food and Environmental Research Agency website <http://www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/national-statistics/breaches-of-the-code-of-practice/>

The breach has been reported to the National Statistician's Office. The full breach report will replace this notification once it has been published on the UK Statistics Authority's website.