

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')

Results from the June 2013 Scottish Agricultural Census

www.scotland.gov.uk/stats/bulletins/01071

Name of Producer Organisation

Scottish Government: Rural & Environment Science & Analytical Services

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

Roger Halliday, 1N.04, St Andrews House, Edinburgh EH1 3DG

Tel: 0131 244 0442e-mail: roger.halliday@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2: Release practices

Practice 4. Issue statistical releases at the standard time of 9.30am on a weekday, to maintain consistency and to permit time for users to understand and respond to the information during normal working hours.

Date of occurrence

9 October 2013

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

Delay in publication until 10:30. The problem was noticed by the statistics team at about 9:40 and investigated immediately, but no-one was available to resolve it until 10:30.

Reasons for breach

The publication process is not completely automated. The document was transmitted from the web-production team to the web-publication team late on the afternoon of 8 October. It then requires someone to manually queue the document, however neither of the two members of staff saw the message; one member is on leave, and the other went to a meeting without checking.

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

Delay in availability of results to media. There were difficulties for communications colleagues briefing journalists on these important statistics and the accompanying Ministerial comment at their regular Wednesday morning media briefing. The 10:30 publication time however meant that the Wednesday lunchtime deadline seems to have still been met for specialist farming trade publications with no impact on the amount or accuracy of coverage.

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

Additional members of staff in the web-publication team have been given access to the mailbox, to check for documents that need to be published, in order to ensure that there is someone available each day that statistics are published. In the longer term a fully automated system would be preferable.

5. Links to published statements about this breach

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/About/nsbreaches