

Prices

Output prices for agricultural products

Before the foundation of ISTAT, information on the output prices for agricultural products were collected by the Agrarian Statistics Office at the Ministry of National Economy; from 1928 the responsibility for processing and publishing these statistics was passed to ISTAT, then known as the Central Statistical Institute.

The series presented start from 1861 and refer to annual average prices received by farmers for the sale of their products, and are composed of average quotations relating to the most representative markets for the type of product considered.

The recording of prices has stayed almost unchanged over time: prices were – and still are – recorded in the various provinces by Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Craft Trades and Agriculture and are then submitted to ISTAT on a monthly basis.

From 2000 data are no longer submitted by the Chambers of Commerce in paper form but through a computerised procedure: up until 2009 the information was sent by email, and after that date the registration and transmission of data took place through the Indata accessible website. Considering the peculiar nature of these figures, in order to ensure the entire territory is represented, the choice of markets also takes account of the level of production for each product.

The indices have, however, undergone significant change. The producer price indices for agricultural products at first sale and those on the prices of goods and services purchased by farmers for their business were first calculated using 1928=100 as base. In order to make the series for consideration coherent, both in terms of range of products and the methodology applied, the series presented here run from 1976. In that year – following decisions taken by the countries in the European Economic Community – when the base year was set as 1976=100, the products in the two indices were completely revised, where necessary introducing items to make the statistics comparable on an international level.

In 2000 further changes were made and the base year was shifted to 1995=100. The innovations introduced by the European System of Accounts (ESA95) and by the Economic accounts for agriculture in the field of measuring agricultural production made it necessary to extend the scope of the general price index for products sold by farmers. Furthermore, the structure and the summary levels for price statistics were also reviewed, in order to bring the whole system closer to the new agricultural accounts structure. From January 2009 the price indices for agricultural products have been calculated using a base of 2005=100.

Warnings for time series comparisons

- In 1976 the product range was overhauled to ensure comparability on an international level.