Do agricultural pretests differ from business survey pretests?

QUEST workshop meeting
April 27th to 29th
Granada (Spain)

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Overview

- Agricultural Pretesting at the FSO

  - Agricultural surveys differ from business surveys

- Discussion: Do you share my experience?
Agricultural Pretesting at the FSO

Subject-matter unit has to connect two competing perspectives:

- Transfer of EU regulation into the national context
- Disburden of respondents in favor of high data quality

➡ Testing and revising the draft questionnaire in order to make it applicable to “reality”
Agricultural Pretesting at the FSO

- Recruitment with the help of the Länder offices
  - Regional setting the most important characteristic
  - Structural differences between different parts of Germany

- Company-site-visits (at least 12 farms)
  - Self-completion of the questionnaire in advance
  - Cognitive interviewing (audio-taped)
    - In presence of a subject-matter colleague
    - Narrative description of the agricultural operation

- In addition, expert reviews useful

- Evaluation of the self-completed questionnaires
Meeting unknown perspectives

- “Time is money” (farmer)
  - Cancellations due to weather conditions
  - No self-completion in advance
  - Time pressure during cognitive interviewing

- “All I know is I know nothing” (survey methodologist)
  - Imbalance of knowledge: subject-matter colleague and test person as experts
  - Clear allocation of roles during warming-up

- “I thought I knew the topic and the problems” (subject-matter statistician)
  - Gap between theory and practice
  - Positive experience: being open for “reality”
Agricultural surveys differ from business surveys

- **Record formation:**
  - Different levels of professionalization
  - Data availability is no major problem (basic numbers by heart)

- **Respondent selection/identification:**
  - Less problematic due to hierarchic organization: manager in the center of all crucial decisions (incl. external requests)

- **Assessment of priorities:**
  - Dependent on weather conditions and the natural production cycle
Agricultural surveys differ from business surveys

- **Comprehension:**
  - Office workers: familiar with terminology of accounting
  - Field and barn workers: terms as close to daily farm routine as possible

- **Information retrieval:**
  - Coordination is no problem (farms = small or medium-sized enterprises, two respondents maximum)

- **Release of the data:**
  - Dependent on EU subsidies, questionnaire regarded as control instrument
  - Concerns that statistical data used to discredit the branch
Thanks for your attention.

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