

DELEGATION OF THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
DELEGATION DE LA COMMISSION DES COMMUNAUTES EUROPEENNES
PRESS AND INFORMATION SERVICE

INFORMATION NOTE

European Community not
self-sufficient in cereals

The European Community as a whole had to cover between 5 and 10% of its cereal requirements by means of imports during the marketing years 1972/73 to 1974/75. This information emerges from an analysis entitled "Supply Balance Sheets" recently published in the green series, Agricultural Statistics, by the Statistical Office of the European Communities.

Of course, the situation varies in the nine Member States: France was the only country with a constant and considerable surplus of cereals, corresponding to more than 50% of its domestic use. Denmark had a self-supply level of about 100%, while the Netherlands had the greatest deficit in cereals and had to cover nearly 75% of its domestic consumption by means of imports. Further differences emerged with respect to the individual kinds of cereal. The Community was self-sufficient in the most important food cereal - wheat - while it imported about 45% of its maize, which is used mainly for animal feed. France was the main wheat exporter with a surplus of from 80% to more than 100% of its domestic use, whereas the Benelux countries, the United Kingdom and Ireland had to import between 30% and 50% of their requirements.

The publication in question contains the supply balance sheets for all Member States and for the Community in respect of 100 agricultural and food products (including fish) for the years 1974 and 1975 or the crop years 1973/74 and 1974/75. Three special sections deal with the degree of self-supply, per capita consumption and, in more detail, the uses of cereals.

This last mentioned section of the publication shows that 60% of cereals in the Community were used as animal feed and 24% for human consumption while the rest is accounted for by sowing, losses and industrial processing (for non-food use).

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Half the grain used as animal feed was used on the farm where it was grown and did not reach the market. This proportion, however, varied considerably from country to country, partly as a result of differences in the rate of self-supply, production pattern and agricultural structures. In the Federal Republic of Germany, France and Denmark, between 55% and 65% of grain used as animal feed was used on the farm where it was grown. In Italy, the United Kingdom and Ireland about one third of cereals used as animal feed did not reach the market. The corresponding figure for Belgium and Luxembourg was only 20% and for the Netherlands less than 1%.

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