Statistics Canada's Geography
About Geography

• Compare similar levels of geography for counts, but you can get away with percentages to compare different levels of geography.

• Statistic Canada's geographical hierarchy is used by a LOT of Canadian sources.

• A same city might be available at many different geographical levels.
STANDARD GEOGRAPHICAL CLASSIFICATION
Hierarchy of standard geographic units for dissemination, 2016 Census
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Population Minimum</th>
<th>Covers all of Canada?</th>
<th>How many in Canada (2016)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Census agglomeration</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census division</td>
<td>CD</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census metropolitan area</td>
<td>CMA</td>
<td>100,000 with 50,000 in core</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census subdivision</td>
<td>CSD</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5,162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census tract</td>
<td>CT</td>
<td>2,500 (usually)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>5,721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census consolidated subdivision</td>
<td>CCS</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1,768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designated place</td>
<td>DPL</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissemination area</td>
<td>DA</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>56,590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissemination block</td>
<td>DB</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>489,905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic region</td>
<td>ER</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal electoral district</td>
<td>FED</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province or territory</td>
<td>PR</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Regions</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>126?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forward Sortation Areas</td>
<td>FSA</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1,638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal Codes</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>855,056</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Small Geographies for Which Data is Often Available
Census Subdivision

Census Division

Census Tract

Dissemination Block

Dissemination Area

Health Regions

Census Metropolitan Area

Forward Sortation Areas

And

Postal Codes
Census Subdivision (CSD)

Part A - Short definition:
Area that is a municipality or an area that is deemed to be equivalent to a municipality for statistical reporting purposes (e.g., as an Indian reserve or an unorganized territory). Municipal status is defined by laws in effect in each province and territory in Canada.
Census tract (CT)

Definition

Census tracts (CTs) are small, relatively stable geographic areas that usually have a population of less than 10,000 persons, based on data from the previous Census of Population Program. They are located in census metropolitan areas and in census agglomerations that had a core population of 50,000 or more in the previous census

A committee of local specialists (for example, planners, health and social workers, and educators) initially delineates census tracts in conjunction with Statistics Canada. Once a census metropolitan area (CMA) or census agglomeration (CA) has been subdivided into census tracts, the census tracts are maintained even if the core population subsequently declines below 50,000.

Reported in

Census tracts are available for Census Metropolitan Areas (big cities) only.

Truro is not a CMA.

Here is a map of Halifax census tracts.
Dissemination area (DA)

Definition
A dissemination area (DA) is a small, relatively stable geographic unit composed of one or more adjacent dissemination blocks with an average population of 400 to 700 persons based on data from the previous Census of Population Program. It is the smallest standard geographic area for which all census data are disseminated. DAs cover all the territory of Canada.

Reported in
Census metropolitan area (CMA) and census agglomeration (CA)

Part A - Short definition:
Area consisting of one or more neighbouring municipalities situated around a core. A census metropolitan area must have a total population of at least 100,000, of which 50,000 or more live in the core. A census agglomeration must have a core population of at least 10,000.
Finding Maps and Lists of Small Geographies
To give get a quick look at dissemination areas or census tracts, cheat by using the Census Mapper! 😊
Finding Maps of Stats Can Geographies

- Choose your source based on your need and the time period to cover.
- Just need to see the geography for a specific location? Try GeoSearch or Scholar’s GeoPortal or the Census Profiles.
- Want a beautiful PDF map? Try the online reference maps or internet archives.
- Need to play around with maps in GIS software? Try Scholar’s GeoPortal or the Online Boundary Files.
Finding Lists of Geographies

- Choose your source based on your need and the time period to cover.
- Just want to **see a simple list online**? Try browsing the Census Profiles, or clicking on numbers in the standard geographical classification.
- Want to **create a list**? You’ll want to explore GeoSuite, or GeoSuite online (2016 only) or download the Census Profiles, or extract a list from Boundary Files…
GeoSearch is an interactive mapping application that makes it easy to find geographic areas in Canada for which census data are available. To find a specific place of interest, users can click and zoom in on a map of Canada or they can search by place name or postal code. Links to data products, analytical products and maps that are available for the selected area are listed below the map.
Online GeoSuite

Search geography by name or code

Data vintage: 2016
Nova Scotia (12010035), DA

Hierarchy of standard geographic areas for dissemination, 2016 Census

Scroll down and select
Census of Agriculture Geography
Take a look at the reference maps.

Make sure you know about *Ecumenes* – agricultural operations tend to be concentrated in geography.

To explore geography in geospatial software, download the Census of Agricultural Regions Boundary File or the Agricultural Ecumene Boundary File.

- Consult [Unraveling the mysteries of mapping Census of Agriculture data](#) from librarian colleagues to work through an exercise using these map layers.

Work with layers developed by other governmental agencies.

- Take a look at the Interpolated Census of Agriculture from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada which corresponds with biophysical units.
- Try the [online interactive Canada Census of Agriculture 2011 and 2016](#) map from Agriculture & Agri-food Canada.
Census of Agriculture Reference Maps

Reference maps provide the geographic boundaries, codes and names for all geographic areas appearing in the data tables. To view the maps associated with each province, please select the province name, then refer to the appropriate map number.

Due to confidentiality constraints, when the data for a geographic area has very few farms, it is combined with the data from another census division. For the names of the geographic areas included in an amalgamation, go to Geographic area amalgamations.

A complete set of reference maps is available in PDF format.

Definition

Census agricultural regions (CARs) are composed of groups of adjacent census divisions.
Definition

Ecumene is a term used by geographers to mean inhabited land. It generally refers to land where people have made their permanent home, and to all work areas that are considered occupied and used for agricultural or any other economic purpose. Thus, there can be various types of ecumenes, each having its own unique characteristics (population ecumene, agricultural ecumene, industrial ecumene, etc.).
Working with Agricultural Geography in Geospatial Software

Agricultural Ecumene Boundary File (92-639-X)

This boundary file delineates areas of significant agricultural activity in Canada as indicated by the 2011 Census of Agriculture. It is available at the Canada level, except for the territories, and is generalized for small-scale mapping. This agricultural ecumene enables users to thematically map data aggregated to the census division level and limits the data display to those areas where agricultural activity is concentrated in Canada. When used in dot and choropleth maps, the ecumene concept provides a more accurate depiction of the spatial distribution of data within standard geographic areas such as census divisions. Agricultural indicators including the ratios of total agricultural land to total land area, and total agricultural receipts to total land area were used in generating the agricultural ecumene. The file is available in ArcGIS Shapefile, MapInfo and Geography Markup Language formats.

A reference guide is also provided.

Census Agricultural Regions Boundary File (92-637-X)

This Cartographic Boundary File for Canada contains the boundaries of all 82 census agricultural regions delineated for the 2011 Census of Agriculture together with the shoreline around Canada and the larger inland lakes, all integrated in a single layer. The boundary file co-ordinates are latitude/longitude and are based on the North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83). The file is available in ARC/INFO Interchange, MapInfo Interchange and Geography Markup Language formats.

A reference guide is also provided.

Unraveling the mysteries of mapping Census of Agriculture data

Description:
Outline - Part A: "massage" / prepare raw data from Census of Agriculture - Part B: manipulate / prepare the geospatial map layers - Part C: make map(s)

Subject:
Census

Creator:
Daniele Borel-Meczuk
Peter Fellet

Language:
English

Date:
2014-11-26
Explore Map Layers Shared by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Interpolated Census of Agriculture

The Census of Agriculture is disseminated by Statistics Canada’s standard geographic units (boundaries). Since these census units do not reflect or correspond with biophysical landscape units (such as ecological regions, soil landscapes or drainage areas), Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in collaboration with Statistics Canada’s Agriculture Division, have developed a process for interpolating (reallocating or proportioning) Census of Agriculture information from census polygon-based units to biophysical polygon-based units.

Publisher - Current Organization Name: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

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