



24th  
Annual

# Morris Hansen Lecture

## Methodological Issues and Challenges in the Production of Official Statistics

*Speaker: Danny Pfeffermann*

Discussants:

Lawrence Brown, Professor of Statistics, Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania  
John Eltinge, Associate Commissioner for Survey Methods Research,  
Bureau of Labor Statistics

**Abstract:** The big advancement in technology, coupled with the constant rise of 'big data', and yet increased demand for more accurate, more detailed and more timely official data with tightened budgets, places enormous challenges to producers of official statistics across the world. In this presentation I shall discuss the major challenges as I see them and occasionally offer ways of dealing with them. Examples of such challenges include the potential use of big data with integration of computer science; increasing data accessibility but maintaining privacy and confidentiality; possible uses of data obtained from web-panels; addressing the problems of response burden and nonresponse; mode effects and proxy surveys; integration of statistical and geospatial information; and future censuses based on administrative data and small area estimation.

Based on my extensive experience in the academia, researching and consulting on topics related to the work of National Statistical Offices (NSOs), and serving as the National Statistician of Israel, I shall also confront the question of how well universities train students to work at NSOs. Considering that NSOs are among the largest employers of economists and statisticians, and official statistics is the most frequently encountered statistics for most people, I strongly believe that the academia should include topics applied in the work of statisticians and economists working at NSOs in their teaching and research programs. As advocated in my presentation, these topics are just other facets of statistical inference.

**DANNY PFEFFERMANN** is Professor of Statistics at the University of Southampton, UK, and Professor Emeritus at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. As of 2013, Danny is the National Statistician and Head of the Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel. He is a past President of the Israel Statistical Society and present President of the International Association of Survey Statisticians (IASS). For the last 20 years, he has also served as a consultant for the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Danny is a fellow of the American Statistical Association and an elected member of the International Statistical Institute (ISI). In 2011, he received the Waksberg Award for "outstanding contributions to survey methodology". His main research areas are analytic inference from complex sample surveys, seasonal adjustment and trend estimation, small area estimation, observational studies and nonresponse. Danny has 65 publications in refereed journals, and co-edited with Professor C.R. Rao the two-volume handbook "Sample Surveys", published by North-Holland. He received a B.A. in Mathematics and Statistics, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Statistics from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Tuesday, January 20, 2015

3:30 – 5:30 pm

Jefferson Auditorium, U.S. Department of  
Agriculture South Building  
Independence Ave.  
(between 12th and 14th Streets)  
Smithsonian Metro Station  
(Blue/Orange Lines)

A reception will follow at 5:30pm in the  
Whitten Building Patio

Please pre-register for this event to help  
facilitate access to the building online at  
<http://www.nass.usda.gov/morrishansen/>

Sponsored By

