

Supplement to the Report on the 1990 World Census of Agriculture

International comparison
and primary results by country
(1986 - 1995)

FOREWORD

In the past fifty years, the FAO Statistics Division prepared a decennial Programme for the World Census of Agriculture (WCA) in order to provide member countries with the fundamental concepts, definitions and standard classifications needed for undertaking their National Agricultural Censuses in a given decade in order to foster the improvement of data quality of baseline national agricultural statistics. The International Institute of Agriculture prepared the 1930 and 1940 Programmes for the World Census of Agriculture, and the FAO Statistics Division prepared the 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000 Programmes for the World Census of Agriculture.

The adoption of the criteria of the Programmes also allowed the publication of summary agricultural census data by country after each census round and, for the 1960, 1970 and 1990 census rounds, the preparation of a database of internationally comparable figures such as number of farms by size, number of livestock by type and age/sex classification and land use by crops and agricultural inputs.

In this context, the FAO published in 1997 the “Report on the 1990 WCA, FAO Statistical Development Series No. 9” which presents census results collected from the reports issued by the countries that conducted censuses during the decade 1986-1995 and made them available to FAO by mid-1997.

The present “Supplement to the Report on the 1990 WCA” presents the census results collected from the reports issued by the countries that conducted censuses during the 1986-1995 decade and made them available to FAO after mid-1997. This publication also provides, in an internationally comparable form, a summary of data describing the main characteristics of the structure of agriculture, such as number and area of agricultural holdings, land tenure, agricultural holders and land use for 90 countries; and includes comparable data for those countries conducting a census of agriculture during the period 1930-1990.

The work of the FAO Statistics Division in preparing this publication has involved the collection, assessment, validation, standardization and processing of selected information and data from national agricultural census publications and reports, available in diverse form and languages, and using different concepts and classifications for their definitions and data.

The comprehensive tabulations presented here provide an overview of agricultural census data and methods and may serve as a useful background for the study of agricultural statistics.

The Director
Statistics Division

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REMARKS

Geographic areas

The form of presentation in this report does not imply official endorsement or acceptance by FAO of the names, status or boundaries of the countries or territories listed or described. It was adopted solely for the purpose of providing a convenient geographical basis for presenting statistics in a form in which they could be readily used. The same qualification applies to all notes and explanations concerning geographic units for which data are presented.

Rounding

In some tables data presented for components of a total have been rounded. In such cases the sum of component parts may not be exactly equal to the total.

Symbols

Magnitude 0 or less than half the unit specified, category not applicable or data not available: -

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INTRODUCTION

The preparation of the first Programme for the World Census of Agriculture (WCA) was initiated in 1924 by the International Institute of Agriculture (IIA) and implemented around 1930 in about 60 countries. IIA planned a second Programme for 1940 but its implementation did not materialize because of the Second World War. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, created in 1945, took over the work on the preparation of the decennial Programmes for 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990 and recently issued the Programme for the World Census of Agriculture 2000, now being implemented.

In many countries the Census of Agriculture is not only the main source of agricultural statistics, covering a very wide range of different data, but it is also a base for the organization of current statistics including other agricultural surveys and related statistical activities. The census methodology is normally based on interviews of all, or a representative sample, of agricultural holders throughout the country. It should be kept in mind that the agricultural census is limited to collecting data from the agricultural holdings. As a consequence in many countries it does not cover some important land use categories, such as communal pastures and forests, which are not part of agricultural holdings.

In spite of the widely recognized importance of the agricultural census for agricultural planning, many countries do not organize a census for various reasons. The full scale agricultural census is an expensive venture so that many developing countries are not in a position to finance such an operation. Developed countries often have alternative sources for agricultural data and are concerned about "respondents fatigue" so they have an increasing tendency not to organize a full scale agricultural census but to collect only structural data which are considered to be the core of the agricultural census. These data may be collected either through a smaller scale structural survey, or by adding a few structural questions to regular annual surveys of agriculture (as done in the Netherlands), or by processing existing administrative registers (as in India, for example).

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