



# Cyprus: Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT



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Nicosia, 2005

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Cyprus: General Overview.....</b>	<b>6</b>
Geographical Profile.....	6
Geomorphology.....	6
Climate.....	6
Recent History.....	7
<b>Agriculture.....</b>	<b>8</b>
Contribution of Agriculture to GDP and Employment.....	8
Agricultural Trade.....	10
The Structure of Agriculture.....	12
Crops.....	12
Livestock.....	13
Forestry.....	14
Agriculture and Rural Development.....	15
Agricultural Policy Objectives.....	15
Cyprus Rural Development Plan 2004-2006.....	17
Agricultural Research and Development.....	19
<b>Natural Resources.....</b>	<b>20</b>
Water Management.....	20
Water Demand.....	20
Water Development.....	20
New Water Management and Conservation Measures.....	21
Forest Management.....	22
National Forest Programme.....	22
Forest Recreation and Education.....	23
Fisheries Management.....	25
Fisheries Development and Marine Research.....	25
Fisheries Production.....	25
Single Programming Document for the Fisheries Sector (2004 – 2006).....	25
Geology and Mineral Resources.....	28
Built Environment.....	28
Restoration Works and Environmental Management.....	28
Metallic and Industrial Minerals.....	28
<b>The Environment.....</b>	<b>30</b>
Chemical Substances, Industrial Pollution and Risk Assessment.....	30
Nature Protection and Management .....	31
Noise Regulation.....	32
Waste Management.....	32
Agricultural Practices and Quality of Waters.....	33
<b>The Functions and Organizational Structure of the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Addresses of the different Departments and Services.....</b>	<b>36</b>

# Introduction

This publication aims at providing a general overview of the fields of agriculture, natural resources and environment in Cyprus. It is of particular importance because it is released just a year after the accession of Cyprus in the European Union.

With respect to agriculture, the timing of this publication coincides with the end of an autonomous national agricultural policy and the adoption of the Common Agricultural Policy.

During the last few decades, agriculture in Cyprus has lost the major role it had in the national economy, while other sectors, such as tourism and services, grew at a faster pace. Nevertheless, in absolute values, Cyprus agriculture is characterised by an ascending trend in all sectors. Today, the multifunctional role of agriculture is being increasingly recognized. Beyond its economic significance in providing jobs and income for rural people, agriculture helps in maintaining the local culture and conserving the environment of the Cypriot countryside.

With this in mind, the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment developed and implemented the Cyprus Rural Development Plan (2004-2006), which was based on the guidelines of the Common Agricultural Policy and adopted to the needs of the agricultural sector in Cyprus. A range of measures aim at improving the competitiveness of agriculture, strengthening the socioeconomic conditions of rural areas and protecting the environment. During the first call, the Rural Development Plan was met with a great response by the rural people of Cyprus.

A great effort has also been placed towards the implementation of European Union policies and Directives with respect to natural resources and the environment. In fields such as water management, forest conservation, fisheries development and nature protection, a more holistic approach is being pursued, one that recognizes the importance of maintaining the health and integrity of ecosystems.

It is also recognized that the ecosystem approach involves people. Without the involvement of rural people in the design and implementation of natural resources policies and programmes, very little can be accomplished. Rural people are thus called upon to actively participate in developing integrated measures for sustainable rural development and environmental conservation.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the people who were involved in preparing this publication.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Timmy Efthymiou', written in a cursive style.

**Timmy Efthymiou**  
***Minister of Agriculture,  
Natural Resources and Environment***

# Cyprus: General Overview



## Geomorphology

In the central-western part of the island lies the Troodos Range, a mountain massif of igneous origin, rising to an altitude of 1,951 metres in Mount Olympus. Along the northern part of the country runs the Pentadactylos Range, rising to a lower altitude of about 1,000 metres. Between these two morphological features lies the Mesaoria Plain, which together with narrow alluvial plains along the coasts, makes up the bulk of the agricultural land of the country.

The island has no perennial rivers, except for a few small streams at an altitude above 1,000 meters on the Troodos Range.

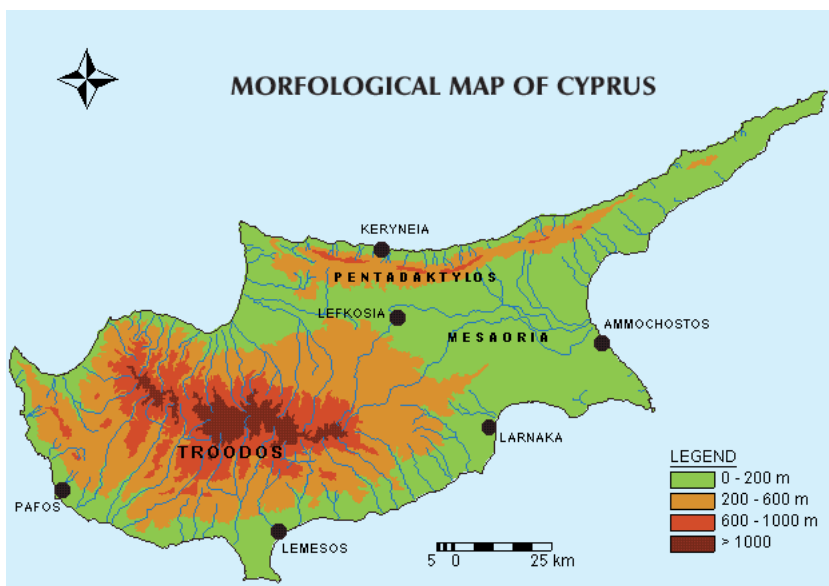
## Geographical Profile

Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean Sea, with an area of 9,251 square kilometers. It is situated at the northeastern corner of the Mediterranean, 33° east of Greenwich and 35° north of the Equator.

The mid-year de-jure population of Cyprus was estimated at 797,100 people in 2002, of whom 80.1% are Greek Cypriots, Armenians and Maronites, 10.9% Turkish Cypriots and 9% other nationalities<sup>1</sup>. The capital of Cyprus is Nicosia (Lefkosia).

## Climate

The island has a typical mediterranean climate. Hot, dry summers from June to September and rainy, rather changeable winters from November to March, are separated by short autumn and spring seasons of rapid change in October, April and May. In July, the hottest month of the year, the mean daily temperature ranges between 29° C on the central plain and 22° C on the Troodos mountains, while the average maximum temperature for these months ranges between 36° C and 27° C respectively. In January, which is the coldest month of the year, the mean daily temperature is 10° C on the central plain and 3° C on the higher parts of Troodos mountains, with an average minimum temperature of 5° C and 0° C respectively.



The average annual rainfall in Cyprus is about 500 millimetres, the bulk of which falls between the months of November through April. Although precipitation increases with altitude, from 300 millimetres in the central plain and the flat southeastern parts of the island to nearly 1,100 millimetres at the top of the central Troodos massif, most cultivated land is found in the low rainfall zone, about 200 metres above sea level. The country faces severe drought conditions every ten years and a moderate drought once every three years.





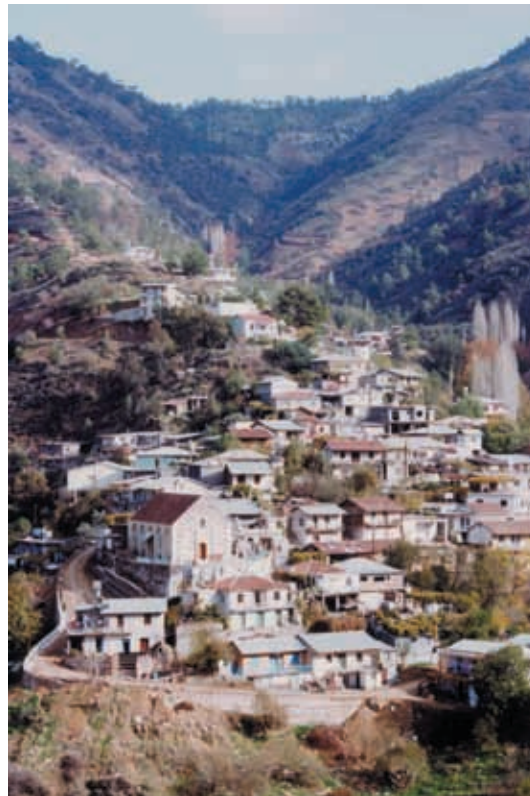


## Recent History

Cyprus became an independent Republic in 1960 and is a member of the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the Commonwealth and the Non-Aligned Movement.

In 1974 Turkey invaded Cyprus, occupying nearly the 40% of the country's territory. The period from 1975 until today is characterized by an enormous effort for economic and social development.

On the 1st May 2004 the Republic of Cyprus became a member of the European Union (EU).



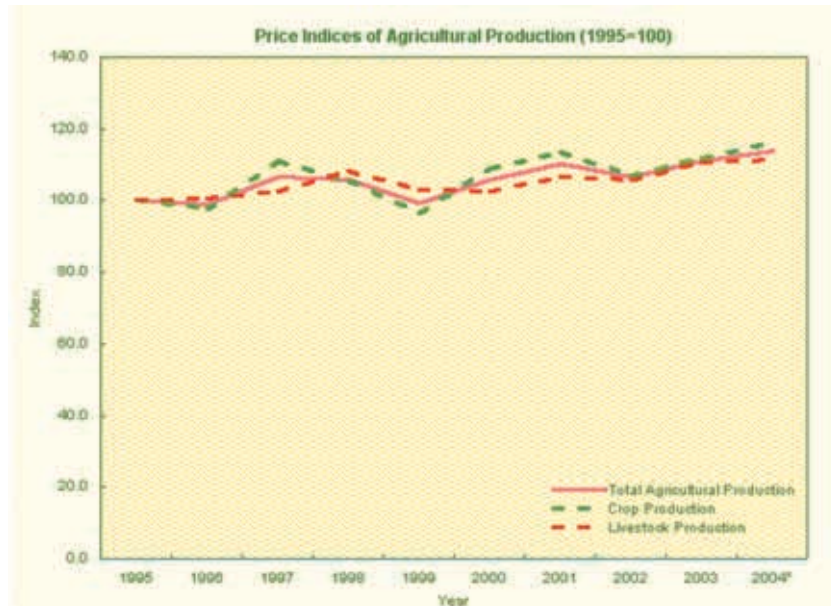
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<sup>1</sup> Estimates of the number of Turkish Cypriots are based on data from the Statistical Service (Statistical Service, Ministry of Economics and Finance, Republic of Cyprus (2004) Statistical Abstract 2002, pp. 46).





# Agriculture

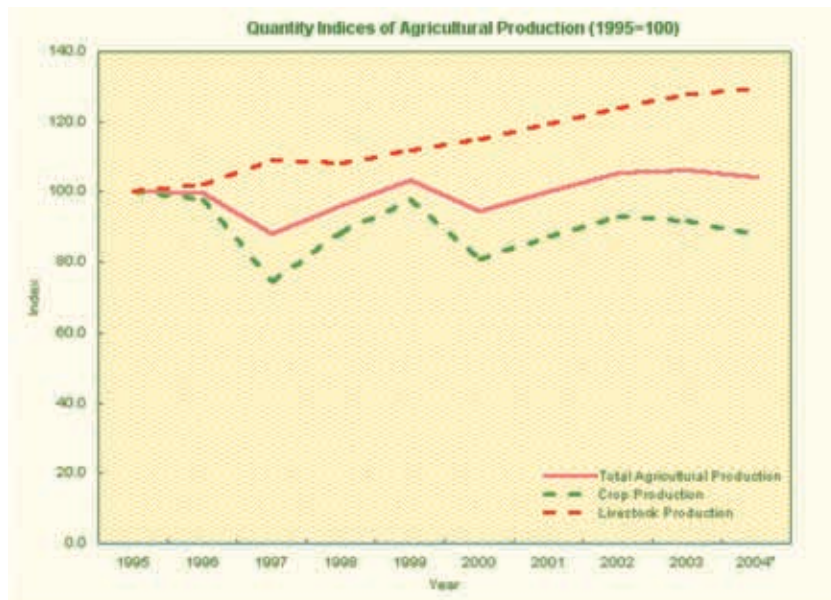


## Contribution of Agriculture to GDP and Employment

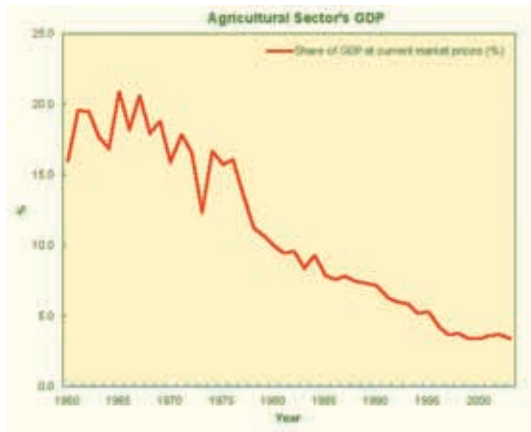
In the past, agriculture was one of the most important sectors of the Cyprus economy. In the early years of Cyprus' independence, the contribution of the agricultural sector to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was about 20% and the share of the total economically active population was 40%.

During the years 1960 – 1973, the agricultural sector expanded rapidly, but in 1974 it was severely affected by the Turkish invasion and occupation of part of Cyprus. Turkish forces occupied the most fertile land, which accounted for 48% of agricultural exports, 46% of crop production and much higher percentages of tobacco (100%), carobs (86%), citrus (79%), cereals (68%) and green fodders (65%). In addition, 45% of livestock production emanated from the area.

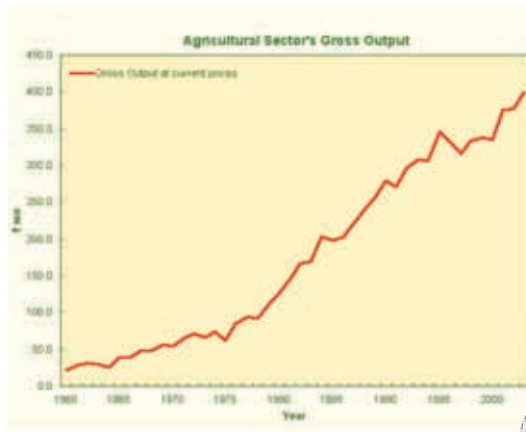
During the last few decades, the urbanisation trend, water shortages and excessive land fragmentation, contributed to the continuous decline of the agricultural sector in percentage terms. In 2003, the contribution of the agricultural sector to GDP was just 3.4 % and the share of total economically active population was 7.2%.







Despite this decline, through innovative policies and heavy investment in land improvement and irrigation projects, agriculture is still considered an important sector, both with respect to the production of essential food items for the local population, tourists and export commodities, and with respect to the employment of thousands of rural people. More specifically, in 2003 the gross output at current prices



was £399.3 mn and Cyprus was self sufficient in citrus, vegetables, grapes and vines, potatoes and livestock products including as pork, poultry, eggs and milk. It is also estimated that 22,800 people were employed in agriculture. The value of raw agricultural products exported in the same year was nearly £43.6 mn, accounting for about 21.1% of the total domestic exports.



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