The agricultural censuses team of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) aims to develop and promote international standards and guidelines on conducting agricultural census.

The team provides technical assistance and capacity building to countries to support the production and dissemination of relevant, sound, harmonized and internationally comparable structural data on agriculture, to underpin evidence-based decision-making at national, regional and international levels, including the monitoring of some key indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Area of work

Since the 1940s, the agriculture census team continues to improve and update the decennial World Programme for the Census of Agriculture (WCA) to support countries with their national agricultural census, while applying the latest international standards and methodologies. The “Programme, concepts and definitions” of WCA 2020 is the tenth and latest programme, covering national agricultural censuses within the 2016-2025 decade. In 2018, the agriculture census team complemented the WCA 2020 with an “Operational Guidelines” volume.

To advocate the use of the census guidelines and as part of its capacity development activities, the agriculture census team regularly organizes regional roundtables and workshops to disseminate among member countries the latest census standards and best practices. These events also aim to facilitate the exchange of country knowledge and experiences.

The agriculture census team also develops country capacity by supporting the planning, designing, and implementation of national censuses of agriculture. It regularly documents agricultural censuses worldwide and posts the census reports and other materials online. Following the end of each census round, the team reviews national census practices, methodologies and results, and publishes its findings in FAO’s Statistical Development Series.
Core objectives

> Develop appropriate methodological guidelines (including concepts, definitions and standards) for the collection and analyses of data on agricultural censuses and associated surveys.

> Build country capacity to design, conduct and analyze agricultural censuses and associated surveys through technical meetings, promote the use of standards and facilitate the exchange of methodological experiences.

> Formulate concept notes and technical assistance projects in the area of agricultural censuses while providing project backstops.

> Monitor, document and disseminate national agricultural censuses and associated surveys.

> Assess national census practices, methodologies and results, and summarize the findings in FAO’s Statistical Development Series.

> Provide ad hoc technical assistance on censuses of agriculture to countries, partners, stakeholders and census practitioners.

Key products by statistical function

Dissemination in hardcopy format and/or electronically

> Methodological guidelines on the WCA in six official languages;

> Operational guidelines on the WCA in six official languages;

> Country census metadata and methodological reviews; and

> Country census reports and materials per census round (only electronically).

Methodological work

> Develop and update conceptual, methodological and operational guidelines to collect statistical information on the structure of national agriculture sectors through agriculture censuses.

> Document and assess national census methodologies and practices.

Capacity development

> Provide technical assistance to countries to build capacity in the planning, preparation and implementation of agricultural censuses, in line with WCA guidelines.

> Provide training to countries by organizing regional meetings in which updated guidelines and best practices are disseminated and the exchange of country knowledge is facilitated.

> Provide in-country training on agricultural census standards (concepts, definitions, methodologies) and field operations.

FURTHER INFORMATION

> World Programme for the Census of Agriculture: www.fao.org/world-census-agriculture/en

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Census of agriculture

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