



www.fao.org

FAO online, knowledge management and more

Key facts

The FAO Web site has approximately three million pages and was visited by over 43 million users during 2008.

The FAO Web site hosts over 100 databases and specialized information systems covering animal health, international statistics, water and agriculture, fisheries, country profiles, emergency prevention systems, plant genetic resources and satellite imagery.

In October 2008, there were over 4.3 million visits to the FAO Web site (out of a total of 105 million hits), more than 10 times the number of visitors registered in December 1999.

Approximately 30 000 documents and publications are available online; 3 000 new documents were added during 2008 alone.

Fighting hunger with knowledge and information

FAO is a centre of excellence in the fields of agriculture, commodities, nutrition and sustainable development among others. The Organization offers an unparalleled collection of online data and information on these topics for use by member countries and other interested parties. Such information is an important tool for all those who are striving to build societies free of hunger.

Online gateway to a world of data and analysis

FAO and its member countries consider information to be a priority area for achieving agricultural development and food security. In its strategic effort to fight hunger with information, in 1989 FAO established the World Agricultural Information Centre as a corporate framework for setting up tools and procedures for the efficient and effective management and dissemination of high-quality technical information.

From the start, this structure included relevant and reliable statistics, texts, maps and multimedia resources as well as tools for integrating and harmonizing standards for the exchange of information.

Since 1989, there have been enormous advances in information technology and the task of managing and disseminating information in a digital environment has become increasingly complex. Two tasks in

particular are assuming greater importance: firstly, to enable better access to FAO's information resources as a means of promoting partnerships with other agricultural information networks; and secondly, to assist FAO member countries to build their own capacity to manage and utilize food and agricultural information.



A training class teaches how to get the most out of FAO data.

FAO Web site

The FAO Web site is an entry point to thousands of full-text publications and technical documents in fields such as:

- agriculture, fisheries, nutrition and forestry;
- specific topics such as trends in trade, country-specific information, food safety and deforestation;
- codes of conduct, interactive tools for use at the national level, and early warning and disaster-prevention systems; and
- data, including maps and charts and thousands of other multimedia resources.

Along with member countries, economists, trade and commodities experts, universities and research institutes, chambers of commerce and agriculture, agronomists, nutritionists,

government planners, development professionals and students have all found the site to be an incomparable resource.

In September, 2005, an Ask FAO feature was added to the FAO Web site. As of the end of 2008, more than 5 000 questions had been received and answered by FAO staff. Other interactive ways of sharing information through blogs and wikis are also being evaluated.

In 2008, the home page and other top-level pages of www.fao.org were redesigned and modernized. The home page is now available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish versions, and work is ongoing to improve the already highly multilingual nature of the site as a whole.

Traffic to the FAO Web site 1997–2008

Visits		Hits	
1997	774,309	1997	17,581,566
1998	1,281,340	1998	21,854,555
1999	3,057,056	1999	69,993,249
2000	5,497,002	2000	128,499,017
2001	9,038,768	2001	235,263,543
2002	15,005,028	2002	364,388,018
2003	20,797,412	2003	506,263,307
2004	23,459,480	2004	583,174,283
2005	28,159,277	2005	797,055,823
2006	40,947,558	2006	1,117,296,621
2007	42,475,579	2007	1,114,349,312
2008	43,369,632	2008	1,086,760,642

Visits and hits to the FAO Web site have soared since 1997.

Source: FAO

Bridging the digital divide and setting standards for information exchange

Effective information integration, retrieval and exchange require internationally agreed standards. For over 20 years, FAO has been a leader in setting standards in information management in agricultural development and food security. Now FAO works with member countries and other partners to develop and disseminate global standards and procedures to facilitate agricultural information management and exchange.

The problem of lack of access to modern communication technologies in rural compared to urban areas – called the “rural digital divide” – led FAO in 2003 to launch a

Bridging the Rural Digital Divide programme. It works to narrow the gap in support of agricultural development and food security.

In 2005, the World Summit on the Information Society assigned FAO the lead role in one specific area of information and communication technologies: e-agriculture. E-agriculture is an emerging field focusing on the enhancement of agricultural and rural development through the use of the new technologies. In 2006, FAO launched a global community of expertise on e-agriculture, which now counts around 5 000 individual members from over 150 countries.

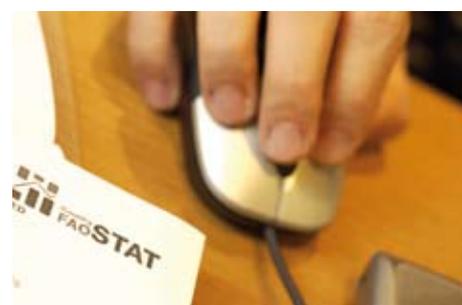
Some FAO specialized information systems

- FAO statistical databases: <http://faostat.fao.org>
- Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases: <http://www.fao.org/empres/>
- Global Information and Early Warning System: www.fao.org/gIEWS
- Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems: www.fivims.net
- FAO Country Profiles and Mapping Information System: www.fao.org/countryprofiles
- International Information System for the Agricultural Sciences and Technology: www.fao.org/agris/
- FAO Corporate Document Repository: www.fao.org/documents
- Information Management Resource Kit suite of e-learning materials in various subject areas: www.imarkgroup.org

Improving access to information

The FAO Web site is a comprehensive source of information on agriculture, forestry, fisheries, sustainable rural development, economics, food and nutrition. It gives decision makers and professionals access to the accumulated knowledge and expertise of the Organization, thereby assisting them in finding solutions to difficult problems. The site also informs the general public and news media about key issues in food and agriculture.

Many specialized information systems are also available on CD-ROM. The Google search engine is available from the FAO home page to further facilitate access to information.



The Internet puts data at everyone's command.

Fostering international partnerships

Another of FAO's priorities is to establish and foster international partnerships to extend its global reach. By creating synergies with its partners, the wealth of FAO's information is better disseminated and utilized. In each of its major activities, the Organization works jointly with one or more partners, including governments, organizations, universities and development agencies.



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