

Historical outline

Lesotho has been conducting Decennial Agriculture Censuses since 1949 and Annual Agriculture Surveys since 1973. The first census of agriculture, conducted in 1949/50, and the second, conducted in 1959/60, were both organized by the Ministry of Agriculture, while those conducted in 1969/70, 1979/80, 1989/90, and the latest, conducted in 1999/2000 to which data here refer, was organized by the Bureau of Statistics (BOS).

Organization

The Bureau of Statistics (BOS), was responsible for census planning, organization, data collection, processing, analysis and tabulation; administrative and financial responsibility was also with the BOS. FAO supported the BOS through a Data Processing Project.

Enumeration period

Enumerators visit the selected households at different times during the reference period, depending on the activities on which information is to be collected.

Reference date/period

The reference period for data collection was 1st August 1999 to 31st July 2000.

Definition

- **An agricultural holding** is an economic unit of agricultural production under single management. It consists of all livestock kept and all land used for agricultural production, regardless of the title. For the purpose of the census, the agricultural holdings were restricted to those meeting one or more of the following conditions:
 - operating at least one field of arable land;
 - raising at least one cow or five or more sheep/goats.
- **Primary Sampling Unit (PSU)** is the statistical area unit with identifiable geographical boundaries defined by physical features and landmarks and delimited in terms of a certain size of population living in villages within the area.

Coverage

The census covered the entire country. The types of holdings covered included peasant farms, large farms, prison farms, school farms, project farms, etc. Information was from both urban and rural areas.

Frame

The BOS has a master sample frame developed by using results from population censuses. The frame has about 789 PSU in rural areas and 249 in urban areas. The sample is updated after every population census.

Method

A stratified multi-stage sampling scheme was adopted, excluding prisons and project farms which were completely enumerated. Large enumeration areas constituted the PSUs and individual agricultural holdings (farming households) constituted the Secondary Sampling Units (SSUs) for estimation of crop areas and livestock population. Fields under specific crops formed the secondary sampling units for estimation of crop yields. The PSUs were selected with probability proportional to size, the size estimate being obtained from the 1996 Population Census. In each PSU, 30 agricultural households were selected through systematic sampling from a list of all agricultural households. Over 3 300 holdings were selected, there being about 30 selected holdings in each PSU. The same sampling method applied to the urban areas where 20 PSUs were selected. Data on crop area were obtained through field measurement of all the selected holdings. Data on yields for major crops were obtained by harvesting sample plots. Information and household's characteristics, livestock, crop failures and use of fertilizers and protective chemicals, and the farmer's estimates of the yields of different crops, were collected through interviews with the sampled holder.

Data source

Lesotho Agricultural Census, Volumes I, II and III 1999/2000. Lesotho Bureau of Statistics, Ministry Of Finance and Development Planning.

Contact

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