

Agricultural Census

1.1 Importance of the Agriculture Census

Agriculture remains an important activity in the economy of the Seychelles providing fresh meat, fruit and vegetables to the local markets, restaurants and hotels as well as contributing to household food security. It is also an important means of livelihood and employment. For this reason, the development and expansion of the agricultural sector remains a top priority for the government.

Information on the sector for planning and policy making, however, remains very out-of-date and incomplete. A National Agricultural Survey was conducted in 1978 and this remains the most comprehensive source of information on the agricultural sector even though it is now more than 30 years out-of-date. Limited information on household agricultural activity has been collected in the Population & Housing Census since 1976 and the recent census, conducted in August 2010, was no exception. The data collected is comparable with previous census data thus giving some indication on change over time. More importantly, the data collected provides a frame based on the extent of household agricultural activity and it is this frame which is being used as the basis for the National Agricultural Survey Programme (NASP) which started with the Agricultural Census 2011 (AC 2011).

Table 1: Summary of Household Farming Activity in Seychelles, August 2010

		Keeping Livestock			
		NO	YES	Not stated	Total
Cultivating Crops	NO	14433	1007	261	15701
	YES	6485	1872	284	8641
	Not stated	81	11	356	448
	Total	20999	2890	901	24790

Source: Population & Housing Census, August 2010, National Bureau of Statistics

Table 1 above summarizes the household farming activity in Seychelles at the time of the August 2010 Population & Housing Census. Some 14,433 (60%)¹ households were found not engaged in any farming activity (neither cultivating crops nor keeping livestock). At the other end of the spectrum, 1,872 (8%) households were found to be both growing crops and keeping livestock. In addition, 6,485 (17%) households were only growing crops while 1,007 (4%) were only keeping livestock. The total number cultivating crops was 8,357 (35%) whilst the total number keeping livestock was 2,879 (12%).

¹ percentages calculated excluding not stated

Table 2: Purpose of Crop Cultivation and Selling of Produce

Purpose of farming	Whether agricultural produce was sold			Total
	No	Yes	Not stated	
Mainly for sale	26	422	48	496
Sale of surplus	37	320	50	407
Mainly for consumption	4466	980	1544	6990
Not stated	155	62	130	347
Total	4684	1784	1772	8240

Source: Population & Housing Census, August 2010, National Bureau of Statistics

Table 2 shows that the large majority of households cultivating crops were doing this for their own consumption (6,990) with only 496 cultivating crops mainly for sale and 407 selling surplus crops although it should be noted that a total of 1,784 households were recorded as selling agricultural produce in the last 12 months prior to the census so many of the households producing mainly for own consumption were also selling any surplus (980).

1.2 Objectives of the AC 2011

In support of the strategic plans and programmes of the Seychelles on agriculture, the government decided to conduct the Agriculture Census in August 2011. The objectives of the Census are to:

- a) provide benchmark or basic data on the structure of agricultural holdings and their main characteristics at the micro-level;
- b) use this information to develop a regular system of agricultural statistics;
- c) build up some important village level statistics;
- d) establish a technical and organizational foundation on which to build up a comprehensive and integrated system of food and agricultural statistics; and
- e) provide a frame from which samples can be drawn to study certain aspects of agricultural activities in greater depth.

1.3 Authority for Undertaking the AC 2011

The AC 2011 was conducted jointly by the Seychelles Agricultural agency (SAA) and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). Authority for census undertaking rests with the National Bureau of Statistics, the institution with the legal power to collect such information under the Statistics Act 2010.

1.4 Census Methodology

Based on information from the Population & Housing Census, lists were compiled of all households growing crops mainly for sale. This list was supplemented with a list of large enterprises and other non-household farms from the Seychelles Agricultural Agency (SAA). Together, these made up the most important producers and all such farming units were included in the Census using the census questionnaire. These large farms are located in 234 of the 527 Census Enumeration Areas identified by the NBS and the Agricultural Census was **ONLY** conducted in these EAs to minimize the workload.

The next strata comprise those households growing crops both for home consumption (the household's own use) and ALSO for sale (selling surplus). All households in this category that are located in the EAs where the AC was conducted were enumerated (about 60% of all such holdings) using the 'Long' questionnaire.

For the other categories (households producing mainly for their own consumption and households not cultivating crops), 2 EAs were randomly selected in each district from the list of EAs where the AC was conducted. In these 2 EAs, the enumerator went door-to-door enumerating each household using a simple listing sheet. Households were asked "has this household grown any crops (vegetables, root crops, spices, herbs) in the last 12 months, or have any fruit trees?" Those households answering 'NO' to this question (about 60% of all households) were only asked that one question. Households producing for their own consumption and NOT selling any crops in the last 12 months were asked questions on land area and crops grown and the information recorded on a listing sheet. Households producing mainly for sale and households selling agricultural produce in the last 12 months filled in the census questionnaire.

Information on livestock was only collected from the large farms. Livestock numbers by type of livestock are available from the 2010 Population & Housing Census at the district level.