
LESOTHO - Agricultural Census 1989/90 - Explanatory Notes

Historical outline: Lesotho has been participating in the FAO Programme for the World Census of Agriculture ever since 1950. 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 the third, conducted in 1969/70, the fourth, conducted in 1979/80, and the fifth, conducted in 1989/90, to which data here refer, were organized by the Bureau of Statistics. The 1989/90 census complements the annual statistical survey on crops and livestock production started in 1973.

Organization: The census was conducted by the Bureau of Statistics (BOS), which was responsible for its planning, organization, data collection, processing, analysis and tabulation; administrative and financial responsibility was also with the BOS. Objectives and coverage of the census were determined in collaboration with a coordinating committee which also included the Ministry of Agriculture. The field work was carried out by about 80 specially trained enumerators, called Field Assistants, permanently employed by the BOS, and by 40 temporarily employed enumerators. Each enumerator was in charge of a Primary Sampling Unit (PSU), and their field work was supervised by one District Statistical Officer in each of the ten districts, with some additional Field Officers assisting in large districts.

Enumeration period: Data were collected during the period August 1989 to July 1990; enumerators visited the selected households at different times during the year depending on the information to be collected.

Reference date: Data generally refer to the agricultural year 1 August to 31 July. Data on livestock refer to 1 August 1989.

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, without regard to title. For the purpose of the census, the agricultural holdings were restricted to those meeting one or more of the following conditions:

- having or operating at least one field of arable land;
- raising one or more cattle;
- raising five or more sheep and/or goats.

Coverage: The census covered the entire country. The types of holdings covered include peasant farms, large farms, prison farms, school farms, projects, etc. Agricultural activities in urban areas were also included.

Frame: The 1986 Population Census data were used as a sampling frame for the agricultural census. The frame of Primary Sampling Units (PSUs) was prepared by district (ten) and, within district, by agro-ecological zone (four).

Methods: A stratified multi-stage sampling scheme was adopted (excluding prisons and project farms which were completely enumerated). Enumeration areas constituted the PSUs and individual agricultural holdings (farming households) constituted the Secondary Sampling Units (SSUs) for estimation of land use, crop areas and livestock population. Fields under specific crops formed the secondary sampling units for estimation of crop yields. 120 PSUs and over 3000 holdings were selected, there being about 25 selected holdings in each PSU. The PSUs were selected with probability proportional to size, the size estimate being obtained from the 1986 Population Census. In each PSU, the 25 agricultural households were selected through systematic sampling from a list of all agricultural households. Data on crop areas were obtained using actual measurement of all fields on selected holdings.

Data source: Lesotho Bureau of Statistics - The Agricultural Census in Lesotho 1989/90 - Technical Report, December 1991 and Analytical Report, May 1994.

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