



## Conclusions and Recommendations

The 31st Session of the FAO-OEA/CIE-IICA Working Group on Agricultural Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean was held from March 28 to 30, 2023, and hosted by the National Institute of Statistics (INE) of Chile. The following 15 countries were represented in person: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Jamaica, Dominican Republic and Chile. In addition, the following 14 countries participated virtually: Argentina, Ecuador, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Panama, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States, and Haiti.

### Session 1: Welcome and progress since Session 30<sup>th</sup>

The Master of Ceremonies, Mrs. Olga Barquero Alpizar, officially opened the event. The opening was followed by welcome messages from Ms. Daniela Moraga Farías, National Director of the National Statistics Institute of Chile *ad interim*, Mr. Mario Lubetkin FAO Regional Representative for LAC, and the Director of the FAO Statistics Division, Mr. José Rosero Moncayo.

The initial presentation was given by INE Chile, who presented the national agricultural statistical system of Chile, together with a comparison of the 2007 and 2021 censuses of agriculture and forestry (CAF) methodologies and results. INE highlighted how the CAF 2021 will affect the inter census surveys during 2025- 2035.


This presentation was followed by a presentation from FAO on progress and activities since the 30th Session. This presentation emphasized the importance of responses from countries to the official questionnaires of FAO for the generation of world statistics on food and agriculture. However, the response rates to questionnaires prepared by the statistics division were only 46% in Central America, 59% in South America, and 30% in the Caribbean.

In addition, FAO reported on advanced in the following areas since the 30th session: 1. SDG monitoring, 2. agricultural censuses and surveys, 3. development of new projects and 4. review of recommendations from the last session. For the first point, FAO is providing support to all the countries of the region in the indicators under its custody with a particular focus in technical assistance in 9 countries on indicators 2.1.2, 2.3.1, 2.3.2, 2.4.1 and 12.3.1. Regarding assistance in Censuses and Surveys, TCP projects to prepare censuses are being supported in 6 Caribbean countries, and work has been done on planning and/or revision of census in 4 Latin American countries. Additionally, several events for sharing experiences on various aspects of censuses were organized, technical assistance was provided to 3 countries in the sampling for national agricultural surveys, and 2 countries received support in the use of earth observation for the improvement of agricultural statistics. Regarding new projects, FAO coordinated the development of a proposal for the Regional Public Goods Initiative of IADB that was not accepted. However, 2 technical cooperation projects with a budget totalling 425,000 USD were approved to improve national agricultural statistical systems. Regarding the review of the recommendations of the 30th session, FAO was not able to address only 2 recommendations.

During the round table, Ecuador, Chile and Costa Rica presented the status of the incorporation of questions to collect SDG2 information in their national agricultural surveys.

The working group observed:

- Countries must measure not only the production and consumption of agricultural products but also social and environmental aspects and adopt a holistic approach that measures agri-food systems as a whole, including traditionally invisible actors and quantifying interactions between them, with disaggregated data by population groups and geographies to guide policies with a territorial focus.

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- The large amount of information collected by INE in collaboration with ODEPA, as an example of inter-institutional work.
  - The achievements of FAO regarding the advances of the last session on the topics of SDG indicators, agricultural censuses and new projects that promote the use of data from earth observation data and small area estimation.

The working group highlighted:

- The work done by Ecuador and Costa Rica to incorporate SDG indicators in their National Agricultural Surveys.

The working group recommended:

- Promote the sharing of country experiences in the use and adoption of AGRISurvey methodology.

## Session 2: Approaches to measure and monitor food losses in Latin America

Session 2 began with a summary of the regional status of the measurement of food losses and the SDG 12.3.1 indicator, emphasizing the achievements obtained in recent years in Latin America.

The National Administrative Department of Statistics of Colombia (DANE) gave a presentation on the status of indicator 12.3.1 in Colombia including the progress and challenges for the generation of sub-indicators 12.3.1a and 12.3.1b. Regarding the challenges, DANE highlighted the difficulty of completing the measurement for all sectors, improving the collection of information in the commercial sector, and achieving results with territorial disaggregations.

Afterward there was a presentation by the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics of Peru, where the national legislation on food losses and waste was explained, and the next steps in measurement issues were presented including including the mapping and selection of food chains, as well as the identification of the critical points of loss in the value chain and the existing sources of information on the subject. They are currently in the design of the questionnaires, and pilot tests.

The working group observed:

- Surveys on food losses and waste in the countries which have been implemented so far are not nationally representative.
- At the global level, Latin America has come a long way in recent years driven by policies and laws to reduce food loss and waste which has generated advancements in data collection.
- In countries where no primary data is available, a good starting point is data from food balance sheets.

The working group highlighted:

- The difficulty for informants from farms and business in understanding the concept of food losses during the interviews.
- Countries should focus efforts on scaling food loss measurements to the national level.
- There is more difficulty in measuring waste than losses, especially due to challenges in monitoring consumption inside homes.
- The challenge in identifying whether the measurements of food losses occur at harvest, post-harvest or transport.
- The public policy of the various countries mandates the measurement of food losses but does not allocate adequate resources.

The working group recommended:

- The use of objective methods to estimate biases in the self-reporting of information by informants.

- Conduct virtual training on Food Balance Sheets.

### Session 3: Monitoring prices in an era of high inflation

Session 3 began with a presentation by the Office of Agrarian Studies and Policies of Chile (ODEPA). ODEPA presented its activities in the collection, validation, and dissemination of data on food prices. The following presentation was made by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock of El Salvador, which focused on the mobile application SIAM-MAG -Agroclimatic and Market Data. They emphasized the need for producers to have useful official information on prices for the sale of their products and how the application provides agro-climatic information, early alerts, producer directory and wholesale market prices.

Then, the National Institute of Statistics of Bolivia presented their activities for monitoring of wholesale producer and consumer prices. In addition, they described the monthly time series from the year 2021 to 2023.

The next presentation by the FAO Subregional Statistician for the Caribbean related to monitoring the cost of healthy diets in the Caribbean. The presentation emphasized the high cost of healthy diets in the region and the need for better data at the subnational level. In addition, he presented a new TCP project in the Caribbean focused on training national officials to monitor the cost of healthy diets, consolidate and exchange experiences, and support the dissemination and results on food prices.

The working group observed:

- The importance of prices for consumers, producers, and wholesalers to give transparency to the market and develop public policies that minimize the impact of price changes on citizens.
- The importance of user-friendly applications for the transmission of information on price changes to the public.
- The importance of making healthy diets more affordable in the region.


The working group highlighted:

- The challenge in the frequent changes in the demand from data users for information on food prices, which can include new products or points of sale.
- The foods that are monitored are the most requested, not necessarily the entire family consumption basket.
- Providing price information on seasonal foods allows the consumer to access better prices for nutritious foods.
- With the pandemic, information transfer agreements were made between national institutions with the aim of providing consumers and users with as much information as possible, which significantly improved inter-institutional cooperation.
- Low adaptation of the methodology to calculate and limited skillset to analyze the cost and affordability of a healthy diet.

### Session 4: Methodological developments for the collection of SDG indicators in Latin America and the Caribbean

During this session, José Rosero, Director of the FAO Statistics Division, presented the proposal for a proxy for the SDG 2.3.1 indicator, Productivity of smallholders. In summary, due to the lack of data on labor productivity in the agricultural sector, FAO developed a proxy using land productivity data.

Next, there was a presentation by Roswitha Baumung, Animal Production Officer in which she reviewed the methodology for the calculation of the SDG 2.5.1b indicator, Number of animal genetic resources insured, in which special interest was placed in the definition of "sufficient material". It was also emphasized that the indicator increases in general as more countries report, but not necessarily because the number of breeds increases, since the



conservation status of local breeds does not change significantly each year. Accordingly, measures were taken to improve the interpretation of the indicator and the current situation of the countries was shown.

The presentation on the SDG 5.a.1 Ownership of agricultural land by women, was made by Verónica Boero, Head of the Economic and Social Statistics team of the FAO Statistics Division. The main change in the methodology of this indicator is that the indicator can now be calculated using the self-reported possession of agricultural land, in addition to the original criteria such as possession of a document indicating possession of the land, the right to sell and/or bequeath.

The concluding presentation of Session 4 was delivered by Chiara Patriarca from the Forestry Division of FAO. The focus of the presentation centered on the methodology employed for calculating the SDG 15.4.2 indicator, specifically the Mountain Green Cover Index. Chiara Patriarca elucidated the reasons necessitating the methodological adjustment of the indicator, elucidating the forthcoming process for implementing the necessary modifications. The presentation further outlined the countries and institutions slated to partake in this undertaking. It provided insights into the measures indicating emerging degradation scenarios based on proposed classes, along with the explanation of sub-indicators to be generated. The session also featured the presentation of information pertinent to Colombia, a case study of Nepal, Brazil, and an analysis of recent trends based on available data. In conclusion, the presentation highlighted the tools currently accessible for widespread use and learning, emphasizing their availability to a broad audience.

The working group observed:

- FAO introduced revisions to the SDG indicator methodologies 2.5.1b, 5.a.1, and 15.4.2.
- The proxy for indicator 2.3.1 using land productivity instead of labor due to the availability of land data, and the lack of labor data in agricultural surveys.
- One of the most difficult points for the report on indicator 5.a.1 is the linkage of data between the household and the productive unit.

The working group highlighted:

- The use of administrative records for reporting 5.a.1 is limited as they normally do not contain data that can identify agricultural holdings and there are concerns about their coverage.
- In many cases, FAO used household surveys to calculate 5.a.1 even though the estimate is biased due to lack of inclusion of large producers.
- The methodology of the SDG 2.3.1 indicator related to the concept and threshold of "small producer" was developed with the objective of generating internationally comparable estimates, however, the concept and threshold for contexts at the national level can be adjusted.

The working group recommended:

- That FAO continue to support countries in the measurement of SDG indicators.

## Session 5: Vision for the World Program for the Census of Agriculture (WCA) 2030

The Vision for WCA 2030 presentation was made by José Rosero, Director of the FAO Statistics Division and by Jairo Castano, Team Leader of the Agricultural Census team. Mr. Rosero presented the background about the WCA 2030, and the main changes that FAO hopes to introduce for the next census round (2030), which will focus on the use of new approaches, new topics, and use of technologies.

A round table discussion took place in order to share experiences applying WCA 2020 and develop recommendations for the next census round by Chile - INE, Mexico - INEGI, and Argentina - INDEC. The main points of these interventions are incorporated below.



The working group observed:

- The 2020 round will end in 2025 with the need to identify emerging issues in the WCA 2030 round.
- The coverage of the items included in WCA 2020 was adequate.

The working group highlighted:

- The difficulty in collecting information on households in an agricultural census.
- That the countries should include only essential items in their census forms considering their intercensal surveys and administrative record systems.

The working group recommended for the WCA 2030 guidelines:

- Provide more detailed information on how the concept of agricultural holding is operationalized, and its practical application in the field especially when holdings are not highly concentrated, using the most challenging cases that have been presented in the countries and considering the importance of georeferenced information for low levels of disaggregation.
- Address the importance of disseminating microdata and propose methodologies and tools to ensure adequate security.
- Promote and highlight the importance of the pre-census phase, provide more information on the purposes, convenience, and objectives of pilot tests to optimize conceptual and operational aspects.
- The inclusion of more specific instructions and recommendations on methodologies and indicators that can support the countries in the evaluation of their censuses.
- Clarification of which SDG indicators can be measured through agricultural censuses.
- Elaborate more on the consequences of not having an agricultural census in Vol 1.
- Provide more orientation and strategies for the mobilization of resources to finance the implementation of the agricultural census in Vol 2.
- Include guidelines on frame maintenance.
- Deepen operational guides on how to collect information on agricultural inputs in the censuses.
- Guidelines should cover more deeply how to collect data on assets, labour, and other issues when farming is integrated with processing activities.
- Preparation of a guide on the implementation of post-enumeration surveys.

## Session 6: Harnessing earth observation data and administrative records to produce agricultural statistics

The objective of this session was to review a variety of different approaches in the region to generate agricultural statistics using non-traditional tools or strategies, that is, that are not solely based on sample surveys.

The first presentation was made by Michael Rahija, Regional Statistician for Latin America and the Caribbean on the new Subregional Technical Cooperation Project (TCP) on the use of earth observation data for the generation of agricultural statistics. The project has 4 components focused on promoting the use of data, producing a regional platform, building capacity and mobilizing resources.

The second presentation by USDA/NASS demonstrated how they used data from administrative records, surveys, and ground observation data to generate various types of official, and unofficial, statistics. Mr. Rosales from USDA/NASS also highlighted some of the main challenges such as differences in definitions in administrative records, and lack of georeferences in their list frame, and integration into workflows.

Subsequent presentations from Jamaica, Cuba and Brazil demonstrated completely different approaches to gathering information. In the case of Jamaica, data was collected with extension agents. The survey is not randomized, but objective methods were incorporated to check data quality. In the case of Cuba, administrative records such as the land tenure registry and the national animal registry are used to generate information on the agricultural sector. In the case of Brazil, expert opinion was used to generate production estimates.



The working group recognized:

- The importance of administrative records and earth observation data for producing agricultural statistics.
- The challenge of integrating data from different sources, both in technical and administrative aspects.

The working group highlighted:

- The importance of objective methods such as cutting crops to evaluate and improve the quality of information of administrative registers.
- The importance of standardizing concepts of administrative registers so they can be used as statistical registers.

The working group recommended:

- FAO support countries in improving their administrative records and use of earth observation data to generate agricultural statistics.
- FAO collects good practices and experiences in the use of alternative data sources, data integration, etc. and shares them among countries.

## Session 7: How to raise agricultural statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean through regional cooperation

Session 7 was an interactive session with open debate to generate ideas and proposals to promote agricultural statistics and regional collaboration. Highlights of the discussion are incorporated below.

The working group recognized:


- The name of this current body does not reflect its character for the following reasons:
  - The institutions that appear in its title do not provide financial resources, nor in kind to organize the meetings every 2 years.
  - The term “working group” does not correspond to the nature of a technical commission of FAO and implies a less formal and less important mechanism. In addition, it implies a defined operational timeline and specific technical products.
- The need to have a working group on agricultural statistics that reports directly to the Statistical Conference of the Americas (CEA).
- The needs to improve and strengthen agricultural and food statistics in the region are great but the available resources are limited.

The working group highlighted:

- The nature of the group corresponds to that of a commission since it doesn't have a limited timeline, develops strategic recommendations, and has the responsibility to report to FAO's Regional Council.

The working group recommended:

- From the next session in 2025, the group will be known as the Latin American and the Caribbean Commission for Agricultural Statistics (LACCAS). To achieve this objective, the group request that FAO begin the appropriate procedure to change the name.
- The creation of a working group in the framework of the Statistical Conference of the Americas including the following countries: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Jamaica, Peru, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Mexico, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, with the aim of developing a roadmap for adopting the use of multiple frames for agricultural surveys.
- That FAO look for mechanisms to mobilize resources for strengthening the statistical capacity of member countries for the production and dissemination of agriculture and food security statistics.

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- That FAO explore an appropriate mechanism that would permit the activities of this group to report to the Statistical Conference of the Americas.
  - That FAO investigate tools and platforms, which could facilitate the exchange of knowledge, and likewise manage webinars about important issues in the region.

### Session 8: Closure

The closing session of the conference was held with the presentation of Draft Recommendations and Conclusions by Michael Rahija, Regional Office of Latin America and the Caribbean. The invitation of the host for the 2025 Conference was also given and the closure was given by INE-Chile and FAO through the Director of the Statistics Division, José Rosero.

The working group recognized:

- The willingness of INE Paraguay to host the 32 Session of the group in 2025.

The working group recognized and congratulated:

- FAO's work in assisting members to improve their food and agricultural statistics systems.