



منظمة الأغذية  
والزراعة للأمم  
المتحدة

联合国  
粮食及  
农业组织

Food and  
Agriculture  
Organization  
of the  
United Nations

Organisation des  
Nations Unies  
pour  
l'alimentation  
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и  
сельскохозяйственная  
организация  
Объединенных  
Наций

Organización  
de las  
Naciones Unidas  
para la  
Alimentación y la  
Agricultura

# Asia and Pacific Commission on Agricultural Statistics

<b>Twenty-fifth Session</b>
<b>Vientiane, Lao PDR, 18-21 February 2014</b>
<b>Agenda Item 4</b>
<b>FAO Statistical Yearbook</b>

**Contributed by:** *FAO Statistics Division*

## 1. Overview of the concept

In 2012, the Statistics Division of FAO launched a Statistical Yearbook with a new look and feel – replacing the previous FAO Statistical Yearbook series<sup>1</sup>, which started in 2004 – and consolidating four previous FAO publications: the FAO Bulletin of Statistics, and the FAO Production, Trade and Fertilizer Yearbooks. The purpose of the Statistical Yearbook was to provide users with a selection of indicators on food and agriculture, by country. The data were taken from FAOSTAT<sup>2</sup>, the organization's corporate statistical database, as well as from several other FAO divisions, and sources external to FAO but mainly within the U.N. system.

The new Statistical Yearbook presents a visual synthesis of the major trends and factors shaping the global food and agricultural landscape, along with their interplay with broader environmental, social and economic dimensions. A narrative combined with visual representations help tell the story about each of the thematic topics. Related indicators are highlighted through a variety of visualizations, including maps and charts, to help complement the information presented in the text. Detailed country-level data and aggregate information for

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fao.org/economic/ess/ess-publications/ess-yearbook/en/#.UbHn8Nhj7To>

<sup>2</sup> <http://faostat3.fao.org/home/index.html>

hundreds of indicators pulled from various sources, including FAOSTAT, are included at the end of each section. It therefore serves as a unique reference point on the state of world food and agriculture for policy-makers, donor agencies, researchers and analysts as well as the general public.

The Statistical Yearbook, the parent publication, includes a suite of products, both printed and digital. Thus far, two global Yearbooks have been launched, one in 2012 and the other in 2013. This publication showcases countries and regions from all over the world and discusses highlights across the globe.

Regional Yearbooks are produced as a complement to bring out key regional messages through presentation of special groupings and region-specific messages. The two regional Yearbooks produced in 2012 – Europe and Central Asia, and Africa – will be expanded in 2014 to cover all FAO regions, which will be launched at regional conferences or other regional events. All of these products will have online versions that are accessible with ISSUU or as a pdf document.

A Pocketbook, a smaller version of the Yearbook presented by country rather than by topic, has also been designed. Over a two year cycle, FAO will alternate the release of Regional and Global, Pocketbooks and Yearbooks. Therefore Regional Yearbooks and the Global Pocketbook will be launched one year, with the Global Yearbook and Regional Pocketbooks launched in the other.

	2013	2014	2015	2016
Global Yearbook	x		x	
Global Pocketbook		x		x
Regional Yearbooks		x		x
Regional Pocketbooks			x	

With the exception of the Regional Yearbook for Europe and Asia, the Global and Regional Yearbooks contain four thematic parts to provide a holistic overview of food security and agriculture. “The setting,” the first chapter, measures the state of the agricultural resource base by assessing the supply of land, labor, capital and inputs. It also examines the pressure of the world food system stemming from demographic and macroeconomic change. The second chapter, entitled “Hunger Dimensions,” gauges the state of food insecurity and undernourishment through a presentation of a suite of food security indicators. The third chapter, “Feeding the World,” evaluates the productive capacity of world agriculture, together with the role of trade in meeting changing food, feed and other demands. And finally, “Sustainable dimensions” examines the

sustainability of agriculture in the context of the pressure it exerts on the environment, including the interaction of agriculture with climate change, greenhouse gases, and biodiversity.

The novelty of the Yearbook is both in its content, which fills a global gap of presenting up-to-date information on agriculture and food security, and in the efficiency of its method of production, which sets a precedent for dissemination.

In the past, the Yearbook was produced, primarily in Excel, through manual updates of graphs and tables, resulting in a labour-intensive process with no direct links to an underlying database. The new architecture, on the other hand, has simplified and improved the process, generating the Yearbooks with two open source software: R<sup>3</sup> and LaTeX4. R is a free software environment for statistical computing and graphics and is emerging as the standard in statistical programming. LaTeX, on the other hand, is an advanced typesetting system designed for the production of technical and scientific documentation. R serves as the engine to download data automatically and import datasets; merge datasets with different coding systems, country classifications, and formats; construct new variables, including growth rates, shares and indexes, and aggregates automatically. LaTeX then automatically generates the layout. The two programs work in concert to provide a seamless process in generating data publications and more efficient dissemination tools.

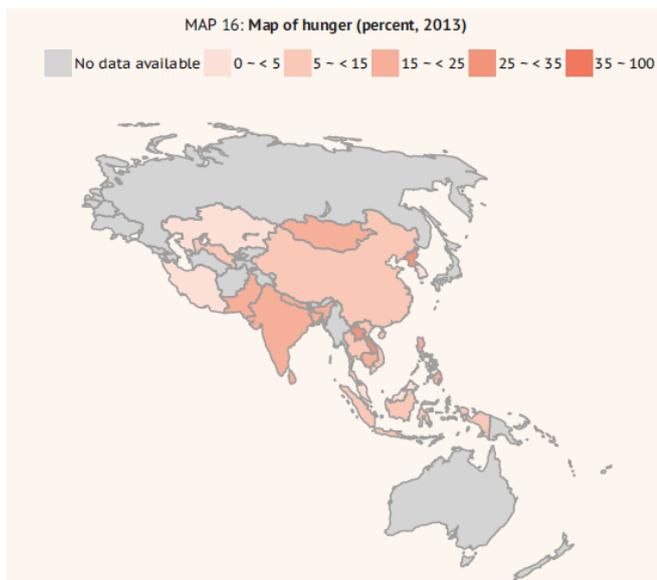
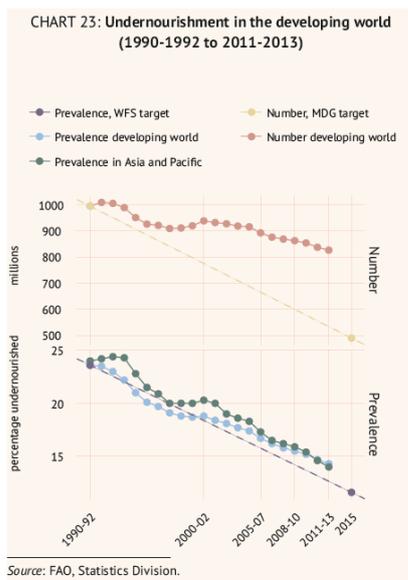
This one-stop-shop for production guarantees consistency in methodology and form across publications and products. It also makes the entire process documented and hence, transparent and reproducible. Because both software are free, there are no royalties and very large communities of practice, which results in constant exchange of information on ways of improving production.

## **2. Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific**

This year, 2014, will be the first time that RAP produces a Yearbook that is part of the suite of products. It will be an opportunity to highlight key trends that are region-specific through data. One pressing issue within the region is the prevalence of hunger, which has dropped from 20.9 percent in 1990-1992 to 11.8 percent in 2011-13.

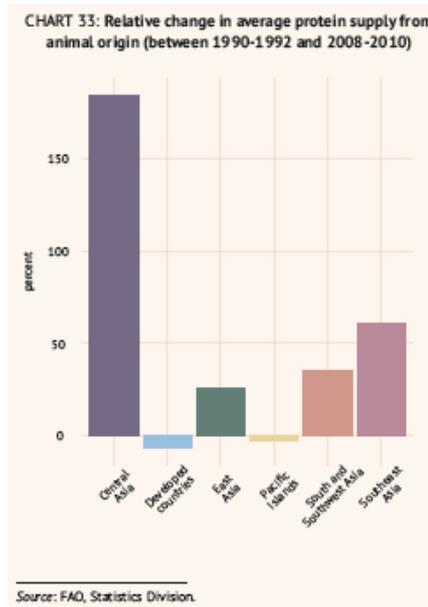
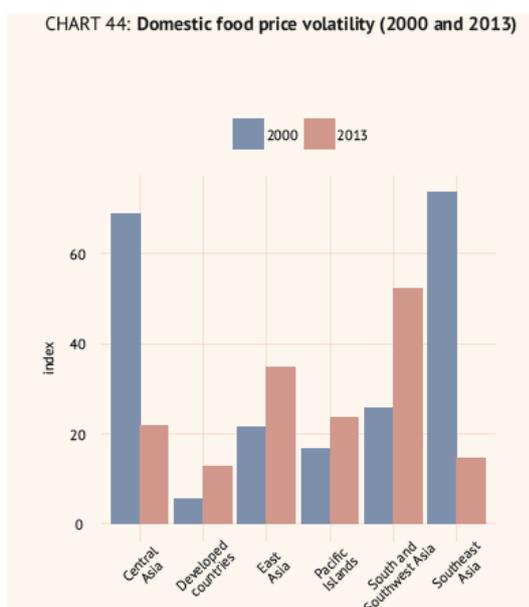
---

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.r-project.org/>

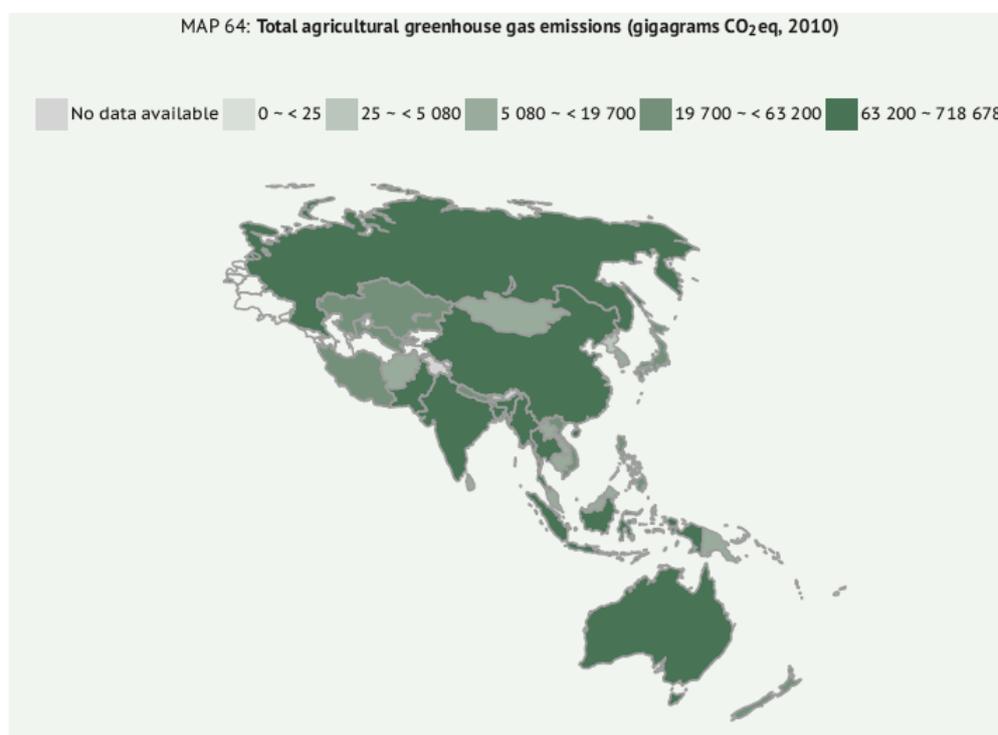


Yet food security is too complex for all of its various dimensions to be reflected in a single indicator. To understand the problem in all its aspects, and develop the policies and measures to resolve it, all underlying factors need to be considered. Some of these indicators look at food insecurity as an outcome, e.g., the number of undernourished, the prevalence of hunger, the extent of nutrition gaps, and the incidence of stunting, wasting and underweight. Others focus on the conditions that generate food insecurity such as poverty, food availability, access, affordability and utilization as well as vulnerability and instability.

The Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific features the suite of indicators related to undernourishment. The result is a picture offering an unprecedented wealth of detail into the various dimensions of hunger and malnutrition in the Asia and the Pacific Region.



With some 60 percent of the world's population and nearly 30 percent of the world's land area, the region will also play a key role in sustainable development. For example, GHG emissions from agriculture account for up to 30 percent of all human-induced emissions of atmosphere-warming gases, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The biggest source of agricultural GHG emissions is enteric fermentation from the digestive system of ruminants and some other animals. With its huge livestock sector, Asia and the Pacific accounts for almost half of the global GHG caused by human activities.



These are just some examples that touch on the breadth of information within the Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific. The publication also highlights many other key trends through graphs, chart, tables and text. The next edition is due to come out in 2016.

### 3. Related links

FAO Statistics Division

<http://www.fao.org/economic/ess/ess-home/en/>

FAO Statistical Yearbooks

<http://www.fao.org/economic/ess/ess-publications/ess-yearbook/en/>

FAOSTAT database

<http://faostat3.fao.org/>

R software

<http://www.r-project.org/>

LaTeX typesetting system

<http://www.latex-project.org/>