Crops, livestock and food statistics

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)'s work on crops, livestock and food statistics (CLFS) provides essential global data that cover the three domains of crops and livestock: production of primary and processed crops and livestock commodities, trade of agricultural products, and supply utilization accounts/food balance sheets. As an analytical tool, food balance sheets provide comprehensive, detailed, annual data on the supply and utilization flows of each food item, including stocks and food losses. FAO’s agricultural production and food balance sheets domains are unique in the world and offer the largest and most comparable coverage in terms of commodities and geographic areas.

This area of work contributes to FAO’s efforts to eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, to make agriculture more productive and sustainable and to enable inclusive and efficient agrifood systems. In addition, it contributes to the international monitoring of several key indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also helps countries strengthen their statistical capacities by providing technical assistance to develop and compile information on national food balances.

Area of work

FAO compiles, validates and disseminates global annual statistics on the FAOSTAT digital platform, covering:

> Production of primary and processed crops and livestock commodities, also including harvested areas, yields, and live and slaughtered animal numbers. The data are gathered primarily from annual production and utilization questionnaires.

> Trade of agricultural and food commodities at the bilateral flow level, covering the imports and exports expressed in quantities and nominal value according to reporters and partners. For non-reporting countries, mirror trade statistics are used extensively.

> Supply and utilization accounts (consolidated as food and commodity balance sheets) that cover production and trade and variables such as food losses, stocks, animal feed and industrial utilization.

FAO provides capacity development and technical support to countries relating to the food balance sheets methodology and data validation. The team also engages in interinstitutional cooperation with national statistics offices on streamlining their data collection and reconciliation processes.
Core objectives

> Collect, analyse, interpret and disseminate crops, livestock and food indicators.
> Compile and disseminate food balance sheets.
> Develop and update methodologies and analytical tools to calculate crops, livestock and food statistics, including feed, stocks and food losses.
> Build the statistical capacity of countries on crops and livestock statistics, and on food and utilization accounts.

Key outputs

Data collection and dissemination

> Update the FAOSTAT digital platform domains relating to:
  • Crops and livestock production (primary and processed) including harvested areas, yield, and live and slaughtered animal numbers.
  • Trade of agricultural and food commodities.
  • Supply utilization accounts and food balance sheets.
  • Commodity balances for key non-food items.

Methodological work

> Update methodologies for imputation and quality control of data collected from questionnaires.
> Develop methodologies and analytical tools to validate crops, livestock and food data, and calculate indicators and indexes.

Capacity development

> Training and technical assistance to countries on the compilation of national supply utilization accounts and corresponding food balance sheets.

FURTHER INFORMATION: www.fao.org/about/who-we-are/departments/statistics-division/en/