



SMALL FAMILY FARMS COUNTRY FACTSHEET



THE CONTEXT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE ROLE OF SMALL FAMILY FARMS

Uganda is a landlocked country in East Africa with agriculture accounting as core sector of the economy as well as the major employer of the population. 69 percent of Uganda's population is employed in agriculture and the sector contributes around 23 percent to annual GDP, making agricultural growth a promising mean out of poverty. Despite its importance, however, Uganda reported a decline of the agricultural sector contribution to GDP, and a significantly slower agricultural growth rate when compared to the rest of the economy, likely indicating a slowly starting structural transformation process. Moreover, strong reliance on rain-fed agriculture affects real GDP growth as well as export earnings.

Small family farmers account for 89 percent of all Ugandan farmers, delivering up to 80 percent of the annual total agricultural output with coffee as the major export commodity, followed by tea and tobacco. Coffee became the backbone of Uganda's economy albeit 85 percent of the national coffee production is generated by smallholder farmers, who often face problems to comply with resource demanding quality standards.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF SMALL FAMILY FARMS¹

General aspects

Small family farms in Uganda hold around one hectare of farmland on average, with maize and beans as the most commonly grown staple crops, equally used for self-consumption. An average small family farm is predominantly male-headed with 5 persons living in the household; less than one third of Uganda's family farms are female headed, highlighting that agriculture remains a men-domain. A weak level of education, averaging 5 years, as well as a high share of 27 percent of smallholders living below the national poverty line remain major obstacles limiting productivity and competitiveness. Similar to crop production, livestock keeping has an important role for family farmers, functioning as a protection against weather related shocks. On average, Ugandan pastoralists herd 3.6 Tropical Livestock Units (TLU) for their livelihood.

Economic situation and diversification

59 percent of an Ugandan smallholder's income, which amounts up to USD 2 897² per year, is generated on-farm, with crop production being the most common source (54 percent) next to livestock. However, Ugandan small family farms undertake other activities to supplement their income: Around one third of the gross annual income is generated from non-agricultural wages or self-employment, including small businesses or occasional employment. Public or private transfers account for 7 percent of the income, likely complying with a constantly increasing remittances flow into the state.

AT A GLANCE

- **Fast-growing** economy in East Africa, with a population reaching **nearly 40 million**.
- **34 percent of the population live below USD 1.9 a day** (2011 PPP); the majority is **settled in rural areas** (84 percent).
- The average **annual GDP growth rate of 4.5 percent** is projected to increase, predominantly due to **large infrastructure projects**.
- **Rapid urbanization** increases the potential of Uganda **becoming a middle income country** within the next decades.

Source: World Bank, 2017.

¹ Unless indicated specifically, the data in this factsheet is taken from the LSMS survey 2012, analyzed by the SMALLS Team in FAO ESA. A detailed methodology description can be found online on the FAO Family Farming Knowledge Platform. The SMALLS Team would like to acknowledge the country office of Uganda for having provided valuable feedback

² All monetary values in this factsheet are expressed in constant 2009 international dollar.

Farming is a labour intensive activity in Uganda, with the majority of labour stemming from the household itself. An average family farm allocates 0.61 person-days to support on-farm activities, while a negligible share of smallholders makes use of outside assistance by hiring on-farm labour, mainly during harvest season. Although Ugandan small family farms potentially diversify their income, a relatively small proportion of available labour is invested off-farm (0.08 person-days).

Around one third of the agricultural production is sold by an Ugandan small family farm, which exceeds the mean of other East African countries.³ However, due to weak infrastructure and lack of transportation, the connectivity to markets and suppliers remains weak. Hence, 85 percent of farmers sell their crops directly to the public at local markets accepting potential income losses. The same local channels serve households to buy agricultural inputs.

Productivity and technology

Limited capital and poor access to agricultural inputs constrain productivity of Ugandan small family farmers. The usage of seeds per hectare on total cropped area, as likewise the expenditures, are noticeable high compared to other East African countries (91 kg/ha). However, only a small share of households has access to improved seeds (19 percent) and, even less, applies fertilizer (4.4 percent), possibly explaining the weak average value of annual crop production of USD 898. More than 80 percent of the crops produced are food crops, underlining the importance of agriculture for domestic consumption.

Although around one fourth of Ugandan smallholders receive provision of extension services, agricultural infrastructure such as irrigation systems is not widely available; only 0.7 percent of the average households' farm land is irrigated, making it evident that agriculture remains highly dependent on rainfall. Moreover, only 0.7 percent of smallholders in Uganda are motorized equipped.

Constraints

Small family farms in Uganda spend a considerable share of their value of production for inputs, presumably due to high costs and inefficient agricultural practices. High expenditures on inputs allow only limited options for savings, which leaves farmers in risky positions, especially in the occurrence of extreme weather events.

SMALL FAMILY FARMS IN UGANDA		SMALL FARMS	OTHER FARMS
Farm aspects	Average farm size (ha)	0.97	5.7
	% of smallholders on total farmers	88.8	11.2
	% female headed households	32.7	32.3
Income and poverty	Household income (const. 2009 Int. \$)	2 897	5 758
	% of income from crop production	54	50
	% of income from on-farm income	59	62
	% of income from non-agricultural wages and self-employment	29	28
	% of income from public and private transfers	7	4
	Smallholder poverty rate (national poverty line)	27	20
Labour	Family labour-days supplied on farm over a day period (person days)	0.61	0.89
	Family labour-days supplied off-farm over a day period (person days)	0.08	0.16
Production	Value of crop production (const. 2009 Int. \$)	898	2 119
	Amount of food produced (const. 2009 Int. \$)	751	1 448
	Value of food production per ha (const. 2009 Int. \$)	1 044	408
Capital and inputs	Livestock (TLU; pastoral households only)	3.6	9.6
	% of households using motorized equipment	0.7	5.2
	% of households using fertilizer	4.4	1.3
	Fertilizer per hectare (kg)	1.3	0.4
	Seed per hectare (kg)	91	27
	Irrigation (% of land)	0.7	0.2
Markets	% of households buying ag. inputs through formal channels*	94	98
	% of households buying ag. inputs in the local markets* <small>* 14 percent of households reported this information</small>	53	38
	% of households selling crops in the local markets	85	81
Innovation and technology	% of households using improved seeds	19	43
	% of households recipient of extension services	26	39
Constraints	% of agricultural production sold	27	39
	% of expenditure for inputs on value of production	5	4
	Distance of land from road (km)	3.4	2.6

Source: FAO. 2018. Smallholders data portrait (available at www.fao.org/family-farming/data-sources/dataportrait/farm-size/en).

REFERENCES

Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP). 2016. *National Survey and Segmentation of Smallholder Households in Uganda*. Washington, DC.
FAO. 2015. *Country Fact Sheet – Uganda*. Rome.

³ Referring to the East African countries included in the Smallholders Farmers' Data Portrait, the mean of agricultural production sold centers around 19 percent on average.

SMALLHOLDER FARMERS' DATA PORTRAIT

The Smallholder Farmers' Data portrait is a comprehensive, systematic and standardized data set on the profile of smallholder farmers across the world. It can generate an image on how small family farmers in both emerging and developing countries live their lives. It is about putting in numbers, the constraints they face, and the choices they make so that policies can be informed by evidence to meet the challenge of agricultural development. Currently, the data portrait provides information for nineteen countries.

For more information about SMALL FAMILY FARMS

Please visit: www.fao.org/family-farming/themes/small-family-farmers

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