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MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

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MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

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Abstract

This paper presents a new methodological approach aimed at measuring progress towards sustainable agriculture in countries and across agri-food systems typologies, by measuring socio-economic and environmental dimensions with available national statistics, with sixteen indicators defined and constructed from FAOSTAT data. A trend analysis is carried out at country level over the time series 1961–2018, with country results aggregated by four agri-food systems typologies: traditional; land-intensive and capital-intensive mixed systems; and modern food systems. A traffic-light approach is implemented to grade sustainability performance in countries via a colour system (red, yellow and green), and a dashboard is used to aggregate country results by typology. The Progress Towards Sustainable Agriculture (PROSA) dashboard provides a visual overview of the sustainability status identifying sustainability hotspots and their evolution identified over time. The PROSA indicators extend conceptually the monitoring framework of indicator SDG 2.4.1 on "sustainable and productive agriculture", by changing the monitoring scope from farms to country level, and by complementing the eleven SDG sub-indicator that cover relevant socio-economic and environmental aspects of sustainability on the farm, with additional indicators of biodiversity and climate change, of importance beyond the farm gate. The analysis provides a novel framework for the analysis of progress in achieving sustainable agriculture by country and agri-food system type, which can be implemented effectively and allows for exploring solutions across development pathways.

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