

FAO

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Yearbook

2014



Near East and North Africa
food and agriculture



FAO STATISTICAL YEARBOOK

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Near East and North Africa

Food and Agriculture

**Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa**

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Foreword

The Near East and North Africa region includes 19 countries that share a common cultural heritage but are very distinct from one another in their levels of development, their resource endowments and their potential for food and agricultural production. There are extremes of wealth and poverty among these countries. However, they are all addressing a common set of problems and challenges that could threaten their development prospects.

One of the primary challenges facing the region is overcoming hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. Currently, there are 43.7 million undernourished people in the Near East and North Africa. Most of these people live in rural areas and rely on agriculture for their livelihoods. A wide range of interconnected issues challenge the region, including dwindling water and land resources, the gap between food needs and food production, increasing difficulties in balancing employment and income generation as populations expand, declining investment in the rural sector, increasing threats from environmental strain, natural and human-induced disasters, as well as the impacts of climate change.

Meeting these challenges with evidence-based policymaking will require timely statistical information from a wide range of fields. As a contribution to this effort, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations has prepared this Regional Yearbook for the Near East and North Africa. The Yearbook presents a visual synthesis of the major trends and factors shaping the regional food and agricultural landscape and their interplay with broader environmental, social and economic dimensions. In doing so, it serves as a reference document on regional food and agriculture for policymakers, donor agencies, researchers and analysts, and the general public.

Reliable data and information are fundamental prerequisites for rigorous analysis and hence sound strategy for development and equitable distribution of income to the various sectors of the economy according to national priorities. For this reason it is crucial that statistics and information be collected, compiled, analyzed and disseminated using the best methodologies, concepts and classifications at national, subnational, regional and global levels.

FAO's preparation of regional and global Yearbooks is part of a much broader effort by the organization and its national and international partners to improve the quality of statistical data related to food insecurity, agriculture and the sustainable management of natural resources. At the 31st session of the FAO Regional Conference for the Near East in 2012, the organization unveiled its plans for the development of a regional strategy to improve agricultural statistics. The regional strategy – which is being developed by regional stakeholders and countries – is an integral part of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics, a long-term project promoted by FAO and international partners. The Global Strategy is built on three major pillars: producing a minimum set of core data and determining national priorities, integrating agricultural statistics into national statistical systems, and fostering the sustainability of agricultural statistics through governance and statistical capacity development.

This 2014 edition of the Near East and North Africa Statistical Yearbook of food and agriculture contains a breadth of data and topics related to food security and agriculture. FAO remains committed to working with partners and Member States in the Near East and North Africa to improve agricultural and rural statistics and facilitate the process of transforming this information into policies that will strengthen food security in the region and ensure more sustainable food production.

Abdessalam Ould Ahmed
Assistant Director-General
and Regional Representative
for the Near East and North Africa

Pietro Gennari
FAO Chief Statistician,
and Director,
Statistics Division

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