

**Use of household surveys
for collection of food
and agricultural statistics**

Provisional

**Statistics Division
Economic and Social Development Department**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

		<u>Page</u>
<u>PREFACE</u>		ii
CHAPTER I	INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER II	AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS	4
CHAPTER III	CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS	13
CHAPTER IV	THE INTEGRATION OF DATA WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF NHSCP	19
CHAPTER V	DATA COLLECTION ORGANIZATION	20
CHAPTER VI	PROBLEMS RELATED TO SAMPLING	24
CHAPTER VII	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	29
APPENDIX I	EXAMPLES OF ORGANIZATION OF DATA COLLECTION FOR AGRICULTURE	33
APPENDIX II	EXAMPLES OF SURVEYS UTILIZING THE HOUSEHOLD APPROACH FOR COLLECTING DATA ON AGRICULTURE	40
APPENDIX III	LIST OF REFERENCES	42

PREFACE

When the United Nations National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP) was launched in 1977, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) took an interest in, and supported, this project by appointing a senior staff to coordinate its statistical activities related to food and agricultural statistics.

The present manual is part of the contribution of FAO in implementing the NHSCP. Its aims are to serve as a guide in the collection of agricultural statistics through households, within the context of the Programme. This manual, conceived within a particular framework, should be seen as complementary to other manuals already made available by FAO. Therefore, general guidelines of census and survey taking are not treated here. Only problems arising from the integration of agricultural surveys in national household survey programmes are considered.

This manual is a first attempt to overcome new problems which may arise in agricultural surveys viewed within the context of an overall integrated programme of surveys and, consequently, cannot be complete. Other problems will certainly appear later when some countries will have carried out their survey programmes and encounter other problems. This manual will then be completed and revised on the basis of the experience of countries in using it.

The preparation of this manual was mostly the work of an FAO Consultant, Dr. Abel Nkougourou Ebongué, formerly UN/ECA regional adviser for household surveys. In preparing this manual, the consultant held extensive consultations with interested international and regional organizations and with a large number of national and international experts. FAO wishes to acknowledge and express its appreciation of the contribution made by all those who were consulted.

Users of this manual are kindly invited to communicate their comments on its contents and to convey the results of their experiences in its use to the Director, Statistics Division, FAO, Rome, Italy. We would also appreciate receiving copies of methodological and practical material describing their surveys, as well as reports containing the resulting data.

C.L. Quance
Director
Statistics Division

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Basic principles, purpose and main characteristics of the guide

The present manual deals with the use of household surveys for collecting data on food and agriculture, within the framework of the United Nations National Household Survey Capability Programme (NHSCP).

Historical background

The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations adopted a resolution, 2055 (LXII), on 5 May 1977, and a further resolution, 1979/5 on 9 May 1979, on the National Household Survey Capability Programme. These resolutions, among other things, stressed the importance of continuous and integrated household surveys, for providing essential information on economic, social and demographic conditions of people in developing countries; emphasized the value and the importance of the NHSCP as a major and much-needed development activity aimed at building enduring capabilities in developing countries to conduct their own integrated surveys programmes; requested the Secretary-General, in collaboration with agencies concerned, to coordinate household survey technical cooperation activities within the context of the NHSCP and strongly urged the multilateral and bilateral donor agencies to provide resources to help developing countries implement their survey development activities, and to ensure that the survey activity they may promote will be compatible with, and contribute to, the Programme.

The NHSCP objectives also meet FAO objectives. In fact, the World Food Conference (1974) in elaborating its approach to developmental effort stressed the need for integrated statistics, particularly those on households.

Therefore, along with the United Nations Statistical Office, Regional Commissions and other specialized agencies, FAO is fully participating in promoting the NHSCP. Many reasons militate in favour of this participation; some of them are as follows:

- Data needed for food security provide the general framework for the coordination of statistical work of FAO with other agencies in the field of household surveys. Indeed, much of the data needed for estimating food production and food supplies can be provided only through household surveys.
- FAO is the lead agency in implementing the Programme of Action of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD), approved by the FAO Conference Resolution 7/79 and the General Assembly Resolution 34/14 following WCARRD. The Programme of Action spans a number of socio-economic areas which are best investigated through household surveys, and hence NHSCP is an essential instrument for this purpose.
- Further, because of the great importance of agriculture in many developing countries, particularly those least developed, household surveys include substantial elements of direct concern to FAO. This is, for example, the case of the African region where a majority of ongoing programmes of surveys include an important agricultural component.
- A village or locality is composed of people, and the primary objective of all development programmes is to improve their living standards. The problems of the people are better understood in the light of periodic statistics on various characteristics of the households to which they belong. Once village or locality is taken as the unit of planning, the collection of data on households which constitute the village or locality becomes inescapable. Household data on various items are therefore of vital importance in micro-level planning.

- Finally, in several countries scheduled to participate in the NHSCP, FAO also has ongoing or planned projects dealing with agricultural and related statistics.

Purpose of the manual

Two main sources of agricultural statistics are current surveys and decennial agricultural surveys. Because of the rapid changes that are taking place in the economics of the developing countries, the decennial censuses, even where they are comprehensive, are inadequate to provide timely information needed to monitor and evaluate the impact of development programmes on agriculture and rural economy. While some structural data may be easily obtained from government-managed farms, and sometimes from large private farms, similar data from the traditional sector, which covers most rural households in developing countries, may not be easily obtained. To obtain data on traditional agriculture, which represents a very high proportion of the total agricultural sector, it is necessary to promote a new approach, i.e. collecting data on the traditional agricultural sector through household surveys.

Because of the many inter-relations existing between agricultural and other socio-economic data needed for a better understanding of the household sector and also for compiling socio-economic indicators, the collection of agricultural data should be integrated in the national household survey programmes.

The present manual intends to serve as a guide for developing countries in collecting agricultural statistics through households, within the framework of the NHSCP.

Main characteristics of the manual

This manual is part of the contribution of FAO in implementing the NHSCP. It is therefore conceived within a particular framework, i.e. collecting agricultural data through household surveys and ensuring integration of agricultural data with other data collected from households.

Such an approach raises problems relating to data collection with respect to organization, survey content, sampling techniques, data processing and tabulation. The manual takes into consideration these problems. It should be considered as complementary to other manuals already made available by FAO, namely:

- Programme for the 1980 World Agricultural Census (1)*/
- Collecting statistics on agricultural population and employment (2)
- Programme for statistics of food consumption and nutrition (3)
- Estimation of crop areas and yields in agricultural statistics (4)
- Guide to statistics of livestock and livestock products (provisional) (5)
- Agricultural census taking (6)
- Assessment and collection of data on pre-harvest foodgrain losses (20)
due to Pests and Diseases
- Assessment and Collection of Data on Post-Harvest Foodgrain Losses (16)

*/ Numbers given in parentheses refer to the serial number of the reference as given in Annex List of references.

It is a well-recognized fact that the levels of statistical development differ widely between developing countries and that it is impossible to propose a single system of statistics to be applied universally or even regionally. It is also obvious that statistical censuses and surveys within the framework of the NHSCP should be designed to meet national needs and to provide information of primary interest to the users in the country. But it is also desirable to achieve regional and worldwide comparability, and this should be aimed at in a complementing way with national objectives.

Structure of the manual

Chapters 2 through 6 of the manual deal essentially with the substantive topics concerning the collection of agricultural data through household surveys, within the framework of the NHSCP.

Chapter 2 covers the following topics:

- Needs for agricultural data
- Sources of agricultural data
- Current practices in developing countries for collecting agricultural data
- Use of household surveys for collecting agricultural and related statistics.

Chapter 3 deals with concepts and definitions. Only those concepts and definitions are examined which are relevant to the integration of agricultural data with data from other sources, such as the concepts of "household" and "agricultural holding". Some definitions, which can be used when the household approach is adopted are suggested. However, these definitions are flexible enough to enable studying some particular aspects, according to countries' priorities, such as, for example, statistics on women in agriculture.

Chapter 4 deals with the integration of data within the framework of NHSCP and gives particular consideration to the problems which are likely to be encountered in the process of this integration.

Chapter 5 deals with the organization of data collection in the country. The relations between the Agricultural Statistics Department and the Central Statistical Office, especially where the Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for collecting agricultural statistics, are examined.

Chapter 6 examines the problems relating to sampling in an integrated survey programme.

Chapter 7 deals with conclusions and recommendations.

Finally, some appendixes are presented in Chapter 8.

CHAPTER II
AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

I. INTRODUCTION

Governments of the Member Nations of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have recognized the great importance of food and agricultural statistics in carrying out national and international programmes aimed at achieving the main objectives of the Organization, namely:

to raise nutritional levels and living standards, to improve the efficiency of agricultural production and the distribution of food and agricultural products, and to better the overall conditions of rural populations.

1. Needs for food and agricultural statistics

From the point of view of the economy, most developing countries are dependent on agriculture.

- It is the most important source of national income in most developing countries.
- The major proportion of their manpower in rural areas is engaged in agriculture.
- For many developing countries, external trade is dependent on agricultural products (export of agricultural products to cover needs for imports).
- It responds to the main human need: food.

It follows from the above that the social and economic development of countries, particularly developing countries, is rather closely linked with the agricultural development and that numeric data on food and agriculture constitute the cornerstone of development planning, the formulation of socio-economic policy and the definition of national priorities.

First of all, the Government agencies need those data for:

(1) of programmes and development plans

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