



## Foreword

Achieving food security for all is at the heart of FAO's mission, by making sure people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives. Our mission is premised on the need to raise levels of nutrition, improve agricultural productivity, better the lives of rural populations and ensure that agriculture can be a sustainable platform for economic growth. Beyond its essential role in food security, sustainable agricultural development is now regarded as pivotal in strategies towards poverty alleviation. In addition, policy makers agree that agriculture will be key to effectively address challenging issues of our time, including climate change, water scarcity, environmental pollution and land degradation. Agriculture has a clear role in providing ecosystem services to protect the environment and preserve our planet's natural resource base. With the sector now intertwined with almost every topic in the development agenda, a major challenge is to capture and monitor the multiple roles of agriculture.

Providing reliable and timely information on the status of food and agricultural sectors in multiple contexts is an important part of the FAO mandate and in particular of the FAO Statistics Division. In response to the demands for a more comprehensive set of statistics and indicators that are amenable to an ever-widening audience, we have attempted to meet the challenge through radically overhauling the usual FAO Statistical Yearbook format. The revised publication will continue the long tradition of the FAO Statistical Yearbook series as the foremost collection and reference point of statistical data on food and agriculture, but the new publication marks a transition. In rising to the call for a broader and more in-depth examination of the many roles of agriculture, this edition leans towards a thematically-driven, statistical snapshot of the major trends and issues related to world food and agriculture. Divided into four parts and encompassing 34 dimensions of food and agriculture, the new FAO Statistical Yearbook employs over 350 indicators drawn from data sources within FAO, sister UN agencies, the World Bank and other international organizations.

The new Yearbook approach makes us all keenly aware of the need to improve the quality, quantity and scope of agricultural and development statistics. Concerted efforts are, however, being made by FAO and our partners to enhance country capacities in providing better and more statistical information. Though presenting an accessible statistical synthesis of the key issues affecting world food and agriculture, it is our desire that the book raises awareness about the multiple challenges confronting the sector, thereby strengthening FAO's resolve towards fighting hunger and improving the livelihoods of the rural poor.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pietro Gennari', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Pietro Gennari  
Director, FAO Statistics Division

## How to use this book

The 2012 edition of the FAO Statistical Yearbook represents a break away from FAO tradition. Through employing data from global statistical providers, including FAO, the publication presents a visual synthesis of the major trends and factors shaping the global food and agricultural landscape and their interplay with broader environmental, social and economic dimensions. In doing so, it strives to serve as a unique reference point on the state of world food and agriculture for policy-makers, donor agencies, researchers and analysts as well as the general public.

The book is subdivided into four thematic parts, where an attempt is made to exhaustively present the spectrum of issues relevant to the subject matter:

**Part 1 The setting** measures the state of the agricultural resource base, by assessing the supply of land, labour, capital, inputs and the adequacy of infrastructure, and also examines the pressure on the world food system stemming from demographic and macroeconomic change

**Part 2 Hunger dimensions** gauges the state of food insecurity and malnutrition, measuring the multitude of dimensions that give rise to hunger and those that shape undernourishment

**Part 3 Feeding the world** evaluates the past and present productive capacity of world agriculture together with the role of trade in meeting changing food, feed and other demands

**Part 4 Sustainability dimensions** examines the sustainability of agriculture in the context of the pressure it exerts on the environment, including the interaction of agriculture with climate change, and how it can provide ecosystem services in relation to the bio-based economy

Multiple page spreads are used to present each thematic issue. Each spread contains a visualization of the data by way of maps and charts and is accompanied by text that provides a background to the salient issues as well as an assessment of current trends.

Data are made available for virtually all countries in the world, excluding principalities and minor territories.

We follow the M49 convention of the United Nations Statistics Division in reporting “geographical regions for statistical use”. See (<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/m49/m49regin.htm>). The most recent data are given, but when country data have not been reported for the reference year, an asterisk (\*) is placed on the year label to indicate “closest to” that year.

### *How to retrieve Yearbook data*

The data used in this book are presented via charts and maps that form the basis of key indicators. A more detailed overview of the data is provided by way of tables located at the end of each thematic part. Documentation about the data, their methodology and sources can be found through the *MetaLink key* below each indicator. For the web version, the user can simply click on the MetaLink key, and will be directed to information about the data. Furthermore, a small icon allows the user to directly download the data presented in each indicator.

