

# FOREWORD

As outlined in the Forward of Issue 1 of the *FAO Statistical Yearbook*, this year marks an important transition for the Statistics Division under its mandate to regularly monitor the global performance of food and agriculture and disseminate relevant information to policy makers, as well as other users. The Yearbook consolidates and replaces four FAO products: *Bulletin of Statistics, Production, Trade, and Fertilizer Yearbooks*. This streamlining prepares the ground for further enhancements and changes in form, content, and delivery of statistical outputs planned for future years. This is Issue 2 of the *FAO Statistical Yearbook* which provides data, by country, for topics dealt with in Issue 1.

A file containing translation of all headings is available in Arabic, Chinese, French and Spanish at <http://www.fao.org/statistics/yearbook/>. This file when printed can be overlaid on each of the various country profiles. It is a unique translation tool which compliments the efforts of development of a versatile translator for Issue 1 of the Yearbook.

As with the FAO's earlier statistical publications, *FAO Statistical Yearbook* is based on data submitted by member countries on questionnaires, supplemented by review of national sources and, where absolutely necessary, staff estimates or imputations to cover critical gaps. The Introduction offers additional background on such technical matters, outlines the content of the *Yearbook*, and explains its relationship to other FAO data sources.

FAOSTAT, the organization's statistical database, is accessed more than a million times each month. It is the world's largest online agricultural information system, with nearly 4 million time series consisting of over 150 million observations. It is expected that publishing data from different domains and sources together and in an analytical structure, may reveal data anomalies and occasional errors that have escaped our attention. Furthermore, new printing routines for such a mass of data on paper often generate new errors - not all of which will be caught before publication. We trust that the ongoing analytic benefits to users far outweigh such transient problems and hope that users will agree and bear with us during the transition period.

We are confident that this new approach will be beneficial and helpful to all. Suggestions and comments are most welcome as we refine our publications strategy and launch the new version of FAOSTAT. We look forward to hearing from you, preferably by email addressed to [FAOStatisticalYearbook@fao.org](mailto:FAOStatisticalYearbook@fao.org).

The statistical dissemination and presentation could not have been achieved without the valuable work of staff of the Basic Food and Agriculture Statistics Service of FAO's Statistics Division, under the editorship of Mr. E. Gillin. Special assistance was provided by Ms. F Petrassi, as well as Mr. S. Zarqa. My sincere thanks go to all.

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