

SURVEY BRIEF

Agricultural season
2022/23

NIGERIA



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Under the umbrella of the 50x2030 Initiative to Close the Agricultural Data Gap, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) provided technical support for Nigeria's 2022/23 Agricultural Sample Surveys (NASS) implemented by the National Bureau of Statistics of Nigeria in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (FMAFS). Through the Initiative, the country will strengthen its national statistics system, improve the use of survey data in policymaking and enhance the capacity of key data users to optimize evidence-based decisions.

Key features

This note provides key insights on farming related to agricultural holdings in the household sector in Nigeria during the agricultural season 2022/23. It presents indicators on agricultural land and holding size, crop output and yields, livestock rearing and labour use. More details are available in the NASS 2022/23 survey report (NBS, 2025). A technical annex at the end of this document provides further details on the indicators presented, definitions, sources and assumptions used.

Key characteristics of agricultural households

During the 2022/23 agricultural season, an estimated 40.2 million agricultural households were active in Nigeria, operating on average about 2.0 hectares (ha). Most of these agricultural households – 89.6 percent or 36 million – reported crop production as their main activity, compared to 8.8 percent who focused mainly on livestock rearing (including poultry), 1.5 percent on fishing, and 0.1 percent on forestry. About half of the agricultural households reported producing for commercial purposes, with 18.6 million producing mostly for sale while retaining some output for self-consumption, and 1.4 million producing exclusively for sale.

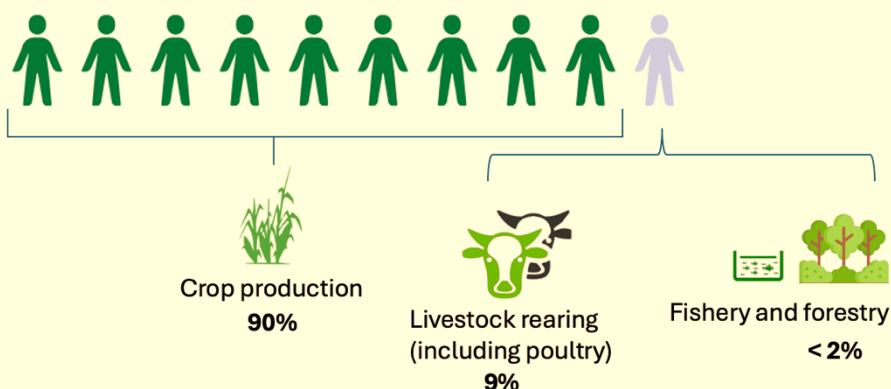


40.2
million
agricultural
households

Agricultural area

2 ha
on average per holding

Distribution of agricultural households by main activity

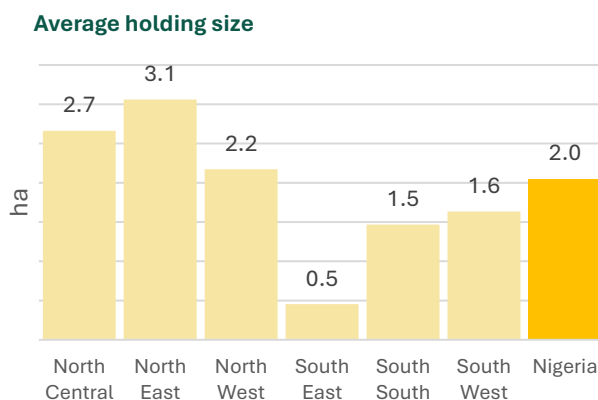


50%

of agricultural households produce
mostly for **commercial purposes**

Average holding size and cultivated area by region

The survey reveals that during the major season 37.0 million agricultural households operated 75.6 million hectares, of which 97 percent was cultivated, and 3 percent was left temporarily fallow. The percent of fallow land varies across regions, with a maximum of 7.1 percent in the South East region and minimum 1.8 percent in the North West region. The average holding size at the national level is 2.0 hectares, with significant variations, ranging from 0.5 hectares in the South East region, to 3.1 hectares in the North East region.



Note 1: The average holding size is calculated as the total area of the plots reported in the major season divided by the number of agricultural households reporting plots in the same season. **Note 2:** Data reported refer to the major season.

Status of agricultural households

94.5%
of agricultural
households are
unregistered

In Nigeria, almost all agricultural households operate informally, with about 94.5 percent of agricultural holdings not registered under any legal form. Among these, the vast majority (94.3 percent of all agricultural households) are owned by individuals, while only a small fraction (0.7 percent) are partnerships (collective or group-based farm ownership).

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Crop output, harvested area and yields

The country's main crops by harvested area are maize (12.3 million hectares), rice (8.4 million), sorghum (7.5 million) – also known in Nigeria as guinea corn – and millet, or maiwa (6.0 million). Maize is cultivated by approximately 20 million households at an estimated yield of 1.4 tonnes per hectare during 2022/23. Yields for other cereal crops and beans range between 0.9 tonnes per hectare (beans) and 1.6 tonnes per hectare (rice). Cash crops also account for a large share of agricultural household production. The main cash crops by harvested area are groundnut, sesame, and cocoa. In the major season alone, agricultural households produced 4.2 million tonnes of peanuts and 4.2 million tonnes of palm oil.

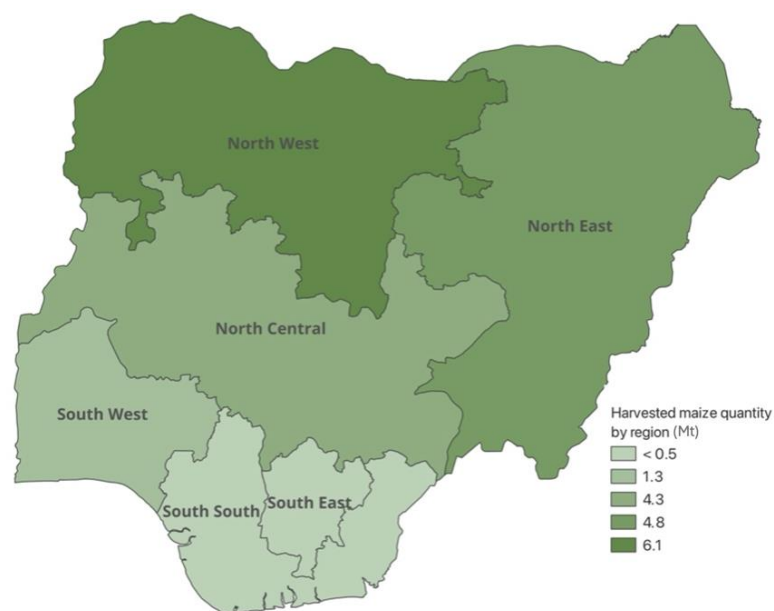
Crop	Harvested Area Hectares	Output Tonnes	Yield Tonnes per hectare
Staple crops (major season)			
Maize	12 257 638	17 349 001	1.4
Rice	8 419 250	13 041 315	1.6
Sorghum (guinea corn)	7 465 495	7 998 661	1.1
Millet (maiwa)	5 961 587	6 163 004	1.0
Beans / cowpea	4 926 684	4 475 665	0.9
Cassava	4 578 175	21 902 466	4.8
White yam	3 016 831	17 238 166	5.7
Soya beans	2 492 867	2 425 990	1.0
Cash crops (major season)			
Groundnut / peanuts	4 279 363	4 231 093	1.0
Sesame	829 719	412 887	0.5
Cocoa	722 266	501 929	0.7
Oil palm fruit	659 297	4 167 807	6.3

Note: Crops are sorted in descending order by harvest area.

Nigerian households cultivate a wide range of vegetable crops, including okra, pumpkin, small pepper (rodo), melon (egusi), tomato, green vegetables and onions. These crops support the nutritional needs of the population and the food traditions of local communities, especially during the minor season when the output of the major cereal crops is marginal. During this period, production of maize and rice amounts to less than 5 percent and around 10 percent of major-season levels, respectively.

Regional production of major crops

Regional distribution of maize output during the major season



Nigeria's two major crops, maize and rice, are mostly grown in the northern part of the country – including the North West, North East and North Central regions – with around 88 and 93 percent of the national production in major season, respectively. The North West region is the leading producer of maize, with 6.1 million tonnes in the major season. In contrast, the South South and the South East regions produced less than half a million tonnes each, accounting for about 4 percent of the national product collectively.

Source: author's own elaboration, 2025. Based on NBS. 2025. National Agricultural Sample Survey 2022/23. Abuja.
<https://microdata.nigerianstat.gov.ng/index.php/catalog/173/related-materials>

Note: Refer to the disclaimer on page 10 for the names and boundaries used in this map.

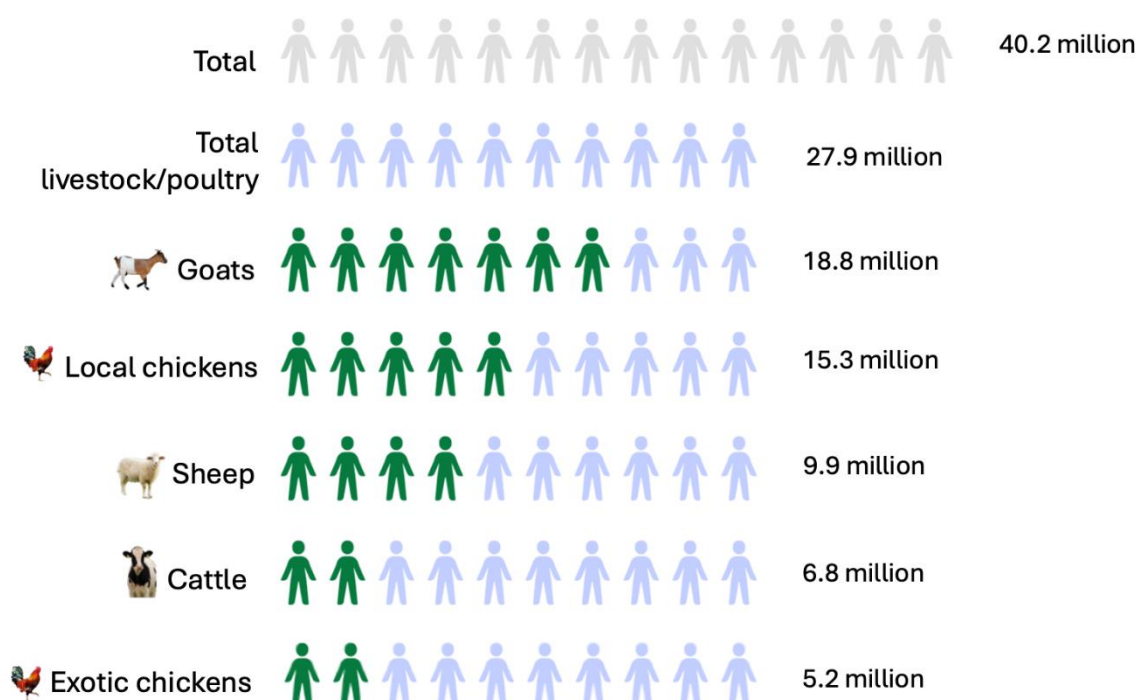
The same pattern is reflected in the production of rice, with the North West as the major producing region.

Livestock and poultry production

Livestock rearing, practiced by 27.9 million households in Nigeria (69.4 percent of all agricultural households) mostly in combination with or in complement to cropping activities (only 8.8 percent of households reported livestock as their main activity), holds particular importance for the economic and social status in many communities. Among livestock types, goats are the most represented, with 18.8 million households engaged in this activity. Sheep and cattle are also widespread, reared by 9.9 million and 6.8 million households, respectively. Pig rearing is less common, involving 1.7 million households, while fewer than one million households engage in fish farming.

Poultry is also widespread, with 15.3 million households raising local chickens and 5.2 million raising exotic chickens (improved breeds). Additionally, 1.6 million households rear guineafowls and nearly one million raise turkeys.

Number of agricultural households by livestock type reared



Note 1: Holdings reporting presence of animals during the last twelve months. **Note 2:** Local chicken figures refer to indigenous chicken breeds only and include hens/layers and cocks/broilers. **Note 3:** Exotic chickens refer to improved chicken breeds.

Labour input

Household labour is critical for agricultural holdings in Nigeria, with 84 percent relying on family members for farming activities. The use of temporary or casual labour is also widespread, reported by nearly half of agricultural households.

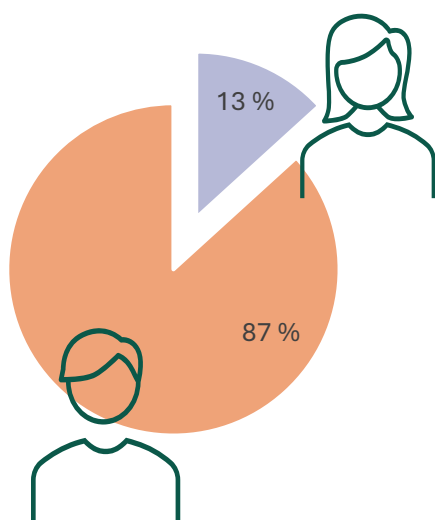
4%
of households
resorted to
**permanent hired
workers**

50%
of households
hired **temporary or
casual labour**

In contrast, only a small minority employ permanent hired labour (about 4 percent), while free or exchange labour arrangements are used by about 7 percent of households.

Participation of women in farming

Distribution of households by household-head sex



Women have lower involvement in agricultural work. They are underrepresented both among household workers and among hired labour. Among household workers, women number around 28 million, compared to 47 million men. Among temporary and casual workers, women represent about one-third of male workers, and only about one-fifth among permanent workers.

Women are underrepresented also in decision-level roles in the agricultural sector: only about 13 percent of the agricultural holdings are headed by women. This underrepresentation is particularly marked in the North West region, with only 3 percent of female-headed agricultural households. The South East region has the highest prevalence of female-headed agricultural households, but the percentage remains low, at 25 percent.

Technical Annex

Sources and scope

- Data source:
National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). 2025. National Agricultural Sample Survey 2022/23. Abuja, Nigeria.
<https://microdata.nigerianstat.gov.ng/index.php/catalog/173/related-materials>
- Geographical scope: Nationally representative survey.
- Product scope: crops and livestock.
- Cash and staple crops classification:
based on FAO, European Union and CIRAD. 2022. Food Systems Profile – Nigeria. Catalysing the sustainable and inclusive transformation of food systems. Rome, Brussels and Montpellier, France. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cc3380en>

Indicators and definitions

All the indicators produced in this brief can be considered as statistically representative at the geographical scale at which they are presented. Definitions provided below are used by the National Bureau of Statistics of Nigeria. For full details, please refer to the NASS 2022/23 survey report (NBS, 2025).

- Agricultural holding: all land and/or livestock used wholly or partly for agricultural production and operated by one person alone or with others, regardless of management structure, organization, size, or location. Single management may be exercised by an individual or household, jointly by two or more individuals or households, by a clan or tribe, or by a juridical entity such as a corporation, cooperative, or government agency.
- Household: one person or a group of related or unrelated persons who live together in the same dwelling, recognize one adult male or female as the head of the household, and share the same cooking arrangements.
- Farming/agricultural household: household in which at least one member is engaged in own-account agricultural activities, such as crop cultivation, livestock rearing, fish farming, or forestry.
- Yield: the ratio between harvested quantities and harvested area, by crop, expressed in tonnes per hectare.

- Major season: refers to the time of the year when a region experiences significant increase in rainfall (rainy season). In Nigeria, it mainly occurs from April to October.
- Minor season: refers to the time of the year when a region experiences little, or no rainfall.

The data presented in this brief are sourced from countries' surveys and may differ from data published on other FAO platforms.

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