

SURVEY BRIEF

Agricultural season
2023/24

MALI



Under the umbrella of the 50x2030 Initiative to Close the Agricultural Data Gap, with the technical support of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Mali is implementing a comprehensive agricultural survey programme, improving the production of agricultural statistics. The 2023/24 agricultural survey (*Enquête Agricole de Conjoncture, EAC*), reflects strong collaboration between the National Institute of Statistics (INSTAT), the Planning and Statistics Unit of the Rural Development Sector (CPS/SDR) and partner sectoral government institutions/offices.

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 agricultural holdings in the household sector in Mali during the agricultural season 2023/24. It presents key indicators on agricultural land, crop output and yields, livestock rearing, input and labour use. More details are available in the Mali agricultural survey report (CPS/SDR, 2025). A technical annex at the end of this document provides definitions, sources and assumptions used.

Key characteristics of agricultural holdings

In Mali, as in many sub-Saharan African countries, agricultural households constitute the basic unit of agricultural production. In the agricultural season 2023/24, 1.5 million agricultural holdings engaged in at least one agricultural activity. Of these, 1.4 million holdings practiced crop production and 1.1 million livestock rearing.

Approximately 7.5 million hectares were cultivated nationally, with an average cultivated area per holding of 5.3 hectares. Crop cultivation is mainly concentrated in the central and southern regions.

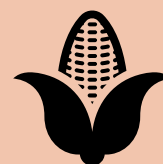
The analysis of land tenure reveals that most agricultural parcels in Mali lack formal property titles (91 percent), illustrating the importance of customary or informal property. Regions such as Ménaka and Gao have the highest proportion of parcels under formal land ownership status (36.8 and 24.5 percent, respectively), reflecting higher land tenure security and specific local policies in these regions. Alternative land tenure modes remain marginal, with some regional exceptions: free lending, for example, reaches up to 11.5 percent of parcels in Nioro and 10.5 percent in Mopti, reflecting mutual aid practices by local communities. Sharecropping remains marginal nationally (0.1 percent) but reaches 16.6 percent in Mopti. This relatively heterogeneous land tenure panorama has implications on land tenure security, equitable access to land, and agricultural development planning.

Key figures on agricultural holdings

1.5
million
agricultural
holdings



1.4 million
agricultural holdings practice
crop production



1.1 million
agricultural holdings practice
livestock rearing



7.45 million
hectares cultivated

Average
cultivated area per
holding

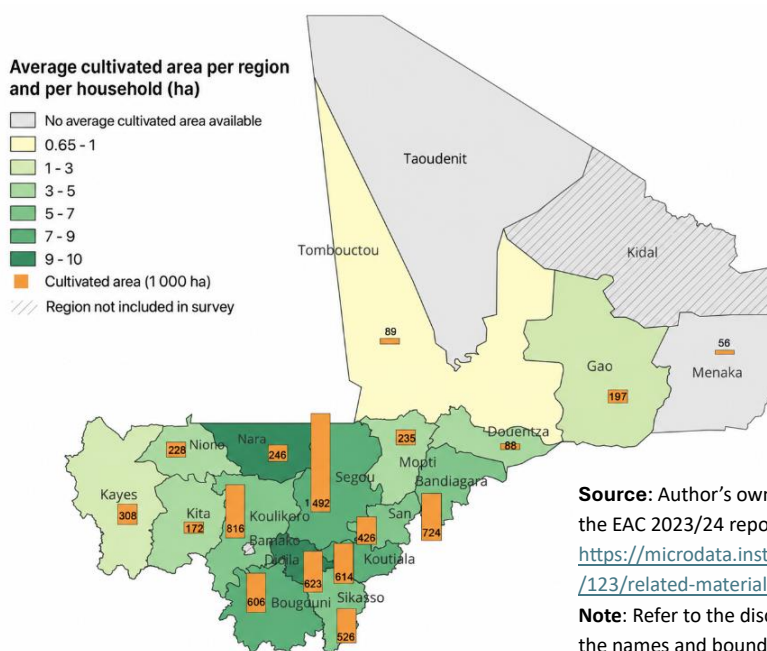
5.3 ha

91% of
parcels lack
property titles

Average holding size and planted area by region

With 1.4 million agricultural households engaged in crop production nationwide, Segou and Koulikoro host the highest number of farms, respectively 14.2 and 9.9 percent of the total. Twenty percent of the national total area planted, or 1.5 million ha, is concentrated in Segou, while 11 percent, or 816 000 ha, are in Koulikoro. The southern and central regions show a strong crop production orientation, compared with the northern and Sahelian regions (including Gao, Tombouctou, and Menaka). Regions such as Taoudenit and Menaka are underrepresented or absent from the data, limiting the comprehensiveness of the analysis. The average cultivated area per holding is 5.3 ha, ranging from 0.65 ha in Tombouctou, to 10.0 ha in Nara.

Total and average cultivated area per household, per region



Source: Author's own elaboration, based on the EAC 2023/24 report (CPS/SDR, 2025)

<https://microdata.instat.ml/index.php/catalog/123/related-materials>

Note: Refer to the disclaimer on page 12 for the names and boundaries used in this map.

Note 1: Average cultivated area refers to agricultural households only. **Note 2:** The 2023/24 agricultural survey covered all regions except the district of Bamako and the Kidal region. Data on cultivated area and production were not collected in Taoudénit.

Crop output, planted area and yields

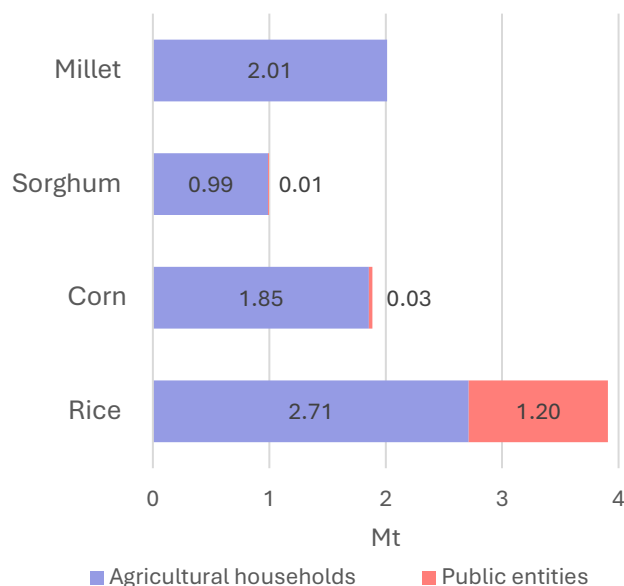
Among agricultural households in 2023/24, millet was the most cultivated crop with 2.5 million hectares cultivated, accounting for more than one-third of the total planted area, followed by sorghum (1 492 000 ha) and maize (1 204 000 ha). While rice comes only fourth in terms of cultivated area, it has the highest output (2.7 million tonnes [Mt]). Rice cultivation shows strong regional specialization and is mainly concentrated in areas with irrigable or flood-prone potential. Specifically, rice cultivation is concentrated in Gao, Mopti, Segou and Tombouctou.

Planted area, production and yields of main crops

Crops	Planted area 1 000 hectares	Output 1 000 tonnes	Yield Tonnes per hectare
Cereals, tubers and roots			
Millet	2 505	2 011	0.8
Sorghum	1 492	989	0.7
Maize	1 204	1 855	1.5
Rice	811	2 712	3.3
Oilseed and nut crops			
Groundnut	802	485	0.6
Sesame	131	30	0.2
Beans			
Cowpea	300	172	0.6

Note 1: Data in the table refer to the agricultural household sector only. **Note 2:** Yields are calculated as output divided by planted area. **Note 3:** Crops are sorted in descending order by planted area within each crop type. **Note 4:** The survey does not include cotton production data. **Note 5:** Area and production figures are rounded to the nearest thousand.

Production of major cereal crops per type of holding

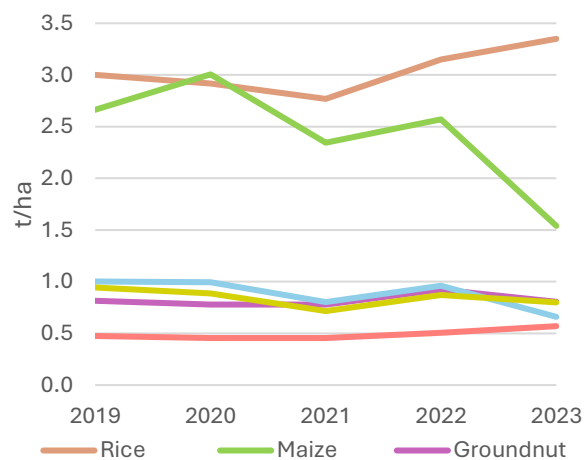


Total cereal production reached 8.84 Mt in 2023/24. Agricultural households – the focus of this survey – produced 7.6 Mt, equivalent to 86 percent of this total. Public entities produced the remaining 14 percent (1.2 Mt); they are large state agencies highly specialized in rice cultivation, and their activity is concentrated in a few regions, particularly in Segou.

Note: See the technical annex at the end of the document for the definition of public entities.

Among agricultural households, yields show considerable variability between 2019 and 2023. After a relatively stable period in 2019 and 2020, yields declined in 2021, before recovering in 2022. However, they dropped again in 2023, except for rice (whose yield increased by 6 percent compared with 2022) and cowpea (up by 12 percent). The sharpest declines between 2022 and 2023 were recorded for maize (–40 percent), sorghum (–31 percent), and groundnuts (–14 percent). These variations can be partly explained by adverse weather conditions that affected the agricultural season.

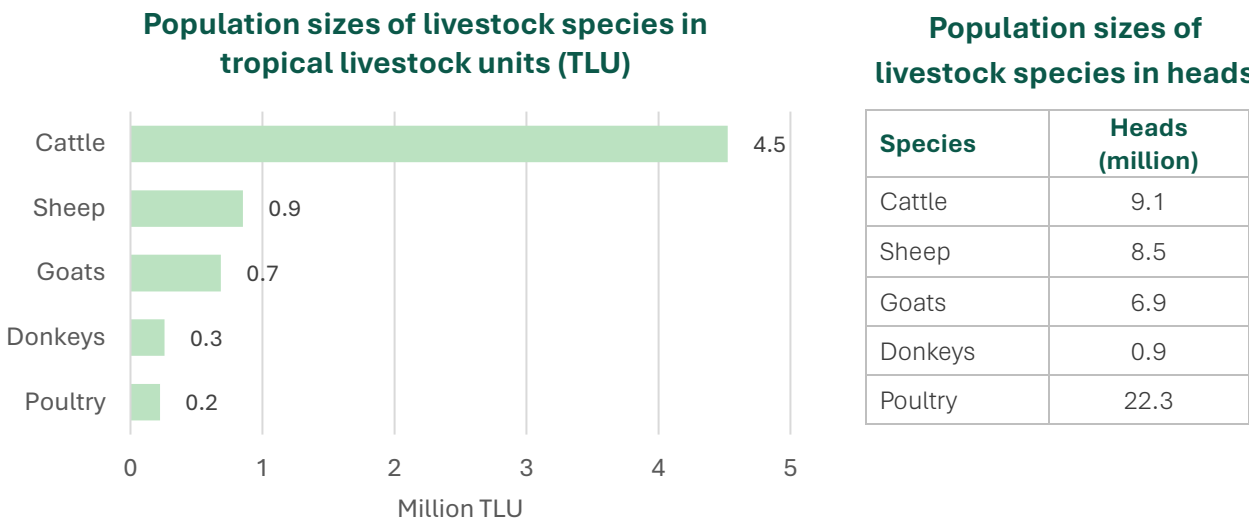
Yield of main crops



Note: Data on yields refer to the agricultural household sector only.

Livestock rearing

Livestock plays a central role in Mali’s agriculture and rural areas, especially in Sahelian areas. Cattle, with a population of 4.5 million tropical livestock units (TLU – see the Technical Annex for the definition of this concept), represent the dominant herd and the main economic asset. They are particularly numerous in Mopti, Segou and Koulikoro, which combine vast pastoral areas with mixed agropastoral systems. Sheep are the second largest livestock group contributing to livelihood diversification. They are concentrated in regions characterized by extensive systems well suited to the mobility of small ruminants, such as Segou, Mopti, Koulikoro and Bandiagara. Goats play a key role in enhancing livelihood resilience in areas less suitable for crop cultivation, such as Menaka, as they adapt well to semi-arid and arid conditions. Poultry, particularly chickens, is widely raised at the household level for domestic consumption. Donkeys are mainly used for animal traction and transport.

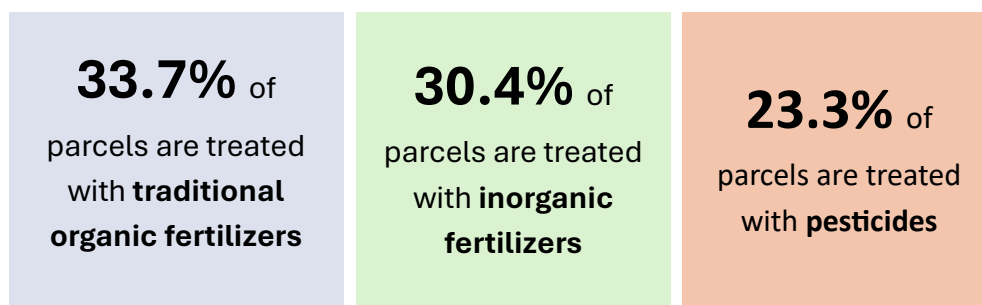


Note 1: The total number of animals recorded includes only animals raised within agricultural households. **Note 2:** TLU conversion factors are based on FAO (2019). **Note 3:** Poultry includes chickens, guinea fowls and other poultry types.

Agricultural practices and input use

About 33.7 percent of parcels are treated with traditional organic fertilizers, while only 1.7 percent are treated with industrial organic fertilizers. Inorganic (or mineral) fertilizers are applied on 30.4 percent of parcels, and are frequently used in regions like Sikasso, Bougouni, Koutiala and Tombouctou. Pesticides are applied on 23.3 percent of parcels.

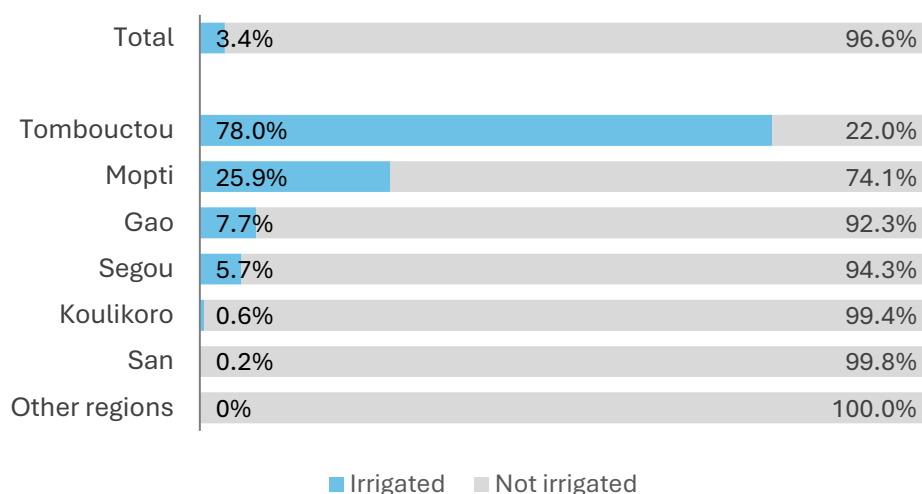
Share of parcels treated with different inputs



Note: See the technical annex for the definition of traditional and industrial organic fertilizers.

Agriculture in the household sector remains largely rainfed, except in a few areas close to the rivers. Only 3.4 percent of agricultural land is irrigated (corresponding to 5.6 percent of parcels). Irrigation is minimal or nearly absent in most regions, except for a few regions crossed by the Niger like Tombouctou (78.0 percent of agricultural land irrigated), Mopti (25.9 percent), Gao (7.7 percent) and Segou (5.7 percent).

Share of irrigated agricultural area by region

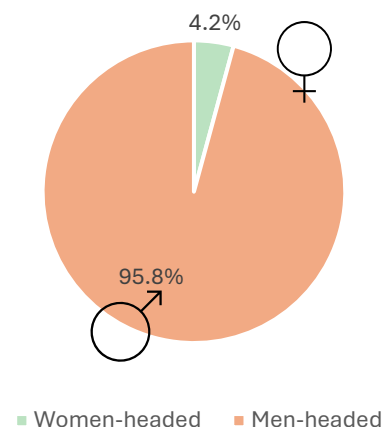


Labour input and women participation

Women are significantly underrepresented in decision-making roles across Mali's agricultural sector. Only 4.2 percent of agricultural holdings are headed by women, and women manage just 11.6 percent of individual parcels.

Regional variation is pronounced. Female-headed holdings are most common in Gao (14 percent) and Kayes, where women also account for 36.6 percent of parcel managers, while in Sikasso female-headed holdings represent only 0.1 percent of the total.

Proportion of women- and men-headed holdings



Technical annex

Sources

- CPS/SDR. 2025. *Rapport synthétique de l'Enquête Agricole de Conjoncture (EAC) 2023 - 24*. Bamako. Mali.
<https://microdata.instat.ml/index.php/catalog/123/related-materials>
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- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). 2010. *World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2010*. Appendix 3. Rome.
https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/ess/documents/world_census_of_agriculture/appendix3_r7.pdf
- The crop classification follows the definitions adopted in the World Programme for the Census of Agriculture (FAO, 2010).

Indicators

Definitions below are provided by the CPS/SDR (Cellule de Planification et de Statistique du Secteur du Développement Rural), except mentioned otherwise. For full details, please refer to the EAC 2023/24 report (CPS/SDR, 2025).

- Agricultural area includes area already used for farming, or that could be brought back into cultivation using the resources normally available on an agricultural holding.
- Agricultural holding: economic unit of agricultural production under single management comprising all livestock kept, and all land used wholly or partly for agricultural production purposes, without regard to title, legal form or size.
- Agricultural household: population unit referring to a household with members practicing own account agricultural activities.
- Public entities refer to offices and agencies (state-run entities) responsible for the development of large agricultural areas, mainly dedicated to off-season rice cultivation.
- Parcel: contiguous area of land corresponding to a field or part of a field, on which a single crop or a combination of crops is grown.
- Traditional organic fertilizers include manure, household organic waste, and compost.
- Tropical Livestock Unit (TLU) is commonly defined as a mature animal weighing 250 kg (Houerou and Hoste 1977; Stotz 1983). Conversion to LTUs allows comparison of the size of animal herd across species and countries. Standard country specific conversion factors may be obtained from [FAO](#) or directly from country sources.

- Industrial organic fertilizers include Éléphant Vert, PROFEBA, ORGAFERT, FERTINOVA, Faranôgô, and other commercial organic fertilizers.
- Inorganic (mineral) fertilizers include urea, DAP (Diammonium phosphate), NPK fertilizers, cotton complex fertilizers, and other mineral fertilizers.
- Pesticides include insecticides, fungicides, herbicides, other phytosanitary products, and biopesticides.

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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