

SURVEY BRIEF

Agricultural season 2024/25

BENIN



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Food and Agriculture
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Through its agricultural survey programme, Benin is strengthening its national agricultural statistical system, improving the use of survey data in policymaking and enhancing the capacity of key data users to support evidence-based decisions.

The results of the 2024/25 agricultural survey, recently published, provide a robust set of national indicators to inform agricultural policies and development strategies. This progress reflects the efforts of the Government of Benin, through the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, the National Institute of Statistics and Demographic Analysis (INStaD), and the Ministry of Economy and Finance, with technical support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in the context of the 50x2030 Initiative to Close the Agricultural Data Gap.

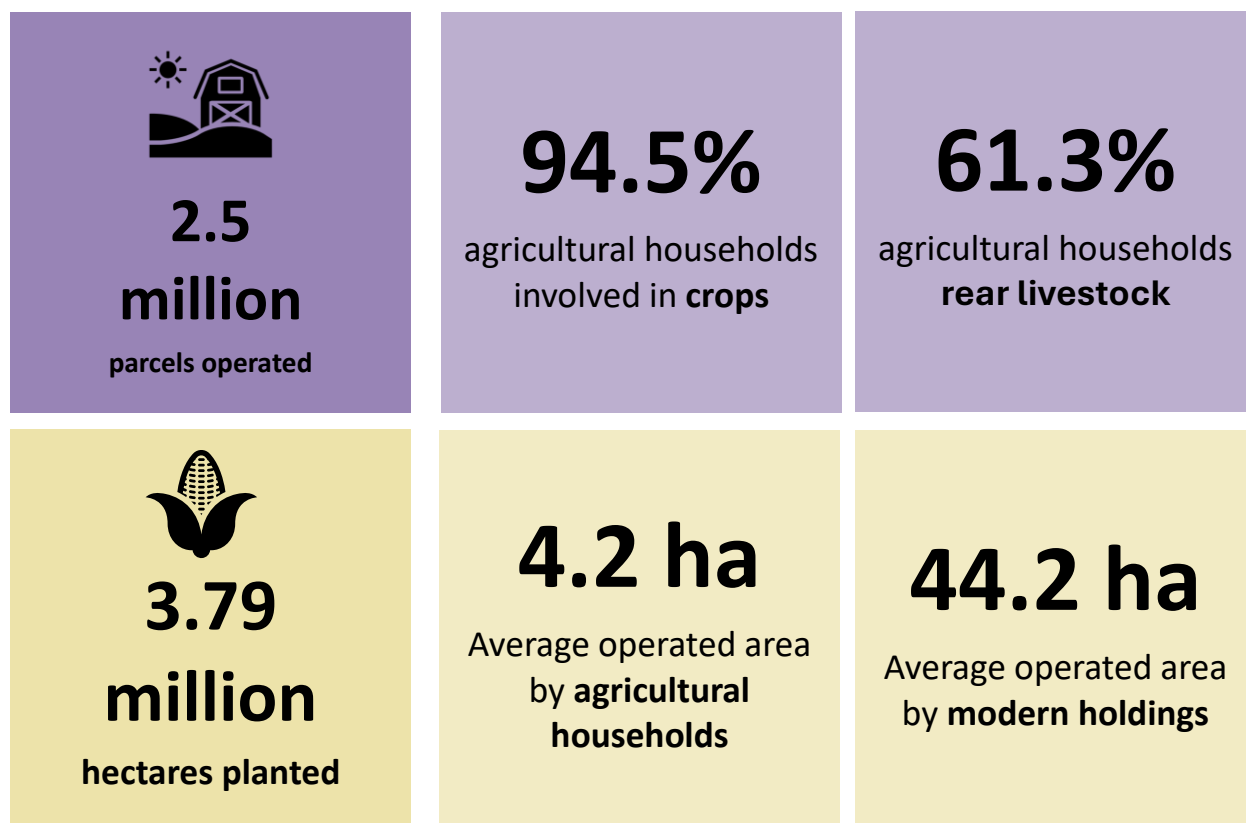
Key features

This note provides key insights on agricultural holdings in Benin during the agricultural season 2024/25. It presents key indicators on agricultural land, crop output and yields, input use, gender gaps and food security. The recently released dataset (Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Élevage et de la Pêche, 2026) from the 2024/25 Agricultural Statistical Survey (Enquête Statistique Agricole, ESA) offers further details. A Technical Annex at the end of this document presents key definitions, sources and assumptions used.

Key characteristics of agricultural holdings

In Benin, as in many sub-Saharan African countries, agricultural households are the major contributors to agricultural production. During the 2024/25 agricultural season, about 2.5 million parcels were operated, with a total planted area of 3.79 million hectares (ha). The non-household sector (modern holdings, see Technical Annex for definitions) remains marginal: it operated less than 300 parcels. Agricultural households are therefore responsible for the vast majority of the country's agricultural output: they produced 99.7 percent of Benin's 2.8 million tonnes of cereals, for example.

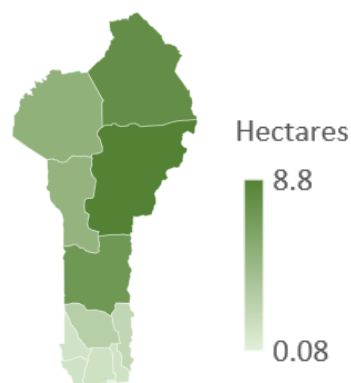
Most of the country's agricultural households are involved in cropping activities (94.5 percent), while 61.3 percent reported rearing livestock. The share of households specialized in crops is 33.4 percent, while the proportion of households exclusively involved in livestock rearing is 4.7 percent. On average, agricultural holdings operated 4.2 ha of land during the 2024/25 season, with large sectoral variations: 4.2 ha for agricultural households compared to 44.2 ha for modern holdings.



Holding size and planted area by region

Agricultural holdings in Benin operate an average area of 4.2 hectares country-wide, with significant variations across regions, reflecting differences in agroclimatic conditions and the relative importance of urban areas.

Average operated area by agricultural holding, by department (in hectares)



Note: Refer to the disclaimer on page 9 for the names and boundaries used in this map.

Source: Author's own elaboration, based on ESA 2024/25 survey dataset (MAEP, 2026).

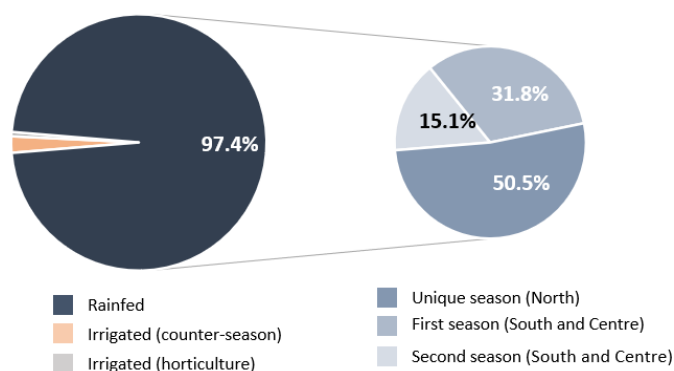
<https://benin.opendataforafrica.org/swdihif/jeux-de-donn%C3%A9es-et-m%C3%A9tadonn%C3%A9es>

The departments in the northern part of the country (Alibori, Borgou, Atacora and Donga) have the largest average operated area per holding, reflecting a more marked agricultural orientation and higher land availability. The department of Collines, located in the centre, also stands out with an average of 7.1 ha. Conversely, the average area operated by holdings in southern departments is much lower (as low as 0.1 ha in Littoral), reflecting higher levels of urbanization limiting access to agricultural land.

Agriculture and cropping patterns reflect the different weather patterns across the country, with a unique rainy season in the North and a major and minor season in the South and the Centre.

Agriculture in Benin largely depends on rain, with 97.4 percent of the harvested area cultivated under rainfed conditions while irrigated agriculture (horticulture, counter-season crops) accounts for less than 3 percent of the harvested area. Most of the area (50.5 percent of the total) is harvested during the unique agricultural season prevailing in the northern part of Benin, while farmers in the central and southern regions harvest twice: during the first season (31.8 percent of the harvested area) and the second season (15.1 percent).

Share of the harvested area by irrigation status and season (%)



Source: ESA 2024/25 survey dataset (MAEP, 2026).

Crop output, planted area and yields

Rice yields

Modern farms

7.0

tonnes per
hectare

Agricultural households

3.9

tonnes per hectare

Benin's crop production is dominated by cereals, especially maize, with a total output of 2 081 000 tonnes during the season 2024/25, representing 75 percent of the total output in cereals (see table below).

Yields are below 1.5 tonnes per hectare for most of the country's major staple crops, including maize, which is produced at

1.2 tonnes per ha. Rice stands out, with a yield close to 4 tonnes per ha, suggesting higher technification and a larger share of the output for this crop coming from modern holdings. Differences between modern holdings and agricultural households are marked: yields for maize are 50 percent higher in modern farms (1.2 vs 1.8 tonnes per ha) and 80 percent for rice (7.0 vs 3.9 tonnes, respectively).

Harvested area, output and yield of major crops, by crop and crop category

Crops	Harvested area Thousand hectares	Output Thousand tonnes	Yield Tonnes per hectare
Cereals			
All cereals	2 139	2 809	1.3
Maize	1 739	2 081	1.2
Sorghum	242	209	0.9
Rice	127	495	3.9
Tubers and roots			
All roots and tubers	508	7 865	15.4
Cassava	285	4 477	15.7
Yam	208	3 322	16.0
Leguminous crops			
All leguminous crops	1 081	962	0.9
Groundnut	237	188	0.8
Soyabeans	598	602	1.0
Cowpea (niébé)	220	152	0.7
Fruits and vegetables			
All fruits and vegetables	53	549	10.4
Chilli	22	132	6.1
Tomatoes	20	286	14.1

Source: ESA 2024/25 survey dataset (MAEP, 2026).

Note: Harvested area and output are rounded to the nearest thousand.

Agricultural practices and inputs

Fallow land is all arable land either included in a crop rotation system or maintained in good agricultural and environmental condition, whether worked or not, but which will not be harvested for the duration of a crop year. It is therefore an important sustainable practice allowing soils to regenerate and maintain their productivity. A high proportion of fallow land may reflect deliberate farm-management strategies, including soil regeneration with a rotation system or the temporary use of land for grazing. However, it may also signal difficulties in accessing the inputs required for cultivation, such as seeds, labour or fertilizers, and lead to lower overall output.



Fallow land

51%

of agricultural holdings left at least one parcel fallow during 2024/25 season

Statistics on the use of key farm inputs, such as fertilizers or pesticides, indicate that while most farmers use them, they tend to do so selectively: for example, while only 28 percent of parcels have received fertilizers, 66 percent of farmers reported having used mineral fertilizers and 94 percent organic fertilizers. Similarly for pesticides, while only 19 percent of parcels were treated with phytosanitary products, 53 percent of the holdings reported using them. This may point to different agronomic needs across crops (for instance, leguminous crops do not require supplemental fertilization, or very little) or pest infestation patterns.

Proportion of holdings using mineral fertilizers, by holding type (in %)



Source : ESA 2024/25 survey dataset (MAEP, 2026).

This selectivity may also be due to a constrained access to inputs and a need to prioritize their use for key cash or food security crops, for instance. This may explain the large differences in input use by holding type: modern holdings, for instance, tend to prioritize mineral fertilizers (90 percent) over organic fertilizers (65 percent). Agricultural households rely mostly on organic fertilizers, which they can often obtain directly from the manure produced by their livestock (66 percent for mineral fertilizers vs. 94 percent for organic fertilizers) or at a low cost on the market.

Key facts on agriculture and gender

Gender-disaggregated statistics on agriculture in Benin during the 2024/25 season shows that women are highly involved in farming, but suffer from an unequal access to key resources, such as land and technical assistance, and are less likely to be in decision-making positions.

Men operate agricultural land more than 2x larger than women, on average

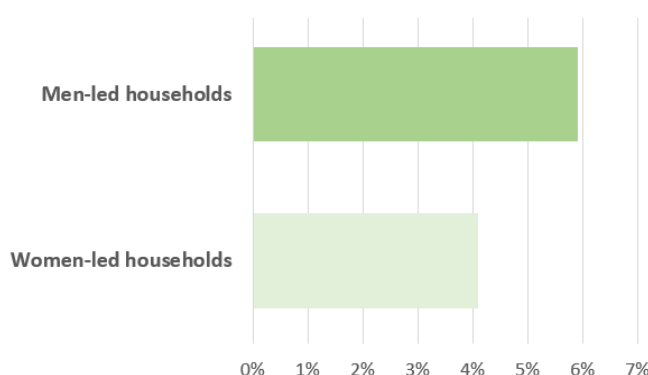
In Benin, men operate more parcels than women (3.0 vs 2.4, on average) and larger ones: average women-operated area totals only 2.0 hectares, well below the average land area operated by men (4.5 hectares).

Women represent 51 percent of the national agricultural workforce, confirming their key role in agricultural production, but they are also much less likely than men to possess land titles (1.2 percent vs. 8.1 percent of the total agricultural population).

51% of the agricultural workforce is composed by women

But only 1.2 % of women possess legal or customary land rights

Proportion of agricultural households receiving targeted support through projects or programmes (%)



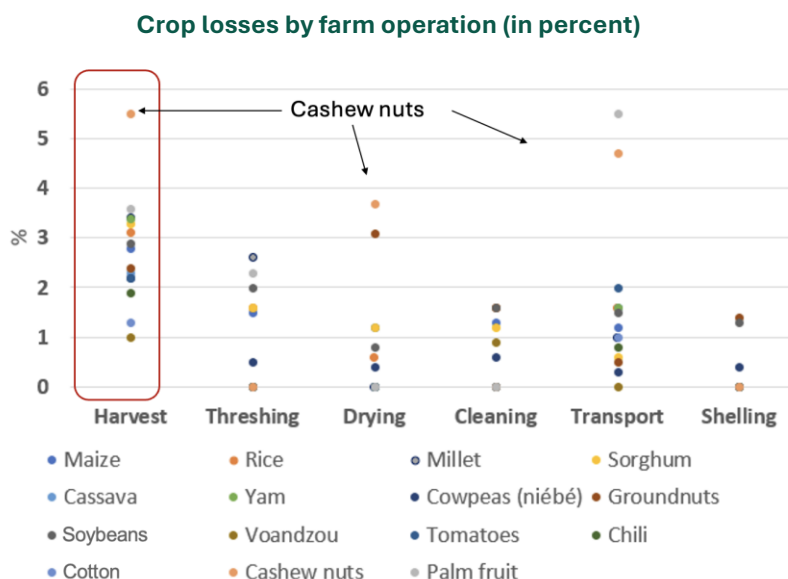
Source: Author's own elaboration based on data from ESA 2024/25 survey dataset (MAEP, 2026).

Women also face a more limited access to key resources and knowledge related to agricultural production: women-led households are less likely to be part of farmer associations (9.4 percent vs 14.5 percent for men-led ones), which often offer easier access to inputs and markets. They are also less likely to have received technical training (0.3 percent vs. 1.4 percent, respectively) or targeted support through projects or programmes.

These statistics underline persistent gaps affecting the capacity of women to generate livelihoods and to decide on its allocation within the household.

Thematic focus: agricultural losses

Crop losses for different operations were reported by agricultural holdings during the 2024/25 agricultural survey.



5.5%

Losses during harvest for
cashew nuts.

First, reported losses tend to be higher during harvest than for any other on-farm operation. Median losses during harvesting across all crops stand at 2.8 percent, compared to a range of 1.2 to 1.6 percent for the other operations.

Second, cashew nuts and palm fruit experience the highest relative losses. For example, losses during harvest for cashew nuts and palm fruit were reported at 5.5 percent and 3.6 percent, respectively. Conversely, peas tend to experience the smallest losses, as reported by farmers (1.0 percent for Voandzou, during harvest, for example).

1.0%

Losses during harvest
for **Voandzou**
(Bambara peas)

Technical Annex

Source

Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Élevage et de la Pêche (MAEP). 2026. Benin Data Portal: Jeux de données et Métadonnées - Enquête Statistique Agricole (ESA) 2024/25. [Accessed on 9 September 2026]. <https://benin.opendataforafrica.org/swdihif/jeux-de-donn%C3%A9es-et-m%C3%A9tadonn%C3%A9es>.

Key definitions and indicators used in the survey

- Agricultural household: a household in which one or more members are engaged in agricultural activity either full-time or part-time.
- Modern agricultural holding: a farm where the working relationship between people is based on well-defined rules and which is characterized by the existence of agricultural equipment and materials (tractors, etc.), the use of hired labor, the application of technical packages, bookkeeping and the exploitation of large areas.
- Parcel: any piece of land of one land tenure type, entirely surrounded by other land, water, road, forest or other features not forming part of the holding or forming part of the holding under a different land tenure type.
- Fallow land: land that, after being cultivated for a certain period of time, is left to rest to allow the soil to regenerate.

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

FAO Survey Team/50x2030 Initiative
Statistics Division – Economic and Social Development
integrated-agricultural-surveys@fao.org
www.fao.org/in-action/agrisurvey
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Rome, Italy

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