

Snapshot of Agriculture in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has a total land area of 130,170 km² and its current estimated population is 162.9 million, making it one of the most populated countries in the world (World Bank, 2017). Agriculture is the main economic driver in the country - as source of food, livelihood, growth and employment. It contributes to 16 percent of GDP and employs 41 percent of the labour force (FAO, 2016).

Bangladesh is located within the floodplains of three great rivers (Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Meghna), making its soil fertile and favourable for agricultural production. In 2014, Bangladesh had a total of 7.6 million hectares of arable land, with 12 million hectares of land under cereal production due to single-, double-, and triple-cropping of grain crops on the same piece of land (World Bank, 2017).

Bangladesh's major crops include rice, wheat, jute, pulses, oil seeds, potato, maize and sugarcane (Table 1). Rice is the dominant crop in terms of area and production. Smallholder farmers, owning less than 1 hectare of land, comprise the bulk of the agriculture sector. Livestock is also a key component of the country's agriculture sector, representing about 14% of the agricultural GDP (World Bank, 2017). Around 70% of rural households are engaged in livestock production. Aquaculture and fisheries is a well-developed sector in Bangladesh, representing about 23% of the agricultural GDP (FAO, 2016). In 2015, Bangladesh ranked 5th in the top aquaculture producing country in the world.

In 1990, the agriculture value added per worker in Bangladesh was about 314 USD (World Bank, 2017, data in constant 2010 U.S. dollars). In 2016, it is already about 769 USD showing a continuous growth in agricultural productivity.

With historically greater emphasis on cereal crops, efforts are now made to promote diversified agriculture in the country by increasing area and production for high value crops such as potato, pulses, oil seeds, vegetables, fruits and spices (FAO, 2016). Livestock production is also aimed to be combined with crop diversification considering how livestock commodities have steadily increased from 2007 to 2014 (FAO, 2016). This is seen as a crucial factor for increasing dietary diversity and nutritional status of the country's population.

Bangladesh agriculture is faced with challenging objectives such as raising the productivity and profitability of farmers, increasing crop diversification, reducing loss of arable land, minimizing yield gap, and developing resilience to threats of

natural disasters. Such challenges also open many opportunities for the country's agriculture sector, including the improvement of agricultural input (fertilizers and other agro-chemicals) management, technology, and infrastructure, raising farmers' income, and improving nutritional standards through the inclusion of high-value crops in a more diversified crop production system.

Table 1. Area, Yield, and Production of Major Crops in Bangladesh, 2015-2016.

Crop	Area ('000' Acres)	Yield per acre (Kg)	Production ('000' M. Tons)
Rice			
Aus	2516	909	2288
Aman	13814	976	13484
Boro	11794	1606	18938
Wheat	1099	1226	1348
Maize	827	2956	2445
Pulses	917	411	377
Oil Seeds	1124	830	933
Sugarcane	243	17312	4207
Jute	1675	4512 (bales)	7559 (bales)
Potato	1175	8063	9474

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS)

1 Bale = 181.43 kg

References:

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). *Yearbook of Agricultural Statistics-2016*. Accessed online September 2017. <http://www.bbs.gov.bd/site/page/3e838eb6-30a2-4709-be85-40484b0c16c6/Yearbook-of-Agricultural-Statistics>.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. *FAO 2016. Country fact sheet on food and agriculture policy trends. Food and Agriculture Policy Decision Analysis*. FAO, Rome. Accessed online August 2017.

The World Bank Group. 2017. *World Development Indicators*. Accessed online September 2017.