**Relevance and cost-effectiveness of agricultural censuses in the 21st Century
Lessons learned from experiences in selected developing countries**

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In most countries, and particularly in developing countries, the Agricultural Census (AC) remains the unique source of key information for building sampling frames for agricultural surveys, providing benchmarks for current agricultural statistics, providing data for small geographical areas, data on rare and emerging commodities and for detailed cross tabulations.

However, despite its recognised importance for the agricultural statistics system, agricultural census, like the population census is being increasingly challenged in many countries given its high cost (in a context of scarcity of resources), burden for respondents and long delays for publication of results that are not always relevant to users' needs. As a result, in many developing regions less than half of the countries are able to conduct an Agricultural Census on a regular basis.

This paper discusses these challenges in the context of the development agenda for the 21st Century which implies a growing demand for more complex and inter-linked data. In particular a large amount and wide range of data will be required for monitoring Sustainable Development Goals (Post 2015), measuring the interaction between agriculture and environment, effective Food Security policies, increasing productivity of small farmers through sustainable agriculture rural development policies etc.. The paper will present selected developing country experiences of agricultural census where some of these challenges have been successfully addressed with new and innovative methods that take advantage of the on-going digital and geo information revolution, and an integrated and modular approach. The paper will finally provide an overview of the main features of the newly developed FAO World programme for Census of Agriculture 2020 (WCA 2020) and its main innovations that build on the lessons learned from these experiences and others.

Keyword 1: Census of Agriculture **Keyword 2:** Sustainable Develpment Goals **Keyword 3:** Integrated and Modular Approach.