



SRI LANKA

1982

CENSUS OF
AGRICULTURE

An outline of the Scope
and content of the
Census.

Publication No: 1.
For Limited Circulation.

DEPARTMENT OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS
MINISTRY OF PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

P R E F A C E

The next Census of Agriculture in Sri Lanka will be conducted in 1982. It is my wish to plan and conduct this Census so that the data required by administrators, planners, research workers and others are met as far as possible.

This outline of the scope and content of the census is prepared and circulated among the users of census data, to keep them informed of the type of information which will become available and to obtain their suggestions and comments.

I shall be grateful if you could go through this document carefully and favour me with your suggestions by the 30th of August, 1980.

W.A.A.S. Peiris

W.A.A.S. Peiris

Director of Census and Statistics.

Dept. of Census and Statistics,
P.O. Box 563,
Colombo 7.

17th July, 1980.

[9]

AN OUTLINE OF THE SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THE
1982 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

1. INTRODUCTION: *Introduction*

It is proposed to conduct a Census of Agriculture in Sri Lanka in about the month of July, 1982. The purpose of this outline is to familiarize the users in the scope of this Census, its content and timing and to stimulate a general interest among them, so that the requirements of the users will be known by the Census Organizers, well ahead of planning. The requirements of various users, suggestions and comments are invited in order to study them before finalizing the scope, content, sampling plan, tabulation programme, questionnaires, time table and the census operation.

A working committee will be appointed to investigate and recommend on various steps and different phases of the census operation. It is a well known fact that various users of data have different requirements confined to their own subject matter, and hence, a sub-committee will study these suggestions and draw up a list of optimum requirements, so that, the census questionnaire will not be overloaded. Hence, it will be greatly appreciated if the users carefully study this outline and present only those requirements which are most essential; along with comments and suggestions.

2. (3) DEFINITION OF AN AGRICULTURAL CENSUS

An agricultural census is defined as a Government - Sponsored Operation for the collection of quantitative information on the agricultural structure, using as a unit of enumeration agricultural holding and covering the whole country within a single agricultural year.

3. (2) PURPOSE OF AN AGRICULTURAL CENSUS

The main purposes of the Census of Agriculture are to:

- (i) Describe the agricultural structure and related characteristics of agriculture, by providing statistical data on agricultural holdings, agricultural operators, land utilization, crop acreage, livestock numbers etc.,
- (ii) Provide benchmark data for the evaluation of current data, and for measuring the future agricultural development,

- (iii) Establish a statistical frame for current agricultural surveys based on sampling techniques,

4. SCOPE OF THE 1982 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

While covering the needs for the fulfilment of these objectives and purposes of the census, the scope and content of the census is subject to limitations imposed by several considerations such as the availability of funds and resources for organizing, enumeration, supervision, processing and tabulation, and the need for avoiding complex and burdensome items which may produce considerable respondent and interviewer resistance.

A tentative list of subjects to be covered and a brief description of census items to be canvassed is indicated below.

(i) Agricultural holdings and their principal characteristics.

The agricultural holdings are primarily divided into small holdings and estates. The important characteristics would be the location, size, tenure, ownership, number of parcels in the holding, and type of holding.

(ii) Agricultural Operator.

The agricultural operator will be the person or persons who has the responsibility of operating the holding.

Proposed Census Items.

1. Name.
2. Age.
3. Education.
4. Occupation (Agricultural and Non Agricultural).
5. Address of the holder, if not residing on the holding.
6. Legal status of the operator.

(iii) Land Utilization.

The utilization of land within the holding.

1. Arable Land.
 - Area under temporary crops.
 - Area under home gardens.

13

2. Land under permanent crops.
3. Land under pastures.
4. Woods and forests.
5. Land under roads and buildings, rivers, streams,
- Tanks etc.
6. All other land.

(iv) Crops

1. As this is covered mainly by a sample survey, only selected items of information about the crops that could be published with a reasonable level of accuracy, will be collected.

(v) Livestock and Poultry

Proposed Census Items.

1. Number of neat cattle.
2. Number of buffaloes.
3. Number of goats and sheep.
4. Number of pigs.
5. Poultry.
6. Number of Bee Hives.

Details such as Neat Cattle and Buffaloes by sex, age, and use will be canvassed on a sample basis.

The possibility of using a separate sample for livestock and poultry, a area where reliable information is limited will be examined carefully.

(vi) Employment in Agriculture

Information about the employment in agriculture is very difficult to obtain as many crops are grown seasonally and the capacity for agricultural employment varies during the year. There is no proper record keeping specially in small holdings and the memory biases could be considerable. The possibility of obtaining reasonably reliable information at the census will be investigated.

9

(vii) Farm Population

The population of a farm, per unit or per acre, is important information, and may be published by sectors, such as estate sector and small holding sector. The farm population represents all those who live in the estate or small holding. Agricultural labourers who do not live on the holding would not be counted.

1. Estate Sector - Members of the staff, labourers and others who live on the estate.
2. Small Holding Sector - Members of operator's household, and labourers and others who live on the holding.

(viii) Agricultural Machinery and Transport Facilities.

Proposed Census Items.

1. Whether any agricultural work is done by machinery.
2. Whether animal power is used.
3. Method of transport of produce to the first point of sale.

A count of machinery by type will not be feasible, as this question will be canvassed only on a sample basis but the use of machinery on the holding by type could be estimated with reasonable accuracy.

The possibility of obtaining a count of all important agricultural machinery by complete enumeration will be examined.

(ix) Fertilizer and Soil dressing.

The possibility of collecting information on a sample basis about the application of fertilizer and soil dressing will be carefully examined. Again as the application of these inputs are seasonal, the problems of obtaining reliable information, at a particular point of time will have to be studied.

TENTATIVE LIST OF STATISTICAL TABLES PROPOSED TO BE PUBLISHED.

A list of statistical tables proposed to be published after the census taking is given below. It is important to note that only after finalizing these

bles will the questionnaires be drafted, so that, unnecessary burden in the enumeration and processing of the data will be minimized.

1. Number of Agricultural Operators classified by age group and sex by district.
2. Number of Agricultural Operators classified by educational attainment by district.
3. Number of Agricultural Operators and area held by them classified according to these fully or partly occupied in Agriculture.
4. Number and Area of Agricultural Holdings classified by status of Operators by A.G.A. division.
5. Number of Agricultural Holdings by size of the holding by A.G.A. division.
6. Number of Agricultural Holdings and the area under principal crops (Paddy, Tea, Rubber and Coconut) by A.G.A. division.
7. Agricultural Holdings and the number of parcels under principal crops by A.G.A. division.
8. Livestock numbers by type and by the number of holdings reporting by A.G.A. division.
9. Number of Agricultural Holdings by the size of the holding and by number of cattle by A.G.A. division.
10. Number of Agricultural Holdings by the size of the holding and by the possession of agricultural machinery and implements by districts.
11. Number of Agricultural Holdings by the size of the holding and by the use of agricultural machinery and implements by type by district.
12. Number and Area of Agricultural Holdings by land utilization by district.
13. Number and Area of Agricultural Holdings under special projects by district.
14. Area under temporary crops in cultivation seasons Maha 1981/82 and Yala 1982, for some selected crops by district.
15. Number of Agricultural Holdings by type of tenure or ownership and area under each type by district.
16. Number of cattle by Age, Sex and Purpose by district.
17. Number of Buffaloes by Age, Sex and Purpose by district.
18. Extent to which agricultural work on the holding is carried on by the holder's household or by persons working for pay, by size of the holding by district.

19. Number of persons employed in Agriculture whether permanent or casual by size of the holding by district.
20. Farm population by Sex, Age by the size of the holding by district.
21. Means used to transport produce from the holding by size of the Agriculture Holdings by district.
22. Number of Agricultural Holdings using fertilizer's and soil dressing and the amount applied on Tea, Rubber, and Coconut by the size of the holding by district.

6. CENSUS METHODOLOGY

In principle, the agricultural census adopt, the method of complete enumeration from all holdings for collection of data. The complete enumeration method is used so that information at lower levels of administration (by District/A.G.A. Division) can be tabulated and published, since this is now considered essential for regional planning, especially at a time when decentralized budgeting and plan implementation at District level, is taking place.

However any attempt at collecting information on all or most of the items through complete enumeration would overload the census questionnaire, which will in turn adversely affect the quality of the data and delay the processing and tabulation work.

In view of these factors and with the experience of past censuses, it is proposed that the forth-coming census should be a combination of both complete enumeration and sample survey. All agricultural holdings may be divided in to two main groups, namely large holdings or estates and small holdings. The large holdings are small in number but contribute heavily to the agricultural production, whereas small holdings are large in number with a relative low contribution. The large holdings will be completely covered for all the questionnaires whereas small holdings will be fully enumerated for only the most essential number of items, and a carefully selected representative sample will be used for detailed enumeration.

The complete enumeration of special lands and livestock holdings such as large government and private farms, which do not come under estates will be undertaken. A list of such farms and estates will be prepared at the planning stage.

A pilot census will be conducted well in advance to test the questionnaires and instructions, to improve the techniques used, and to facilitate the work on data processing programmes so that early release of the findings is made feasible.

7. CONCLUSION

Census taking is a massive operation where all the available resources and personnel of the Department and elsewhere are pooled so that the objectives could be achieved. The publication of the results of the last agricultural census got delayed due to various reasons. A major reason for this delay was the overloading of the questionnaire which resulted in heavy burden on editing, coding and data processing. With this experience it is the wish of the Department to conduct the Agricultural Census 1982 in such a way that useful and valuable information are collected and published within a reasonable period of time.