

FOOD SECURITY

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PRODUCTIVITY CHALLENGE FOR ASIA’S SMALLHOLDERS

Across regions, Asia has the largest share of farmers which are smallholders, who farm on two hectares of land or less (Figure 1).

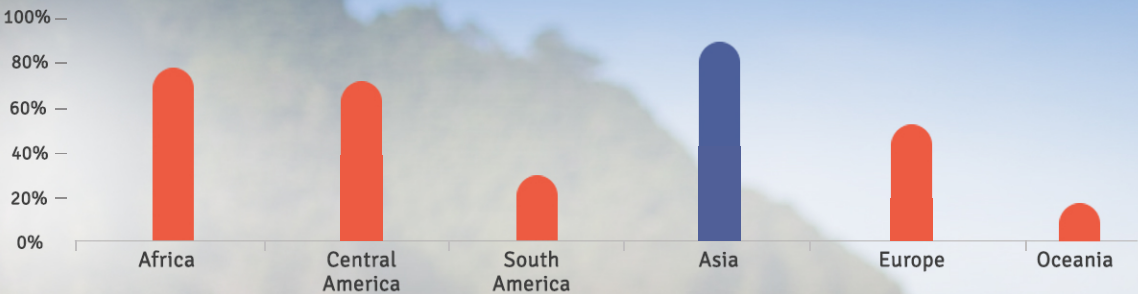


Figure 1: Share of Farmers that are Smallholders, per Region¹

Smallholders face greater risk of crop losses from extreme weather conditions, given their smaller income base and limited access to climate-adaptive technologies. As such, Asia’s yield gaps are 39%-59% compared to the highest yielding regions, for the top crops planted in the region (Figure 2).

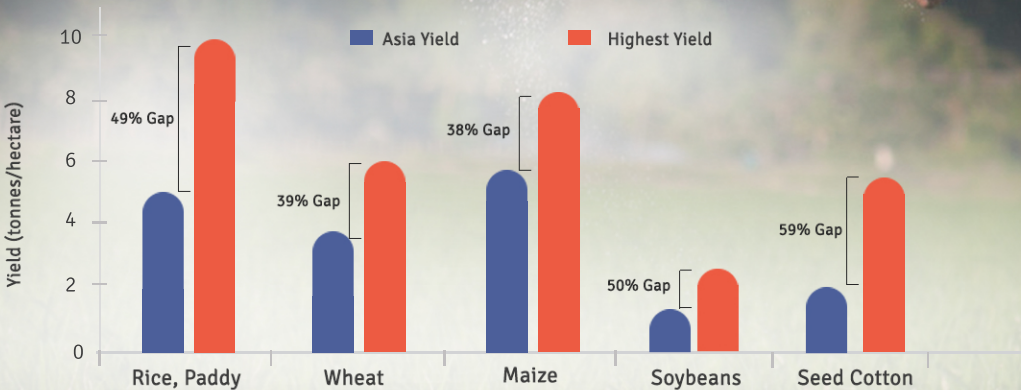


Figure 2: Yield Comparisons between Asia and the Highest Yielding Region, for the top 5 Crops Harvested²

This calls for attention to help smallholders, in bridging skill, infrastructure, insurance, and financing gaps moving forward. This is much needed, especially as rural populations age, given rapid exits by the younger generation from rural agriculture.³

Sources:

1. Author, based on UNFAO (2013), World Programme for the Census of Agriculture, <http://www.fao.org/world-census-agriculture/wcarounds/wca2000/comparison2000/en/>, accessed 25 April 2018.;

2. Author, based on 'Crops', FAOStat Database, UN FAO (2018), <http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/QC>, accessed 25 April 2018. Note: Top crops are identified based on the highest number of hectares planted.

3. Source: HelpAge International (2014). The ageing of rural populations: evidence on older farmers in low and middle-income countries. London: HelpAge International.