

Land and Food Production

In most dry-area countries, food demand is outstripping production, due in part to rapid increases in population growth (about 2% annually). The proportion of arable land to total area is lower (4–11%) than in other climatic zones in other developing regions.

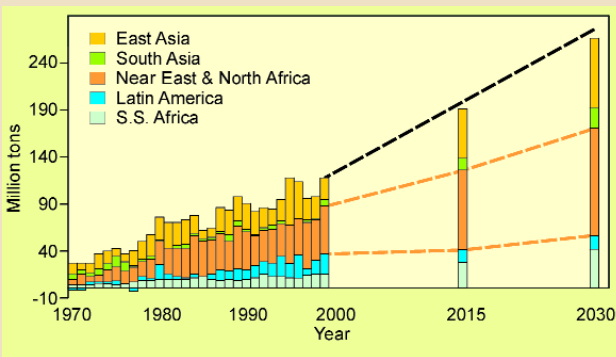
Land area, population, and population growth in non-tropical dry area countries.

Region	Total land area --million ha--	Arable land --%--	Population, 2004 --million--	Population projections, 2030 --million--
Asia	770	11	1757	2168
North Africa	678	4	155	222
South & North America	1475	7	185	237
CAC	419	8	75	90
East Africa	451	8	107	178
Total	4315	8	2330	2942

Source: FAOSTAT 2006

The combination of increasing demand for food and limited land resources has a potentially negative impact on the overall food security situation. The West Asia and North Africa (WANA) region has changed from a net food exporter in the first half of the last century to the largest food importer in the developing world.

Taking cereals as an example, WANA will continue to be the largest cereal importer in the world, although the projected trends for Sub-Saharan Africa, with a large dry-area component, are also alarming.



Cereal imports of developing regions, 1970-2030.

Source: FAO, 2002. World Agriculture: towards 2015/30, <http://www.fao.org/es/ESD/gstudies.htm>

Demand for animal feed also exceeds the region's current production levels. Such shortages, coupled with water shortages and threats of diseases, are leading to low productivity and poor reproductive performance of livestock.