

Rice statistics

- INRAN staff were trained in nationally representative rice statistics survey methodologies. Reliable evidence-based data on rice are available for the country and have been used by the Government of Niger in developing its NRDS and other interventions in the rice value chain.
- National partners were trained in the use of the MLax software developed at AfricaRice to facilitate monitoring and evaluation of research activities.

Policy advice

- The government is trying to boost domestic production by establishing a series of successive policies, programs and specific projects aimed at providing strategic support to the rice sub-sector.
- Niger contributed actively to the development of policies resulting in key investments made by farmers, governments, the private sector and the donor community following the 2007–2008 global food crisis, which resulted in rapid growth in rice production in sub-Saharan Africa (8.4% per year) from 2007 to 2012.

Africa-wide rice task force activities

- Niger has been an active member and benefited from the activities and funding of the six Africa-wide Rice Task Forces coordinated by AfricaRice – Breeding, Agronomy, Gender, Mechanization, Policy, and Processing & Value Addition.
- The Task Forces have provided a unique opportunity for Niger scientists to interact and partner with their counterparts from other AfricaRice member countries.
- Funds contributed to Niger through the Task Forces have complemented government allocations significantly and ensured the continuation of research and the training of scientists and value chain actors.

Rice Hubs and Innovation Platforms

- With technical support by AfricaRice, Niger has established two rice sector development hubs, one in Gaya for the upland ecology and the other in Tillabery for irrigated ecology.
- Hubs serve as field laboratories where research outputs and products are being tested, adapted and integrated – with feedback provided to researchers on technology performance. With the Rice Breeding Task Force working in the hubs, at least 20 improved rice varieties have been released in Niger for use by farmers.

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Niger - AfricaRice Partnership

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- ▶ Niger is a founding member of AfricaRice (ex-WARDA).
- ▶ The Institut national de la recherche agronomique du Niger (INRAN) is one of the most important national partners of AfricaRice.
- ▶ As a member country, Niger takes part in statutory meetings of the AfricaRice Council of Ministers, which is the Center’s highest governing body.
- ▶ Niger is also a member of the AfricaRice National Experts Committee.

“Rice is global and it is big business. Rice is life in Africa.”
 -- Dr Harold Roy-Macauley,
 AfricaRice Director General



Contributions by AfricaRice to Niger

- ▶ Between 2009 and 2016, Niger has benefited from 10 donor-funded projects, coordinated by AfricaRice.
- ▶ AfricaRice, in partnership with INRAN, has contributed to boosting Niger's rice sector in terms of policy and technical advice, improved seed, cropping practices and processing technologies, capacity development and support to rice value chain development.

Capacity strengthening

- ▶ Between 2009 and 2016, 4 PhD and 5 MSc scholars from Niger were trained. About 80 researchers and value chain actors have participated in group training on marker-assisted selection techniques, experimental design, data collection and analysis, quality seed production, integrated rice management, and impact assessment.
- ▶ AfricaRice has helped develop capacity of researchers from Niger (at MSc and PhD levels) in the application of molecular biology techniques that are critical to solving agricultural problems.

IMPORTANCE OF RICE IN NIGER

In Niger, rice is the third important cereal after pearl millet and sorghum, but it constitutes the most rapidly increasing food crop. It is the main source of calories for the urban populations and contributes to the country's food security strategy and income generation for the majority of farmers and other stakeholders along the rice value chain.

Rice has been the staple food for people in the western zone for centuries. The Wogo and Songhai (Gaoboro) communities are traditional rice growers. The Niger River splits the area into many islands, where submergible basins were used for rice cropping.

Niger developed its National Rice Development Strategy (NRDS) in 2009, which states that the country development programs and policies that support the rice sector seek to contribute to the country's macro-economic stability and to the fight against food insecurity and rural and urban poverty.

Niger's NRDS estimates that the infrastructure in place for boosting domestic rice production include the development of 41 irrigated rice schemes with a total developed area of 8,706.7 ha (out of a potential of 24,000 ha suitable for rice production); the developed area is cultivated during both dry and rainy seasons.

Rice is produced mainly in the region of Tillabéry (75% national production), which includes both irrigated and lowland rice. It has nearly 50% of the country's irrigable land. The traditional rice growing in the Tillabéry region includes lowland deep-water and floating agrosystems along the Niger River.

Niger's annual production is about 110,000 tons of paddy (approximately 66,000 tons of white rice), which represents a third of the national consumption. Therefore, the national production does not meet the requirements of rice consumption. In line with its strategy to boost rice production, Niger has undertaken a series of research for development activities in partnership with AfricaRice.

Rice Statistics for Selected Indicators

Indicator	Source USDA			
	2013	2014	2015	2016
Paddy production (t)	68,000	106,000	92,000	111,000
Area harvested (ha)	13,000	21,000	18,000	22,000
Yield (t/ha)	5.23	5.05	5.11	5.05
Milled rice consumption (t)	344,000	369,000	360,000	382,000
Import (t)	300,000	300,000	300,000	310,000

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Niger-AfricaRice Partnership: Achievements and Impacts

Improved varieties

- INRAN, which is in charge of cultivar development, testing, and release, uses new breeding lines developed by the AfricaRice and partners, provides foundation seed and does the certifying of seed quality.
- The Participatory Varietal Selection (PVS) approach was established through collaboration between the National Agricultural Research Institute of Niger (INRAN) and the national rice support program (PAFRIZ). The objective of this participatory approach is to introduce new high-yielding rice varieties that meet farmers' needs and improve rice production in Niger.
- The results of the different evaluations highlighted two NERICA varieties: NERICA-L49 and NERICA-L39 and one intraspecific variety WAS-4-B-B-9-1-4-TGR 48. These varieties were selected for their high yield potential (6-7 t/ha in farmers' fields) and recommended for release. WITA8 and WITA9, were released earlier and are popular because of their tolerance to Rice Yellow Mottle Virus (RYMV).
- To widen the gene pools of breeding programs, the agromorphological characterization and the genetic diversity of a set of *Oryza glaberrima* accessions from AfricaRice's gene bank as well as new rice collections from Niger were done, along with RYMV resistance screening.