The Pacific Harvest

A Data Portrait of Livestock and Crop Production, 1961–2024

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Data Sources: Pacific Community (SPC), Pacific Data Hub - Crop Yield and Livestock Yield; Our World in Data- Meat and Dairy Production, based on FAO data.
Tools: Adobe Illustrator, Javascript.

How to read?

Each line represents a year from 1961 to 2024, with its length corresponding to the yield produced that year. The circles are positioned according to each nation's 2024 yield, arranged from highest on the left to lowest on the right.



Over six decades, from 1961 to 2024, agriculture across 15 Pacific Island nations has followed remarkably different paths, shaped by geography, culture, available land, and economic change. This visualization traces those trajectories through crop and livestock production, revealing both resilience and growing challenges across the region.

Fiji emerges as a regional leader, recording the highest crop yield at 26,794 kg/ha and livestock yield at 4,317 kg/animal in 2024. Meanwhile, Papua New Guinea dominates overall meat production, producing approximately 531,162 tonnes annually, with pig farming playing an important role in its food system and cultural practices.

Behind these regional averages are stories of striking growth and decline. Kiribati increased its crop yields by 213%, despite its limited arable land, while Papua New Guinea recorded an 87% increase. In contrast, crop productivity declined in Niue (-28%), Tonga (-15%), and Samoa (-11%). These changes may reflect a combination of climate pressures, soil degradation, changing agricultural practices, and increasing dependence on imported foods.

The regional picture tells another story: crop yields reached their highest levels in the 1990s before falling sharply during the 2000s, followed by only a partial recovery. Yet traditional crops continue to anchor Pacific food systems. Tonga leads in coconut production, the Cook Islands in sweet potato and cassava, and Vanuatu in yam production, reflecting the deep connection between agriculture, culture, and island life.

The grey gaps across the visualization are also part of the story. They reveal limitations in agricultural data collection, particularly among smaller island nations, where consistent monitoring remains difficult.

As Pacific communities face rising sea levels, changing rainfall patterns, environmental pressures, and shifting food preferences, the future of agriculture is increasingly tied to resilience. These six decades of data show that food production in the Pacific is not a single visual design of growth or decline, it is a visual design of adaptation, vulnerability, and the continuing importance of food sovereignty.



