SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PRODUCTIVITY PROJECT

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MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND FISHERIES

SIXTH AGRICULTURAL CENSUS 2025

PRELIMINARY REPORT



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SIXTH AGRICULTURE CENSUS 2025

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Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries (MAAHF)

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Sixth Agricultural Census of Suriname

Preliminary Report

Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries

August 2026

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Foreword

In Suriname, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries is responsible for the organization of agricultural censuses and the production of annual agricultural statistics. The Sixth Agricultural Census 2025 is implemented under the responsibility of the Ministry.

A Steering Committee for the Sixth Agricultural Census was established to oversee the implementation, objectives, and scope of the census. This committee was chaired by the Director of the Department of Agriculture within the Ministry. The Steering Committee established a Census Working Group (CWG) to coordinate the census preparation and implementation.

Reliable agricultural statistics are essential for planning, policy formulation, and project development in the agricultural sector. The agricultural census provides the necessary structural data on the sector. The census is intended, among other objectives, to contribute to the generation of knowledge and information about the sector. Such knowledge is essential for the effective and efficient formulation and implementation of agricultural policy. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), of which Suriname is a member, recommends that an agricultural census be conducted every ten years. The most recent census was conducted in 2008 (seventeen years ago), and since then the agricultural sector has changed in both structure and production.

The census aims to obtain detailed and reliable information on the structure of Suriname's agricultural, livestock, and aquaculture sectors. These data provide essential input for policy development, investment decisions, research, and strategic planning by both public and private stakeholders. As part of the census, households are visited to collect data and identify agricultural holdings. Subsequently, data are recorded separately for each agricultural holding, covering its activities and characteristics.

During the previous census in 2008, the PAPI method (Paper-and-Pencil Personal Interviewing) was used, whereby data were collected in the field using paper questionnaires. This census was carried out using the CAPI method (Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing), in which interviewers used tablets to administer questionnaires and record respondents' answers directly in digital form. With advances in technology, the CAPI method has become widely recognized as an effective means of data collection, contributing to higher response rates and better data quality.

Acknowledgements

The successful execution and completion of the *Sixth Agricultural Census of Suriname* mark a significant milestone in strengthening our national statistical infrastructure. The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries (MAAHF) conveys its highest esteem and sincere gratitude to all institutional partners, technical experts, and individuals whose dedication ensured the realization of this strategic initiative.

The Ministry extends its profound appreciation to the **Inter-American Development Bank (IADB)** for its pivotal financial support through the *Sustainable Agricultural Productivity Program (SU-L1052)*. This funding has been instrumental in modernizing data collection frameworks and enhancing national statistical capacities. Furthermore, the Ministry acknowledges the critical role of the **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)**. Through the *Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP/SUR/3901)*, the FAO provided invaluable technical expertise across all operational phases, guaranteeing that the methodology and resulting data strictly adhere to international quality standards.

Strategic operational oversight was significantly strengthened by the **IDB Project Executing Unit (PEU)**, hosted by the **Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)**. The Ministry commendably highlights the commitment and high degree of professionalism demonstrated by the **Census Working Group (CWG)**, field supervisors, and enumerators, who executed complex field operations under rigorous and demanding conditions.

Crucially, the Ministry recognizes the indispensable cooperation of the **agrarian community, households, and local community**. Their active participation and transparency formed the foundation of this exercise, yielding the most comprehensive data profile of Suriname's agricultural sector in more than a decade.
Finally, acknowledgment is due to all public and private sector stakeholders, producer organizations, and development partners whose strategic insights shaped the design and oversight of this census. The continued collaboration of these entities remains vital as the Ministry translates these empirical findings into evidence-based agricultural policies, targeted investment strategies, and sustainable development plans.

The Minister of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries

Mike Noersalim MBA

Executive Summary

The Sixth Agricultural Census of Suriname is the first comprehensive structural data collection of the country's agricultural sector since 2008. Conducted under the legal authority approved by Parliament on 30 December 2024, field enumeration was carried out in the period of January till March 2025, with 13 January 2025 serving as the official reference day. The census was implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries (MAAHF) with extensive technical support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and financial backing from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) through the Sustainable Agricultural Productivity Programme (SU-L1052). For the first time in Suriname's agricultural census history, a fully digital data collection system — Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) via the Survey Solutions platform — was employed, marking a significant advance in census operation and data quality.

The census enumerated **14,409 agricultural holdings** across all ten administrative districts, representing a **41%** increase over the **10,234 holdings** recorded in 2008. Despite this substantial growth in the number of holdings, the total area managed by agricultural holdings contracted from **63,989 hectares** to approximately **49,898 hectares**, indicating a structural shift towards smaller, more intensive farming units. The sector remains overwhelmingly dominated by individual civil persons (98.1% of holdings), with juridical entities (corporations and government bodies) accounting for only 0.8% of holdings but managing significant proportions of agricultural land.

Key Findings by Theme

- **Structure of Holdings**: Suriname's agricultural landscape is characterized by a high density of small-scale farms. The most common holding size is 1–2 hectares (25% of all holdings), and 16% of holdings are smaller than 0.1 hectares, reflecting peri-urban and subsistence production. At the other end of the spectrum, only 2% of holdings exceed 20 hectares, yet these large units — particularly when held by juridical persons — account for the majority of the country's total agricultural land area. The national ***Utilized Agricultural Area (UAA) stands at 36,024 hectares***, with civil persons contributing 30,760 hectares of that total.

- **Geographic Distribution**: Sipaliwini holds the largest share of agricultural holdings (30%), reflecting widespread subsistence and shifting cultivation among Maroon and Indigenous communities. The districts of Wanica (17%) and Marowijne (16%) follow. In terms of land area, Nickerie remains the dominant district with 21,449 hectares, driven by large-scale irrigated rice cultivation. Saramacca and Commewijne experienced the most substantial land area contractions since 2008, while Sipaliwini more than doubled its cultivated footprint.

- **Production Purpose**: Agriculture in Suriname serves a dual role. Nationwide, 32% of holdings produce primarily for sale, while 24% produce mainly for subsistence. A further 44% operate with mixed strategies, selling some while consuming the rest.

Sipaliwini is the undisputed center of subsistence agriculture (40% of all subsistence-only holdings), while Marowijne and Nickerie represent the most commercially oriented districts. Paramaribo hosts a distinct peri-urban agricultural sector focused on household food security.

- **Demographics**: The census reveals a demographic profile characterized by an aging workforce and significant gender disparities. The majority of holders are concentrated in the 50–64 age group, raising concerns about generational succession, particularly in coastal commercial districts where younger farmers are underrepresented. Female holders represent 40% of the national total (up from 35% in 2008), but are overwhelmingly concentrated in interior subsistence agriculture — notably Brokopondo (77% female) and Sipaliwini (62% female). Access to large-scale holdings remains almost exclusively male: 98% of holdings over 20 hectares are managed by men. Hindustani, Maroon, Creole, and Javanese communities are the four largest ethnic groups in agriculture, each showing strong geographic concentration.

- **Education**: Most farm holders have completed only primary education (GLO niveau), and a significant share reports no formal education. Secondary and tertiary education are extremely rare among farmers, particularly in interior districts. This has important implications for agricultural extension delivery, technology adoption, and farm management capacity.

- **Crops**: Farm land is mostly simple and fragmented: 68% of holdings consist of a single parcel, and 16% have no formal parcel, relying on shifting cultivation or road-side plots. Approximately 42% of all holdings — predominantly civil persons in the interior — manage at least one shifting cultivation plot, confirming its continued role as a food security strategy for rural and indigenous communities. Annual crops are near-universal and (semi-)permanent crops are regionally concentrated: Annual crops are present on 76% of all holdings. (Semi-)permanent crops reach their highest rates in Marowijne (71%) and Saramacca (62%), while Nickerie (11%) and Wanica (28%) show very limited permanent crop presence.

- **Livestock**: The livestock sector is highly concentrated in peri-urban coastal districts. Wanica accounts for 44% of all livestock holdings, with significant contributions from Nickerie and Commewijne. The interior districts contribute negligibly to formal livestock statistics. Poultry is the most widespread livestock category (2,801 holdings), with the broiler sub-sector dominated by Saramacca and Wanica. The pig sub-sector reveals extreme concentration: just 6 holdings in Saramacca account for 76% of all pig heads nationally, creating significant systemic vulnerability. Holdings with cattle (1,198) are concentrated in Wanica and Commewijne, with crossbreeds dominating the national herd.

- **Looking Forward**: The Sixth Agricultural Census provides Suriname with its first comprehensive structural agricultural database in seventeen years. The complete census tables will be published in the Census Final Report. This report will contain additional statistical tables that expand upon the analysis presented here. The results

of this current report offer already an essential baseline for designing evidence-based agricultural policies, modernizing the Agricultural Information System, and supporting the development of an annual agricultural survey programme. Key policy priorities emerging from the census include: addressing the aging farmer profile and improving inter-generational succession; supporting women's access to larger land holdings; strengthening extension services adapted to diverse educational and cultural contexts; reducing the structural vulnerability arising from extreme geographic concentration of commercial livestock production; and supporting the formalization and market integration of the interior's subsistence farming communities.

Introduction

Agriculture has long been a cornerstone of Suriname's economy and rural way of life. Despite a gradual decline in its relative contribution to national GDP — from approximately 9–10% in the early 2000s to 6.2% in 2023 — the sector continues to provide livelihoods for a substantial share of the population, underpin food and nutrition security, and serve as the primary economic activity across several coastal and interior districts. Crops such as rice, plantains, and vegetables form the backbone of both domestic consumption and export earnings, while livestock plays increasingly important roles in supplementing peri-urban incomes.

Yet, for nearly seventeen years, evidence-based agricultural planning in Suriname was hampered by a critical absence of current, comprehensive structural data. The most recent prior reference point — the Fifth Agricultural Census conducted in 2008 — provided essential information about the sector's structure at that time, but the sector has undergone profound changes since: demographic shifts, land-use transitions, growing urbanization, the expansion of subsistence farming in the interior, climate variability, and significant economic shocks. Without updated data, policymakers, planners, and development partners were forced to rely on projections and administrative data of limited coverage and methodological consistency (Ministerie van Landbouw, Veeteelt en Visserij, 2014).

It is against this backdrop that the Sixth Agricultural Census of Suriname was designed and implemented. Preparatory work began in March 2023, following the signing of a Technical Cooperation Programme agreement between MAAHF and FAO (TCP/SUR/3901(D)). The process was characterized by exceptional methodological rigor: multiple rounds of pre-testing, two full pilot censuses - one in Saramacca district in December 2023, and the other in Region East (Commewijne and Marowijne) in May and June 2024 -, nationwide enumerator training, and the unprecedented adoption of Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) technology. The enabling legislation was approved by Parliament on 30 December 2024 and published on 31 December 2024, and field enumeration commenced on 13 January 2025, which serves as the official census reference day. Data collection continued till the end of March 2025.

The census was conducted in full alignment with the recommendations of the FAO World Programme for the Census of Agriculture 2020 (FAO 2015; FAO 2018), ensuring international comparability and adherence to global statistical standards. Financial support was provided by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) through the Sustainable Agricultural Productivity Programme (SU-L1052), while the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) served as a key operational partner through the IDB Project Executing Unit.

This Preliminary Report presents the first set of analytical results from the Sixth Agricultural Census of Suriname. It covers five thematic domains: the overall distribution and structure of agricultural holdings, the demographic profile of farm holders, crop systems and land use, and the livestock sector. Where possible, findings are compared against the 2008 census benchmark to assess structural change over the intervening period. The report draws not only on census tabulations but also on the Methodology and Implementation Report (Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries, 2026), which documents the conceptual

framework, sampling strategy, questionnaire design, quality assurance procedures, and Post-Enumeration Survey (PES) results.

The census covers all ten administrative districts of Suriname using a mixed enumeration strategy: complete enumeration in most coastal and accessible districts, and probability-based sample enumeration in Greater Paramaribo and the interior districts of Brokopondo, Sipaliwini, and interior Marowijne. A total of **14,409 agricultural holdings** were enumerated, providing the most comprehensive and statistically robust picture of Surinamese agriculture in over a decade.

The findings presented in this report are intended to serve multiple audiences: agricultural policymakers and planners within MAAHF and partner ministries; development partners and international organizations; academic researchers and analysts; and the farming communities themselves, whose cooperation made the census possible. A full Final Census Report, including detailed district-level tabulations on all census items, thematic analyses, and SDG indicator estimates, will follow in a later stage.

Key Findings and Analysis



1. Overview of Agricultural Holdings in Suriname

1.1 National Growth in Agricultural Holdings

The Sixth Agricultural Census of Suriname reveals a significant expansion in the number of participants within the agricultural sector over the last seventeen years. **The total number of agricultural holdings in Suriname has increased by approximately 41%, rising from 10,234 holdings in 2008 to 14,409 holdings in 2025.** This growth suggests an increasing reliance on agriculture for rural livelihoods and food security, despite the sector's declining contribution to the national GDP, with recent figures showing 6.2% in 2023, from around 9-10% in the 2000s. While the number of individual operations has surged, the industry remains defined by its small-scale nature, with the vast majority of these new units being managed by individual (civil persons) rather than large corporate entities (juridical persons).

Table 1.1: Number and percentage of agricultural holdings by district and legal status

	Civil person, 1 holder		Civil person, group of holders		Juridical person		Total	
District	N = 14,130		N = 165		N = 114		**N = 14,409**	
Brokopondo	942	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	**942**	**100.0%**
Commewijne	859	98.6%	7	0.8%	5	0.6%	**871**	**100.0%**
Coronie	90	100.%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	**90**	**100.0%**
Marowijne	2,261	98.5%	32	1.4%	3	0.1%	**2,296**	**100.0%**
Nickerie	1,351	98.0%	20	1.5%	8	0.6%	**1,379**	**100.0%**
Para	158	83.2%	13	6.8%	19	10.0%	**190**	**100.0%**
Paramaribo	779	92.5%	32	3.8%	31	3.7%	**842**	**100.0%**
Saramacca	1,010	99.7%	2	0.2%	1	0.1%	**1,013**	**100.0%**
Sipaliwini	4,258	99.6%	16	0.4%	0	0.0%	**4,274**	**100.0%**
Wanica	2,422	96.4%	43	1.7%	47	1.9%	**2,512**	**100.0%**

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The agricultural sector in Suriname is characterized by the overwhelming dominance of individual and family-based operations. Table 1.1 shows that 98.1% of all holdings (14,130 units) are managed by "civil persons" (natural individuals). This follows the historical trend seen in 2008, where civil persons accounted for 99.5% of holdings. The remaining holdings are distributed between groups of civil persons (1.1%) and juridical persons (0.8%), the latter of which includes corporations, government entities, and institutions. While juridical persons represent a very small percentage of the total number of holders, they often manage significantly larger land areas compared to individual holders.

A geographic reading of Table 1.1 reveals important structural patterns. Sipaliwini (30%) and Wanica (17%) together account for nearly half of all national holdings. The districts in the interior and peri-urban areas show very different legal status profiles: in Sipaliwini, virtually all holdings (4,258 of 4,274) are civil persons, with zero juridical entities — reflecting the prevalence of subsistence farming by Maroon and Indigenous communities. By contrast, Paramaribo and Wanica register the highest concentrations of juridical persons (27% and 41% of all juridical holdings respectively), pointing to the concentration of corporate and institutional agriculture in and around the capital. Although Para has a relatively small total number of agriculture holdings (190), it stands out because 10% of its holdings are owned by juridical persons, likely including government research farms and agricultural institutions.

1.2 Shifts in Total Land Management

In contrast to the rising number of farm holdings, the total land area managed by these holdings has seen a notable contraction. **In 2008, agricultural holdings had a total land area of 63,989 hectares; by 2025, this figure shifted to approximately 49,898 hectares.** This trend indicates a movement toward higher fragmentation or a concentration of activity on smaller, more intensive plots. Small and medium-sized producers continue to dominate the landscape; for example, in 2008, nearly 78% of holdings were under 2 hectares, a structural reality that remains a defining characteristic of the 2025 data.

The divergence between a growing number of holdings and a shrinking total land area implies a reduction in the average holding size. In 2008, the average area per holding was approximately 6.3 hectares; by 2025, this fell to roughly 3.5 hectares. Several structural factors may explain this trend. First, the dramatic expansion of holdings in Sipaliwini — which are predominantly small and subsistence-oriented — dilutes the national average. Second, large commercial operations in districts such as Saramacca and Commewijne may have reduced their footprint due to land-use pressures, economic factors, or changes in management. Third, land fragmentation through inheritance and family subdivision may have subdivided previously larger holdings into smaller units.

1.3 Geographic Concentration

The distribution of agricultural holdings varies significantly across Suriname's ten administrative districts, with the highest concentration located in the interior. Figure 1.1 shows that Sipaliwini holds the largest share of the nation's farms, containing 4,274 holdings, or 30% of the national total. Significant agricultural clusters are also found in the coastal and peri-urban regions, specifically in Wanica (17%) and Marowijne (16%), followed by Nickerie (10%), which remains a dominant area for large-scale rice production. Conversely, the districts of Coronie and Para exhibit the lowest geographic concentration, together representing only 2% of the total number of holdings nationwide.

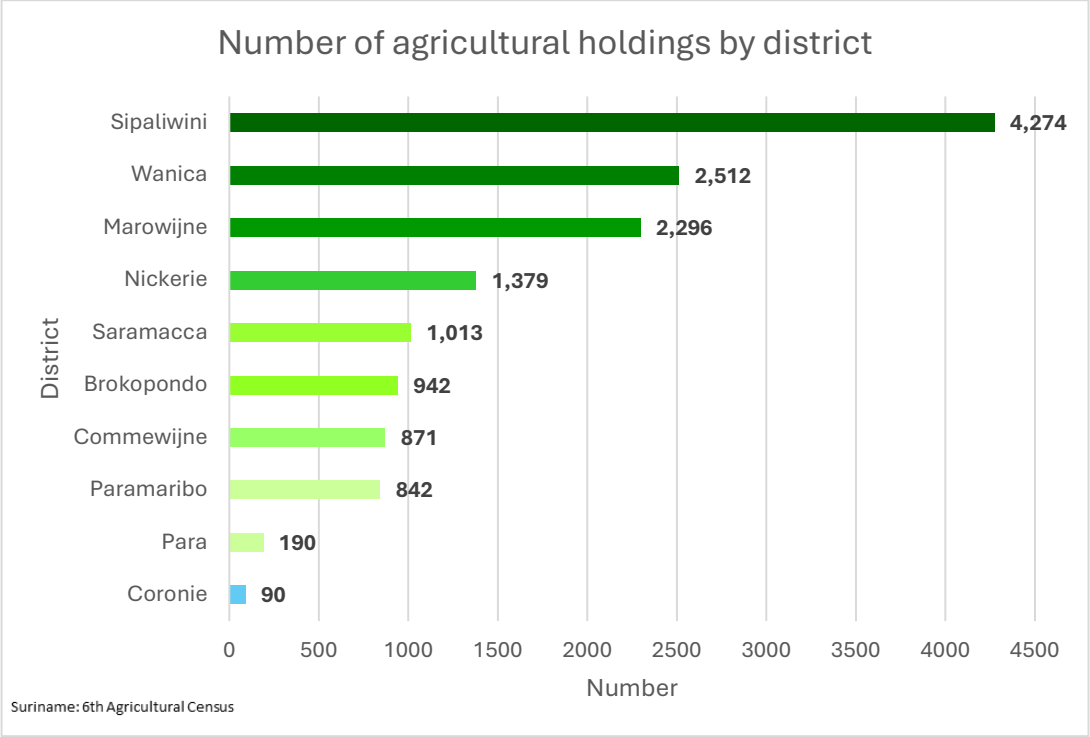


Figure 1.1: Number of agricultural holdings by district

Figure 1.1 highlights Suriname's dual agricultural geography: a high-density interior anchored by Sipaliwini, and a commercially oriented coastal belt led by Wanica, Nickerie, and Marowijne. The concentration of holdings in Sipaliwini reflects the expansion of subsistence and shifting cultivation among Maroon and Indigenous communities, whose agricultural practices — while widespread in terms of holding count — tend to involve small cultivated areas and are largely excluded from formal commercial circuits. This geographic pattern has direct implications for the design of agricultural extension and development interventions, which must be tailored to fundamentally different production systems, cultural contexts, and market access conditions.

Figure 1.2 tells a strikingly different story: despite having the most holdings, Sipaliwini manages only 3,361 hectares — less than 7% of the total land area managed by Nickerie alone (21,449 hectares). This reveals the profound structural disconnect between holding count and land productivity in Suriname. Nickerie, though representing only 10% of holdings, manages 43% of the cultivated land area, underscoring the dominance of large-scale rice farming. Commewijne (9,301 hectares) and Saramacca (5,035 hectares) are second-tier land managers, while Wanica's 4,470 hectares is notable for supporting the country's most intensive peri-urban agricultural economy.

District-Level Dynamics: Number of Holdings

The geographic distribution of farms has shifted toward the interior and eastern districts since the previous census.

• **The Interior:** Sipaliwini remains the national leader in farm concentration, growing from 2,327 holdings in 2008 to 4,274 holdings in 2025—an 83% increase.

• **Coastal Regions:** Marowijne saw its holding numbers jump from 1,579 to 2,296, while Wanica increased from 2,016 to 2,512.

• **Stable Areas:** Nickerie, the nation's rice hub, remained relatively stable, moving from 1,376 to 1,379 holdings, indicating a more established and mature agricultural structure in that region.

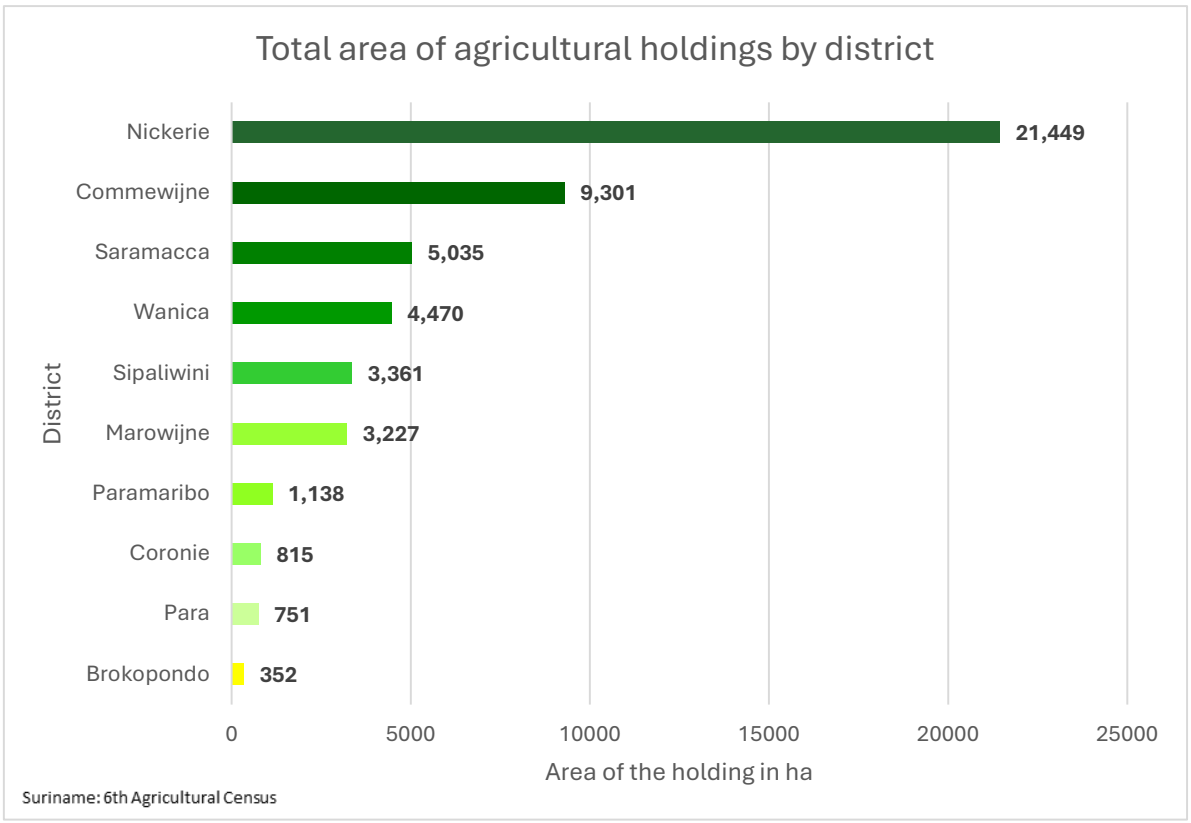


Figure 1.2: Total area of agricultural holdings by district

District-Level Dynamics: Total Area of the holding

While the number of farms grew in the interior, the total area of the holdings has seen a real decline in many districts, particularly in the coastal area (Figure 1.2).

• Saramacca and Commewijne saw the most dramatic land area contractions; Saramacca dropped from 13,201 hectares to roughly 5,035 hectares, and Commewijne fell from 13,298 hectares to 9,301 hectares.

• Nickerie remains the leader in land area, though it experienced a slight reduction from 23,300 hectares in 2008 to approximately 21,449 hectares in 2025.

• Conversely, the land area in Sipaliwini more than doubled, increasing from 1,529 hectares in 2008 to 3,361 hectares in 2025, reflecting the expansion of subsistence and small-scale farming in the nation's interior.

Key Findings — Overview of Agricultural Holdings

- The number of agricultural holdings grew by 41% between 2008 and 2025 (from 10,234 to 14,409), driven primarily by the expansion of small-scale and subsistence farming in interior and peri-urban districts.
- Total managed land area contracted by approximately 22% (from 63,989 to ~49,898 hectares), indicating structural fragmentation and agricultural intensification at the national scale.
- Individual civil persons dominate the sector (98.1% of holdings), with juridical entities concentrated in Wanica and Paramaribo, where corporate and government agriculture is most present.
- Sipaliwini has the highest number of holdings (30% nationally) but manages only a small share of the national total area of the holding — reflecting the subsistence-oriented, small-plot nature of interior farming.
- Nickerie remains the country's agricultural land powerhouse (43% of total area of the holding), driven by large-scale, irrigated rice cultivation. Saramacca and Commewijne experienced the steepest land area contractions since 2008.

2. Agricultural Holding Structure



2.1 Distribution of Holdings by Size

The structural landscape of Suriname's agricultural sector remains defined by a high concentration of **small-scale producers**. Figure 2.1 shows that **25% of all holdings (3,624 units) fall within the 1 to 2-hectare size class**, making it the most common farm size in the country. A significant 16% of holdings are under 0.1 hectares, reflecting a high volume of very small-scale or peri-urban agricultural activities. In contrast, large-scale operations are rare, with **only 2% of all holdings nationwide exceeding 20 hectares**. This distribution pattern is consistent with the findings of the 2008 census, which also reported that nearly 78% of holdings were smaller than 2 hectares.

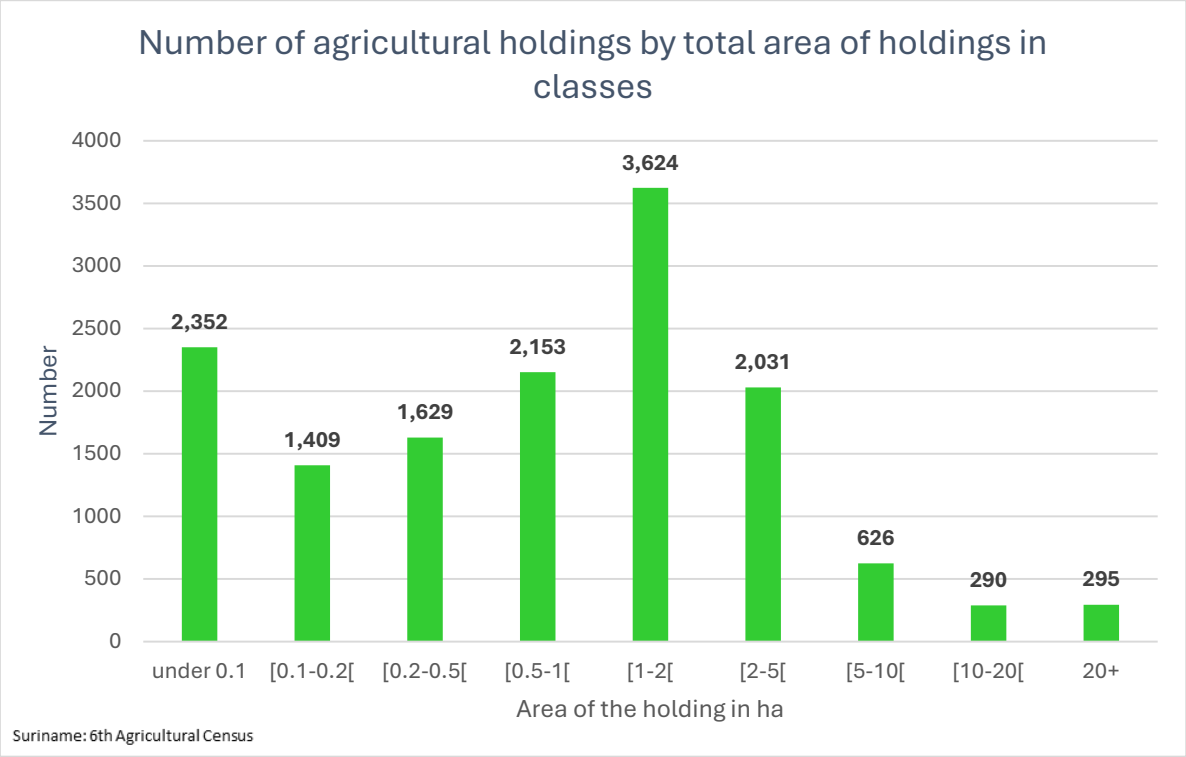


Figure 2.1: Number of agricultural holdings by total area of holdings in classes

Figure 2.1 reveals a size distribution that is strongly right-skewed. The modal category (1–2 ha) accounts for 3,624 holdings, followed by the sub-0.1 ha category (2,352), the 0.5–1 ha category (2,153), and the 0.2–0.5 ha category (1,629). The progressive tapering toward larger size classes is steep: from 2,031 holdings in the 2–5 ha class to just 295 in the 20+ ha class. This pattern is consistent with the structural profile of smallholder-dominated agricultural systems seen across the Caribbean, and underscores the limited penetration of large-scale commercial farming in Suriname's agricultural landscape.

2.2 Number of Holdings by Class Size and Legal Status

The legal status of a holding is closely tied to its operational scale. **Civil persons manage 14,130 holdings**, the vast majority of which are concentrated in smaller size classes, such as the 1 to 2-hectare range (3,566 holdings) and the under 0.1-hectare range (2,322 holdings) (Table 2.1). **Juridical persons**, while representing only **114 holdings in total**, show a more varied distribution; for instance, 25% of juridical holdings fall in the 1 to 2-hectare class, but a notable 7% (8 holdings) operate in the largest class of 20 hectares or more. **Groups of civil persons** represent a small middle ground, with their highest concentration found in the 2 to 5-hectare class **(46 holdings)**.

Table 2.1: Number of agricultural holdings by area of the holding in classes and legal status

Area of the holding in classes (ha)	Civil person, 1 holder		Civil person, group of holders		Juridical person		Total	
	N = 14,130		N = 165		N = 114		N = 14,409	
under 0.1	2,322	98.7%	12	0.5%	17	0.7%	**2,352**	**100.0%**
[0.1-0.2[	1,389	98.6%	9	0.6%	11	0.8%	**1,409**	**100.0%**
[0.2-0.5[	1,621	99.5%	7	0.4%	1	0.1%	**1,629**	**100.0%**
[0.5-1[	2,115	98.2%	21	1.0%	17	0.8%	**2,153**	**100.0%**
[1-2[	3,566	98.4%	29	0.8%	29	0.8%	**3,624**	**100.0%**
[2-5[	1,974	97.2%	46	2.3%	11	0.5%	**2,031**	**100.0%**
[5-10[	581	92.8%	30	4.8%	15	2.4%	**626**	**100.0%**
[10-20[	278	95.9%	8	2.8%	4	1.4%	**290**	**100.0%**
20+	284	96.3%	3	1.0%	8	2.7%	**295**	**100.0%**

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Table 2.1 offers additional insights when examining the comparative size profiles of each legal category. Civil persons show a near-perfect unimodal distribution, peaking at the 1–2 ha class and declining on either side — consistent with a typical smallholder family-farm profile. Groups of civil persons, which may represent cooperatives or informally organized community farms, show a flatter and slightly shifted distribution, with disproportionate concentrations in the 2–5 ha (28%) and 5–10 ha (18%) categories relative to civil persons. This suggests that collective management arrangements are associated with somewhat larger operational scales, possibly reflecting pooled land resources or cooperative production strategies. Juridical persons present a distinctly bi-modal pattern: concentrations at both the very small end (15% under 0.1 ha) and the very large end (7% over 20 ha), suggesting that the category encompasses both small experimental or institutional plots and large commercial enterprises.

2.3 Total Area of the Holding by Class Size and Legal Status

While small farms are the most numerous, the **total area of the holding** is heavily weighted toward larger holdings. Table 2.2 shows that, for civil persons, the **20+ hectare class manages 23,316.6 hectares**, which is more than half of the total land held by individuals. For juridical persons, the concentration is even more pronounced, as the **20+ hectare class accounts for 6,829 hectares** out of a total 7,031 hectares managed by corporations and institutions. Conversely, the **thousands of holdings under 0.1 hectares** manage a combined total of only **124.7 hectares**. This highlights a sharp divide where a tiny fraction of large holdings manages the vast majority of the nation's agricultural land area.

Table 2.2: Total area of the holding by size classes and legal status

Area of the holding in classes (ha)	Civil person, 1 holder	Civil person, group of holders	Juridical person	Total
under 0.1	123.5	0.6	0.6	**124.7**
[0.1-0.2[	173.2	1.0	1.4	**175.6**
[0.2-0.5[	457.6	1.9	0.2	**459.8**
[0.5-1[	1,274.8	11.1	9.2	**1,295.1**
[1-2[	4,067.4	35.0	30.9	**4,133.3**
[2-5[	5,314.0	137.2	28.2	**5,479.4**
[5-10[	3,649.8	178.2	83.8	**3,911.8**
[10-20[	3,507.0	124.6	48.0	**3,679.6**
20+	23,316.6	493.0	6,829.0	**30,638.6**
Total	**41,884**	**983**	**7,031**	**49,898**

Suriname: 6th Agricultural Census

Table 2.2 reveals the extent of land inequality in Suriname. For civil persons, 2% of holdings (those in the 20+ ha category) manage over 55% of the total land held by individuals — a ratio characteristic of highly unequal land distribution. The inverse holds at the bottom: the 16% of civil person holdings in the sub-0.1 ha category collectively manage just 0.3% of civil person land. This inequality has significant policy implications, as it means that agricultural development programs targeting the numerical majority of farmers will reach only a small fraction of managed land, while programs that engage even a handful of large commercial entities will affect the majority of agricultural area.

Total Area of the Holding by District

Table 2.3 adds a spatial dimension to this structural picture. Nickerie is the clear leader in individual land management, with civil persons operating 20,335 hectares — nearly five times more than the next-closest district, Wanica (4,219.7 hectares). However, Commewijne stands out for having the largest area, 6,262 hectares, managed by juridical persons. This represents almost 90% of all corporate-held land in the country. The near-total absence of juridical-person holdings in Sipaliwini and Brokopondo confirms the structural divide between the interior's subsistence economy and the coastal commercial sector.

Table 2.3: Total area of the holding by district and legal status

District	Civil person, 1 holder	Civil person, group of holders	Juridical person	Total
Brokopondo	352.1	NA	NA	**352.1**
Commewijne	3,031.6	7.0	6,262.0	**9,300.6**
Coronie	814.5	NA	NA	**814.5**
Marowijne	3,137.6	87.0	2.0	**3,226.6**
Nickerie	20,335.0	588.7	525.6	**21,449.3**
Para	672.1	24.9	53.8	**750.8**
Paramaribo	951.4	133.8	52.7	**1,137.9**
Saramacca	5,019.3	10.2	5.0	**5,034.5**
Sipaliwini	3,350.5	10.9	NA	**3,361.4**
Wanica	4,219.7	120.2	130.2	**4,470.1**
Total	**41,884**	**983**	**7,031**	**49,898**

Suriname: 6th Agricultural Census

2.4 Area, Land Used for Agriculture, and Utilized Agricultural Area (UAA)

The intensity of land use differs markedly between natural and juridical persons. Table 2.4 shows that the average holding size for a civil person is 3.0 hectares, with approximately 2.2 hectares utilized as Agricultural Area (UAA). Juridical persons operate on a vastly different scale, with an average holding size of 61.7 hectares and an average UAA of 39.7 hectares. Within the juridical category, corporations are the largest entities, averaging 158.5 hectares per holding and utilizing an average of 99.5 hectares for active production. Across all legal statuses, the national total for **Utilized Agricultural Area stands at 36,024.3 hectares**, representing the core productive footprint of the Surinamese agricultural sector.

Table 2.4: Area of the holding (ha), land used of agriculture (ha), utilized agriculture are (ha) by the legal status of the holding

	Natural persons		Juridical persons		
	Civil person, 1 holder	Civil person, group of holders	Corporation	Government	Others
	N = 14,130	N = 165	N = 41	N = 38	N = 35
Area of the holding					
Average	3.0	5.9	158.5	0.7	14.7
Total	41,883.9	982.7	6,497.4	27	506.8
Total Land used for Agriculture					
Average	2.5	5.4	103.8	0.7	13.3
Total	35,903.3	892.5	4,256.8	26.1	458.4
Utilized Agriculture Area (UAA)					
Average	2.2	4.5	99.5	0.2	12.8
Total	30,760.2	738.1	4,079.0	6.1	440.9

Suriname: 6th Agricultural Census

Table 2.4 also reveals important efficiency patterns across legal categories. Civil persons convert 73% ($\frac{2.2}{3}$) of their total holding area into utilized agricultural area (UAA), which is a reasonable utilization rate for mixed smallholder systems that include fallow, access roads, homesteads, and woodlots. Groups of civil persons show a slightly higher conversion rate 75% ($\frac{4.5}{5.9}$), while corporations achieve approximately 63% ($\frac{99.5}{158.5}$), suggesting that large-scale operations may include significant areas of non-agricultural use — such as drainage, buffer zones, or infrastructure — within their total holding boundaries. Government holdings stand out for their very small average area (0.7 ha) and correspondingly small UAA (0.2 ha), suggesting that government-registered holdings are primarily small experimental or demonstration plots rather than production-scale operations. The national total UAA of 36,024.3 hectares represents the core productive footprint of Surinamese agriculture and is the most policy-relevant land metric for food production planning.

2.5 Purpose of the Agricultural Production

The Sixth Agricultural Census categorizes production based on whether the output is intended for personal use or commercial exchange. Aligning with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries (MAAHF) mission to enhance rural livelihoods and sustain a national income database, the data distinguishes between subsistence and market-oriented activities. Nationwide, **4,604 holdings (32%) produce primarily for sale**[1], while **3,448 holdings (24%) produce primarily for their own consumption**[2]. A significant portion of the

[1] Producing primarily for sale (selling 90% or more)
[2] Producing primarily for own consumption (selling 10% or less)

sector maintains a dual-purpose strategy: 4,397 holdings focus on sale with a secondary goal of home use[3], and 1,960 holdings prioritize home consumption while selling surplus goods[4] (Table 2.5).

Table 2.5: Number of Holdings by legal status, district and main purpose of the agricultural production

	Own consumption		Own consumption| sale		Sale		Sale | own consumption		Total	
Legal status	N = 3,448		N = 1,961		N = 4,604		N = 4,396		**N = 14,409**	
Civil person, 1 holder	3,374	23.9%	1,919	13.6%	4,515	31.9%	4,322	30.6%	**14,130**	**100.0%**
Civil person, group of holders	31	19.0%	31	18.5%	44	26.6%	59	35.9%	**165**	**100.0%**
Juridical person	43	37.2%	11	9.7%	45	39.8%	15	13.4%	**114**	**100.0%**
District										
Brokopondo	117	12.4%	93	9.9%	387	41.1%	345	36.6%	**942**	**100.0%**
Commewijne	141	16.2%	30	3.4%	595	68.3%	105	12.1%	**871**	**100.0%**
Coronie	31	34.4%	33	36.7%	2	2.2%	24	26.7%	**90**	**100.0%**
Marowijne	278	12.1%	217	9.5%	852	37.1%	949	41.3%	**2,296**	**100.0%**
Nickerie	196	14.2%	91	6.6%	750	54.4%	342	24.8%	**1,379**	**100.0%**
Para	28	14.7%	26	13.7%	77	40.5%	59	31.1%	**190**	**100.0%**
Paramaribo	363	43.1%	105	12.5%	100	11.9%	274	32.5%	**842**	**100.0%**
Saramacca	88	8.7%	60	5.9%	633	62.5%	232	22.9%	**1,013**	**100.0%**
Sipaliwini	1,364	31.9%	1,005	23.5%	528	12.4%	1,377	32.2%	**4,274**	**100.0%**
Wanica	842	33.5%	301	12.0%	680	27.1%	689	27.4%	**2,512**	**100.0%**

Suriname: 6th Agricultural Census

[3] Producing mainly for sale, with some own consumption (selling more than 50% and up to 90%)
[4] Producing mainly for own consumption, with some sales (selling more than 10% and up to 50%)

Legal Status and Production Intent

Individual farmers (civil persons) represent roughly 98.1% of the holders across all categories of production, demonstrating that small-scale family farming is vital to both the national food supply and the commercial market. However, juridical persons (corporations and institutions) often have more specialized goals. Of the 114 juridical holdings, the largest share is dedicated to sale (45 holdings) or own consumption (43 holdings), with very few engaging in the mixed “sale and own consumption” model typical of smaller households.

Key Findings — Agricultural Holding Structure

- Suriname's agricultural sector is structurally dominated by small farms: 25% of holdings are in the 1–2 hectares class, and approximately 78% are under 2 hectares — consistent with the 2008 census finding that this structural reality has persisted for at least two decades.
- Land is highly concentrated in a small number of large holdings: civil persons in the 20+ hectares category (2% of holdings) control over 55% of individually managed land; juridical persons in the same category (7% of holdings) control 97% of corporate-managed land.
- The national Utilized Agricultural Area (UAA) stands at 36,024.3 hectares, with corporations averaging 99.5 hectares UAA per holding versus 2.2 hectares for civil persons — a 45-fold difference reflecting deeply segmented production structures.
- The sector is split between subsistence and commercial production: approximately 24% of holdings produce solely for own consumption, 32% primarily for sale, and the remainder operate with mixed strategies.
- Sipaliwini is the main subsistence district of Suriname (40% of all pure-subsistence holdings), while Nickerie and Marowijne lead in commercial orientation — reflecting a fundamental geographic divide in production purpose that demands differentiated policy approaches.

3. Demographic Profile of Main Holders



The demographic profile of Suriname's farm holders provides essential insight into the human capital driving the agricultural sector.

3.1 Age of the Main Holder

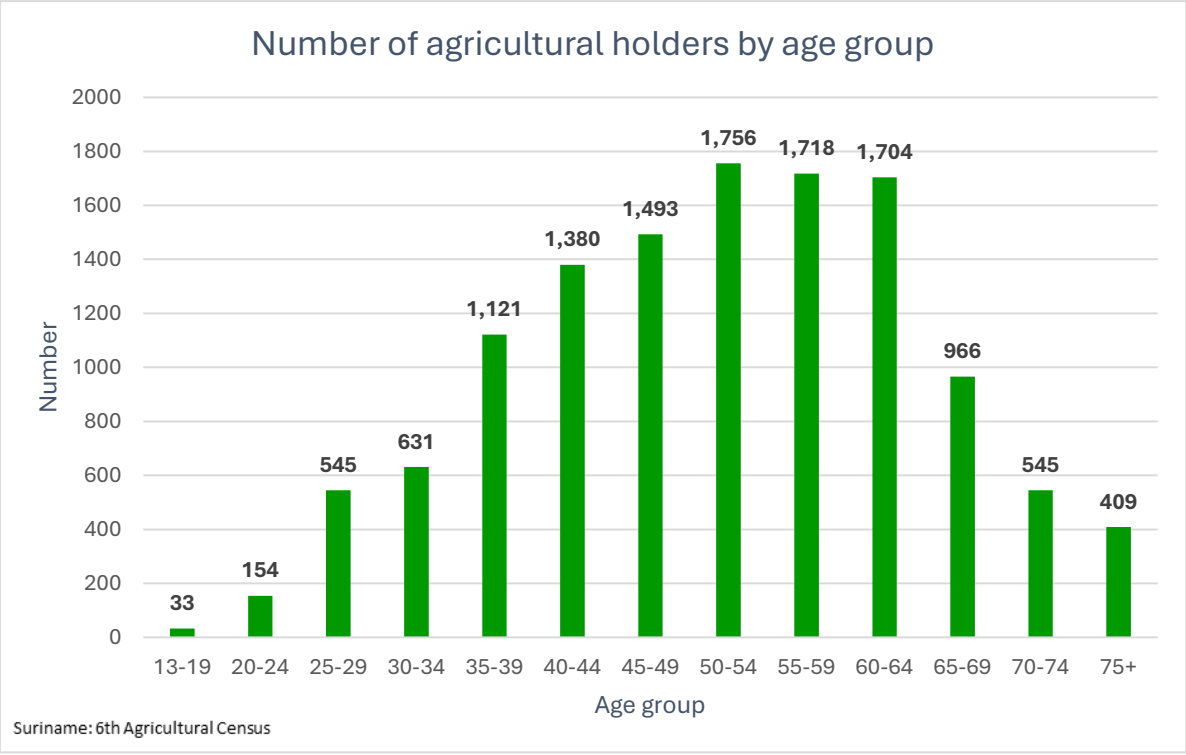


Figure 3.1: Number of agricultural holders by age group

The age structure of Suriname's farmers indicates a sector with significant experience but also signs of an aging workforce. Figure 3.1 shows that the largest concentration of holders remains in the **50–64 age group**, indicating that Suriname's agricultural sector is dominated by middle-aged and older farmers. While this brings valuable experience, it also raises questions about generational renewal and the sector's long-term sustainability.

Figure 3.1 reveals a distribution that is clearly skewed toward older age cohorts. The 50–64 group represents the plurality of holders nationally, followed by the 35–49 and 65+ cohorts. Notably, younger age groups (under 35) represent a relatively small share of holders. This pattern, if sustained, points to a structural deficit in the pipeline of future farmers, particularly in commercialized coastal districts where alternative employment opportunities exist.

While middle-aged farmers predominate nationally, the distribution across districts shows regional variations. Figure 3.2 reveals significant regional variations in age distribution across districts. Established coastal regions like Nickerie (average age 51.4) and Wanica (average age 53) have relatively older farming populations, while the interior shows more variation. Paramaribo exhibits the highest average age at 56.5 years, suggesting that urban agriculture is dominated by older residents, possibly retirees maintaining gardens. In contrast, Marowijne shows a younger profile (mean age 48.8), and Brokopondo (mean age 48.1) also trends younger, indicating that younger generations in the interior remain more engaged in agricultural activities than their coastal counterparts. The box plots in Figure 3.2 also reveal greater age dispersion in interior districts compared to coastal ones, reflecting the more varied livelihood strategies and age-of-entry patterns in subsistence farming systems.

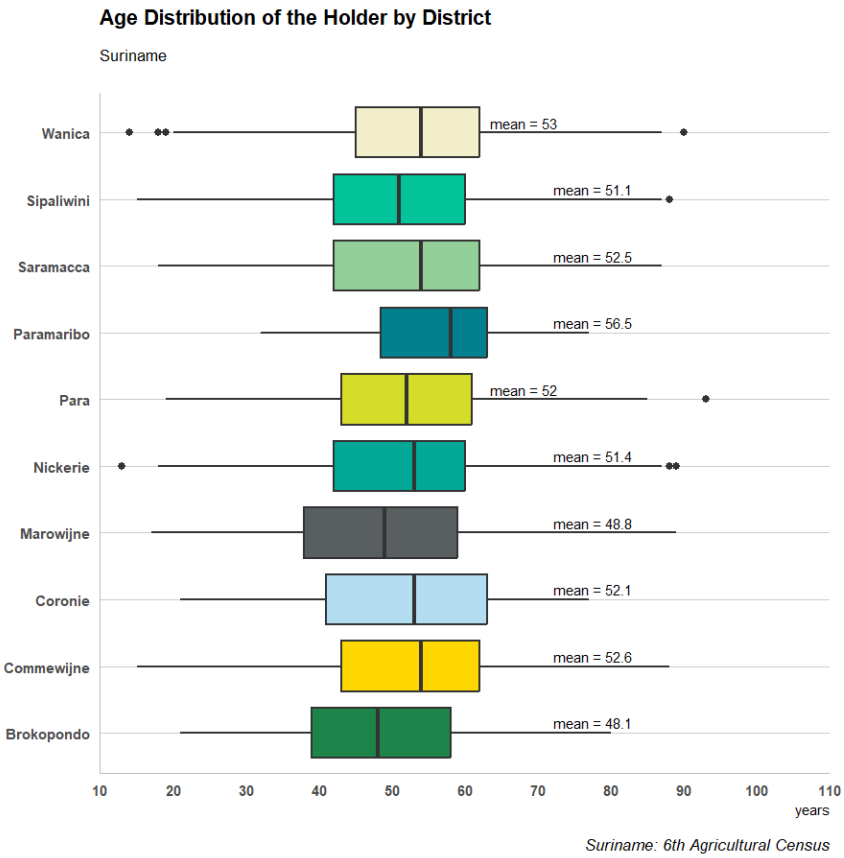


Figure 3.2: Age Distribution of the Holder by District

The age data has significant policy implications. In coastal commercial districts — where the majority of marketable agricultural output is produced — the concentration of farmers in older age groups suggests potential challenges in knowledge transfer, technology adoption, and farm succession. If the trend of younger people avoiding commercial farming continues without targeted interventions, these districts may face labor shortages and productivity stagnation within a decade. The younger demographic profile in the interior is more encouraging for generational continuity, but the absence of market access and infrastructure limits the economic potential of this younger farming population.

3.2 Sex of the Main Holder

Suriname has experienced a notable shift in gender participation over the last seventeen years. In 2008, women accounted for approximately 35% of all holders. By 2025, the number of female holders grew to **5,670**, now representing nearly **40% of the national total**. This 5 percent increase over seventeen years is mainly due to the rise in the number of holdings in Saramacca and Brokopondo, where shifting cultivation is practiced. Under shifting cultivation, the gender perspective is that men clear the forest, while women carry out the

planting and are therefore considered the holders. However, shifting cultivation is typically not associated with formal land property rights.

Table 3.1: Number and percentage of holders by district and sex

	Female		Male		Missing		Total	
District	**N = 5,670**		**N = 8,625**		**N = 114**		**N = 14,409**	
Brokopondo	726	77%	216	23%	0	0%	**942**	**100%**
Commewijne	128	15%	738	85%	5	1%	**871**	**100%**
Coronie	18	20%	72	80%	0	0%	**90**	**100%**
Marowijne	1,138	50%	1,155	50%	3	0%	**2,296**	**100%**
Nickerie	102	7%	1,269	92%	8	1%	**1,379**	**100%**
Para	57	30%	114	60%	19	10%	**190**	**100%**
Paramaribo	212	25%	599	71%	31	4%	**842**	**100%**
Saramacca	137	14%	875	86%	1	0%	**1,013**	**100%**
Sipaliwini	2,629	62%	1,645	38%	0	0%	**4,274**	**100%**
Wanica	523	21%	1,942	77%	48	2%	**2,513**	**100%**

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Table 3.1 reveals that this gender distribution is highly regionalized, dividing Suriname into two contrasting agricultural landscapes. The interior districts, Brokopondo (77% female) and Sipaliwini (62% female), are led predominantly by women. This reflects the central role of female-headed households in the interior's agricultural system — deeply rooted in the cultural and social organization of Maroon and Indigenous communities, where women have traditionally been the primary cultivators of subsistence crops while men engage in other activities (fishing, artisanal gold mining, seasonal labor migration). The high female headship rate in Brokopondo is particularly striking and merits further anthropological and social analysis.

In sharp contrast, the Coastal Area present a male-dominated picture. The rice-dominant district Nickerie remains overwhelmingly male-led, with men accounting for **92%** of holders. Commewijne (85% male), Saramacca (86% male), and Wanica (77% male) also show strong male dominance. Marowijne stands out as unique among coastal districts with a balanced 50-50 gender split. This suggests that the male predominance is offset by the presence of villages practicing shifting cultivation, where women are more frequently recorded as holders. Paramaribo shows 71% male holders, which is lower than the coastal agricultural districts but still indicates male predominance in urban agriculture.

Table 3.2: Number and percentage of holders by area of the holding in classes and sex

Area of the holding in classes (ha)	Female		Men		Missing		Total	
	N = 5,670		N = 8,625		N = 114		N = 14,409	
under 0.1	1,040	44%	1,295	55%	17	1%	**2,352**	**100%**
[0.1-0.2[	707	50%	691	49%	11	1%	**1,409**	**100%**
[0.2-0.5[	813	50%	815	50%	1	0%	**1,629**	**100%**
[0.5-1[	918	43%	1,218	57%	17	1%	**2,153**	**100%**
[1-2[	1,534	42%	2,060	57%	29	1%	**3,623**	**100%**
[2-5[	548	27%	1,473	72%	11	1%	**2,032**	**100%**
[5-10[	84	13%	527	84%	15	2%	**626**	**100%**
[10-20[	19	7%	266	92%	5	2%	**290**	**100%**
20+	7	2%	280	95%	8	3%	**295**	**100%**

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Table 3.2 exposes a structural gender disparity that intensifies dramatically at larger farm scales. At the micro level, women approach gender parity — managing 44% of sub-0.1 ha holdings and 50% of the 0.1–0.2 ha category. However, as holding size increases, the male concentration accelerates sharply: women manage 42% of 1–2 ha holdings, dropping to 27% for 2–5 ha, 13% for 5–10 ha, 7% for 10–20 ha, and just 2% for holdings over 20 hectares. This means that 95% of large-scale agricultural operations are managed by men — an extreme structural disparity that reflects differential access to land, capital, credit, and institutional support.

3.3 Age and Gender of the Main Holder

Figure 3.3 and Figure 3.4 reveal important intersections between age and gender in agricultural participation, adding a third dimension to the analysis of Suriname's farming demographics

Figure 3.3 shows that male participation peaks more sharply in older age brackets, particularly in coastal commercial districts. This suggests that in commercialized areas, farming is increasingly associated with older men who may not have been replaced by younger entrants. Younger men in these regions likely seek opportunities outside agriculture or may be engaged in agriculture, but not as the main holder. The relatively sharp age peak among male holders in coastal districts may be one of the most urgent indicators of a generational succession crisis in commercial agriculture.

Conversely, female participation is more evenly distributed across age groups in the interior, showing strong representation even among younger demographics. This pattern suggests that while traditional coastal farming may face challenges in attracting younger men, agriculture in the interior remains a primary and accessible livelihood for women of all ages.

The more balanced age distribution among female holders in the interior may reflect the greater economic necessity of farming in regions with limited alternative employment, as well as cultural patterns that maintain women's agricultural roles across generations.

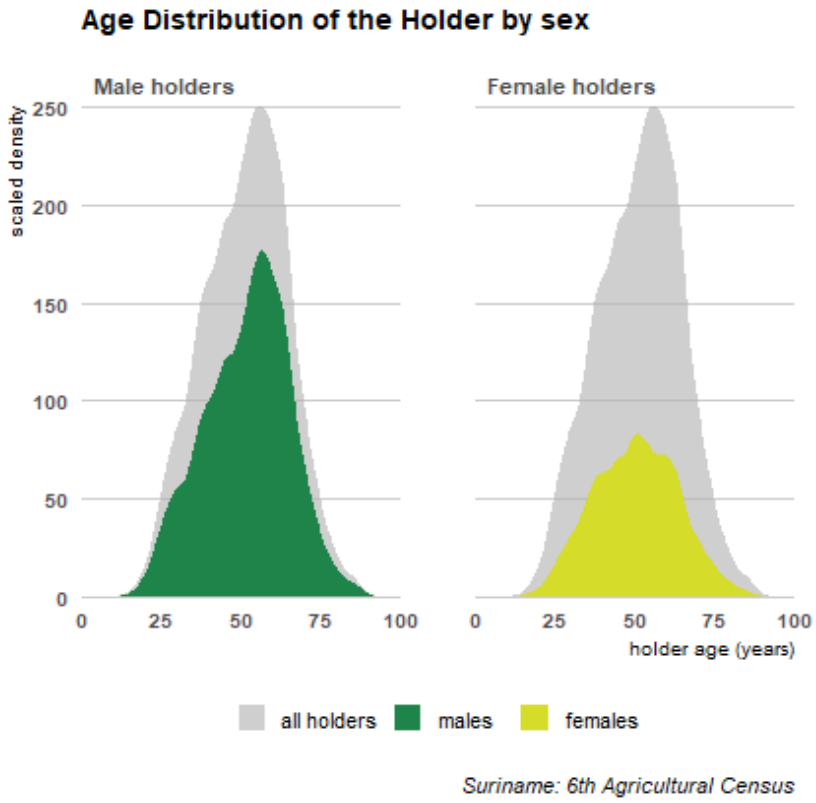


Figure 3.3: Age Distribution of the Holder by Sex

Figure 3.4 provides a normalized view of age-sex interactions. Female participation is more evenly distributed across age groups in the interior, showing strong representation even among younger demographics. This pattern suggests that while traditional coastal farming may face challenges in attracting younger men, agriculture in the interior remains a primary and accessible livelihood for women of all ages. The broader age distribution among female holders likely reflects the greater economic necessity of farming in regions with limited alternative employment, as well as cultural patterns that maintain women's agricultural roles across generations.

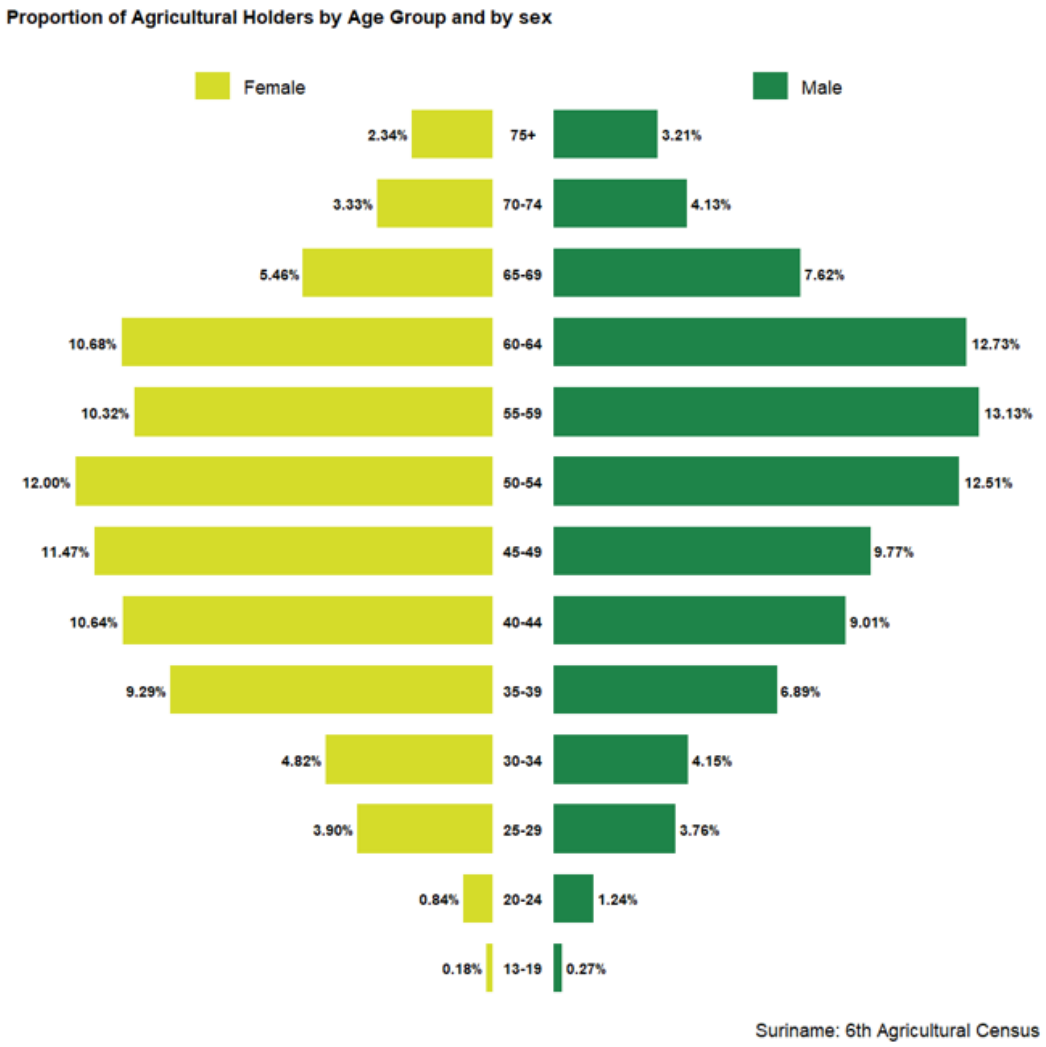


Figure 3.4: Proportion of Agricultural Holders by age group and sex

Figure 3.4: Proportion of Agricultural Holders by age group and sex

The combination of aging male farmers in coastal commercial districts and younger female farmers in interior subsistence areas suggests diverging agricultural trajectories. Coastal commercial farming may face a generational crisis without targeted efforts to attract younger farmers of both genders. Meanwhile, the interior's agricultural system appears more demographically sustainable, though it operates primarily at subsistence levels. Targeted policies may be needed to address each context separately: making commercial farming more attractive and accessible to younger farmers (of all genders) in coastal areas, while simultaneously supporting the development of market linkages and value-adding

opportunities for the younger interior farming population where female participation is already stronger.

3.4 Ethnicity of the main holder

The ethnic composition of Suriname's farmers reflects the country's multi-ethnic heritage and remains strongly tied to geography. Figure 3.5 shows that in 2025**, Maroon (38%), East Indian (28%), Afro-Surinamese/Creole (15%) and Javanese (8%)** populations have been the most active ethnic groups in the sector.

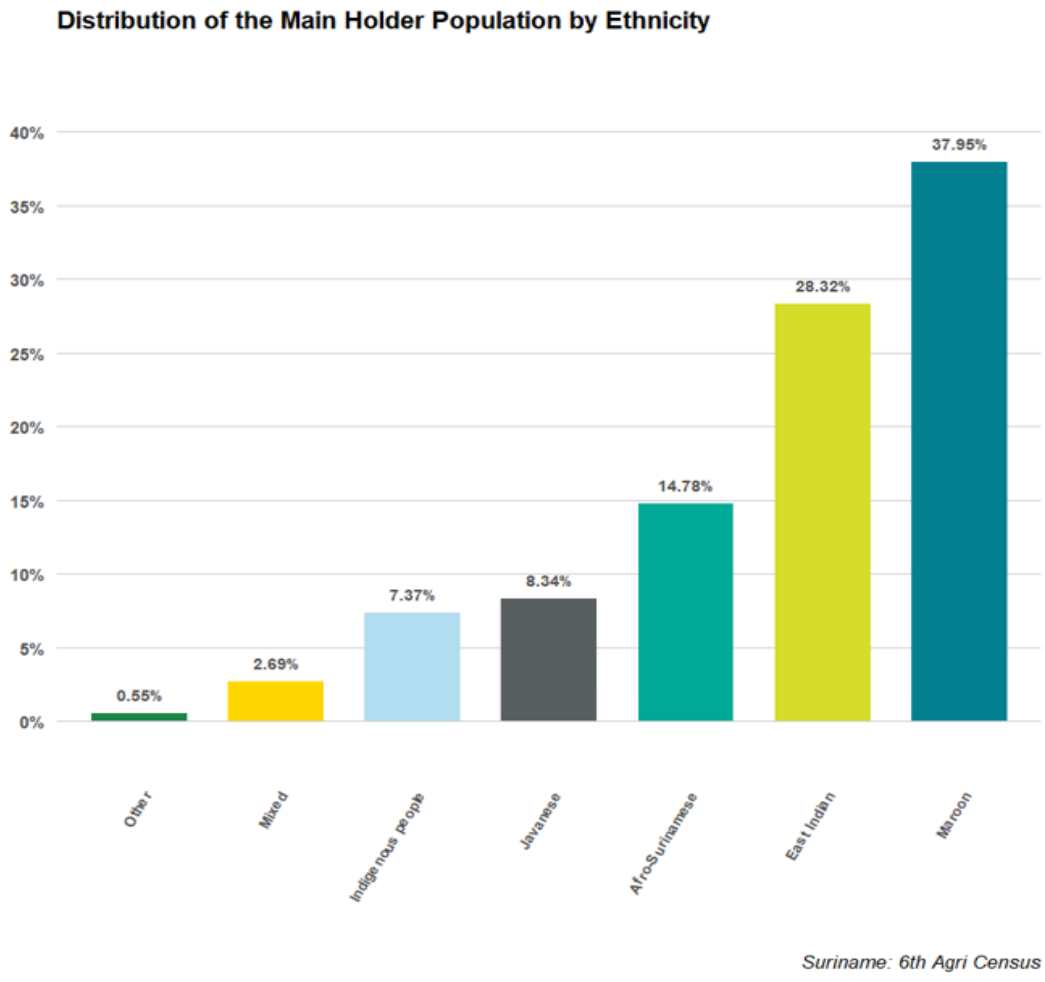


Figure 3.5: Percentage of the main holder population by ethnicity

Figure 3.5 visually confirms that no single ethnic group commands an absolute majority of agricultural holdings nationally, making Surinamese agriculture one of the most ethnically diverse in the Caribbean. However, the national aggregate conceals profound geographic concentrations that are visible in Table 3.3.

Interior districts are dominated by **Maroon** and **Indigenous** holders: Brokopondo is 77.4% Maroon, Sipaliwini is 73.2% Maroon with 11.9% Indigenous, and Marowijne shows 60.6% Maroon with 17.1% Indigenous. These patterns directly reflect the historical settlement of Maroon communities in the interior, as well as the continuation of traditional agricultural practices by Indigenous communities within their ancestral territories.

Hindustani and **Javanese** holders predominate in the coastal agricultural areas, in a pattern that traces directly to the indentured historical labor system. Nickerie is 74.6% Hindustani with 15.1% Javanese; Saramacca is 60.3% Hindustani with 19.2% Javanese; and Wanica is 65.7% Hindustani with 14.1% Javanese. The descendants of Indian and Javanese indentured laborers, have maintained strong agricultural traditions in these districts over four to five generations, and today they constitute the productive backbone of Suriname's commercial rice and horticultural sectors.

Afro-Surinamese/Creole holders show more dispersed patterns. Coronie stands out as 78.9% Creole — the most Creole-dominated agricultural district — historically linked to coconut cultivation. Paramaribo presents unique ethnic diversity (46.1% Hindustani, 25.1% Creole, 14.8% Gemengd/Mixed, 6.5% Javanese), reflecting the capital's multi-ethnic character and the practice of peri-urban agriculture by diverse urban residents. The relative under-representation of Creole farmers in commercial agricultural districts such as Nickerie (6.0%) and Saramacca (9.8%) may reflect historical patterns of greater Creole urbanization and participation in civil service and trade rather than agricultural production.

Para presents a unique ethnic profile, with a striking 38.0% Indigenous representation — higher than any other district outside the interior. This reflects Para's transitional geographic and cultural position between the coast and the interior, hosting significant Indigenous communities alongside Maroon, Creole, and Hindustani settlers. The strong ethnic-geographic correlations across Suriname have important policy implications, suggesting that extension services, land titling programs, and credit facilities need to be culturally adapted and linguistically accessible to be effective across different farming communities.

Table 3.3: Percentage of the main holders by district and ethnicity

District	Maroon	Creole	Other	Hindustani	Javanese	Indigenous	Mix	Total
Brokopondo	77.4%	22.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	**100.0%**
Commewijne	2.7%	11.1%	0.9%	44.7%	36.5%	0.9%	3.2%	**100.0%**
Coronie	1.1%	78.9%	1.1%	5.6%	8.9%	0,0%	4.4%	**100.0%**
Marowijne	60.6%	19.2%	0,0%	0.3%	2.2%	17.1%	0.6%	**100.0%**
Nickerie	1.1%	6.0%	0.1%	74.6%	15.1%	0.4%	2.6%	**100.0%**
Para	12.3%	21.1%	2.3%	8.2%	8.8%	38.0%	9.4%	**100.0%**
Paramaribo	5.1%	25.1%	0,0%	46.1%	6.5%	2.4%	14.8%	**100.0%**
Saramacca	0.3%	9.8%	1.5%	60.3%	19.2%	4.7%	4.2%	**100.0%**
Sipaliwini	73.2%	14.3%	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%	11.9%	0.2%	**100.0%**
Wanica	2.9%	10.6%	1.6%	65.7%	14.1%	0.3%	4.7%	**100.0%**

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These strong ethnic-geographic correlations have several implications. First, they suggest that agricultural extension services and policies may need to be culturally tailored to be effective in different regions. Second, they indicate that different ethnic groups may specialize in different crops or farming systems based on cultural traditions and historical practices. Third, they reflect the persistence of historical settlement patterns and suggest that land ownership and access may still be structured along ethnic lines. Finally, they highlight the importance of ensuring that agricultural development programs are inclusive and equitable across all ethnic groups.

3.5 Educational Level of the Main Holder

Figure 3.6 reveals the educational profile of Suriname's main holders, showing that a majority have completed primary education (GLO niveau), but attainment of secondary and tertiary education remains limited within the sector. The largest category is primary education, followed by lower secondary education (MULO/LTS/LBO), with progressively smaller proportions having completed higher levels of education.

A significant proportion of holders fall into the **"None" (Geen)** category, indicating farmers with no formal education. This group likely includes older farmers who had limited access to education in their youth, as well as farmers in remote interior regions where educational infrastructure was historically limited. The presence of substantial numbers of farmers without formal education has implications for extension services, which may need to rely on oral communication, demonstration methods, and peer-to-peer learning rather than written materials.

The categories secondary/vocational (Middelbare school/MBO), higher professional education (HBO), and university (Universiteit) represent progressively smaller proportions, with university-educated farmers being particularly rare. This suggests that higher education tends to lead individuals away from agricultural careers rather than into them, possibly due to better-paying opportunities in other sectors or the perception of farming as a lower-status occupation.

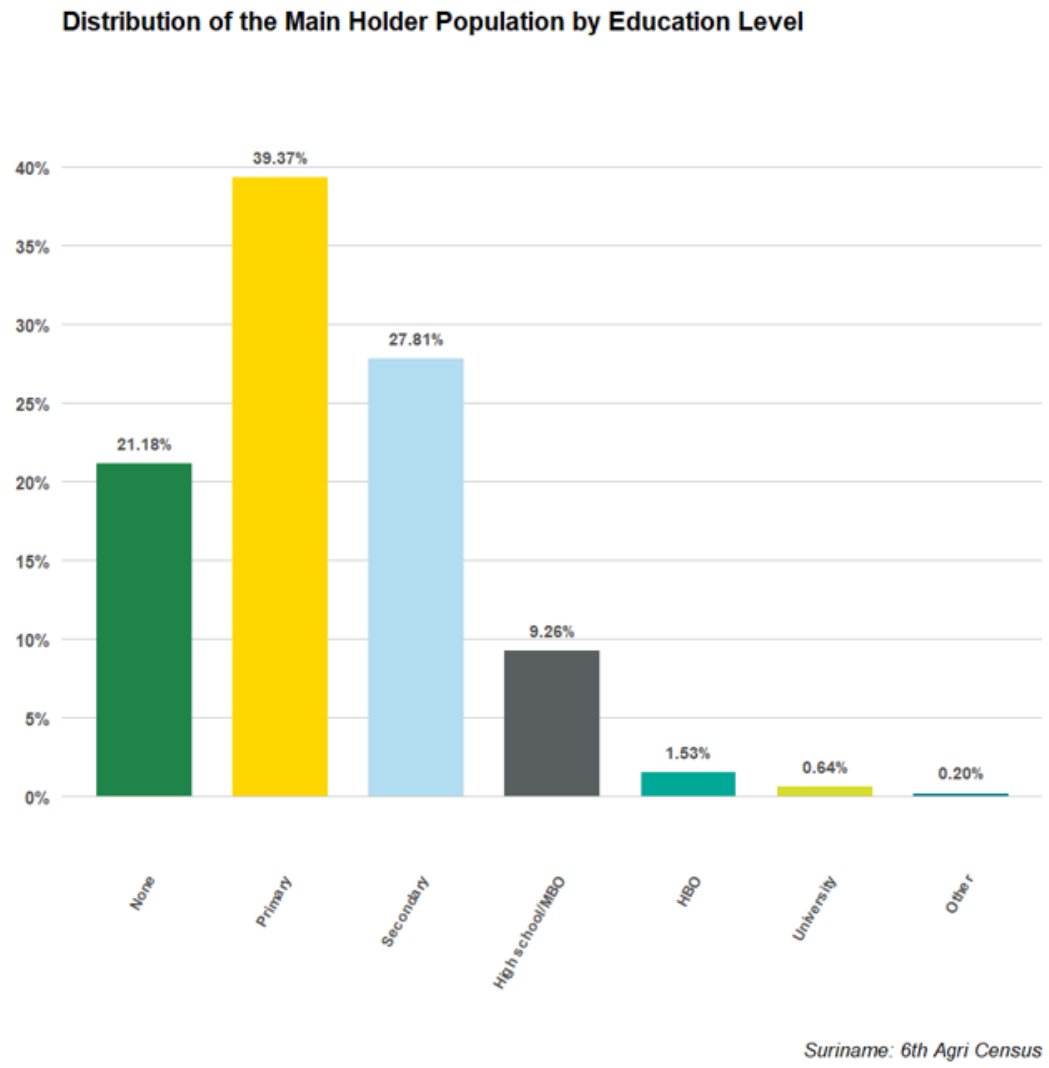


Figure 3.6: Percentage of the main holder population by educational level

The educational profile of farmers has important implications for agricultural modernization and technology adoption. While practical farming knowledge is often passed down through generations and gained through experience, formal education can facilitate the adoption of new technologies, understanding of market dynamics, financial management, and engagement with extension services. The limited representation of highly educated individuals in farming may constrain the sector's ability to rapidly adopt innovations or implement complex farm management systems

Table 3.4: Number and percentage of the main holder population by educational level and location

Educational level	Coastal N = 8,105		Interior N = 6,303		Missing N = 1		Total N = 14,409	
None	954	32%	2,074	68%	0	0%	3,027	100%
Primary education	2,488	44%	3,138	56%	1	0%	5,627	100%
Secondary education	3,075	77%	900	23%	0	0%	3,975	100%
Tertiary education	1,158	87%	166	13%	0	0%	1,324	100%
HBO	203	93%	16	7%	0	0%	219	100%
University	91	99%	1	1%	0	0%	92	100%
Other, specify	25	86%	4	14%	0	0%	29	100%
Unknown	111		4		0		115	

Suriname: 6th Agricultural Census

Key Findings — Demographic Profile of Main Holders

- The agricultural workforce is aging: the 50–64 age group predominates nationally, with Paramaribo recording the highest average farmer age (56.5 years). Interior districts such as Brokopondo and Marowijne show younger profiles, suggesting that succession challenges are more acute in coastal commercial districts.
- Female headship increased from 35% (2008) to nearly 40% (2025), but participation is highly unequal across geography and farm size: women dominate interior farming (up to 77% in Brokopondo) while managing only 2% of holdings over 20 hectares nationally.
- Gender and scale interact severely: women's share of holdings falls from near-parity at micro-farm sizes to near-exclusion at large-scale commercial operations — a structural disparity with direct implications for SDG 5.a.1 monitoring and women's land rights policies.
- Suriname's ethnic geography of agriculture is deeply entrenched: Maroon and Indigenous holders dominate the interior; Hindustani and Javanese holders dominate coastal commercial districts; and Creole holders show more dispersed but concentrated patterns in Coronie and Paramaribo.
- Primary education (GLO niveau) is the modal attainment level for Surinamese farmers; no-formal-education holders are concentrated overwhelmingly in village (interior) settings, while higher education is almost exclusively a coastal phenomenon (99% of university-educated farmers are coastal).
- The extreme educational divide between coastal and interior farming populations demands differentiated extension strategies: oral, demonstration-based, and culturally adapted approaches for the interior; and digital, market-oriented, and formal agribusiness tools for coastal commercial farmers.

4. Crops



The Sixth Agricultural Census collected data on parcels, crop types, and cultivated area for all eligible holdings across Suriname. This chapter covers three crop categories, defined in line with **FAO WCA 2020** standards: **annual crops** (crops with a growing cycle of less than one year, such as rice, cassava, and vegetables); **semi-permanent crops** (crops with growing cycle of at least one year and less than two, such as plantains, pineapple, and sugarcane); and **permanent crops** (crops requiring more than two years to reach productive age, such as coconut, citrus, mango, and cocoa). The analysis proceeds from the physical organization of farmland—including parcel structure and cultivation arrangements—to the distribution of crop types and, ultimately, the geographic composition of crop portfolios at the district level.

4.1 Land Organization: Parcels, Road-side Plots, and Shifting Cultivation

Structure of Farm Land

The structural organization of the Surinamese agricultural holdings is characterized by simplicity. A large majority of holdings — **68%** of all 14,409 enumerated holdings (9,854 holdings) — consist of a single land parcel. A further 12% held two parcels, and 3% held three or more. Notably, **16% of holdings reported no formal parcel at all**, most likely reflecting arrangements where land access is based entirely on shifting cultivation or road-side plots.

Table 4.1: Number of holdings with parcels, shifting cultivation and road-side plots by legal status

	Civil person, 1 holder		Civil person, group of holders		Juridical person		Total	
	N = 14,130		N = 165		N = 114		N = 14,409	
Parcels								
0	2,354	17%	5	3%	3	3%	**2,362**	**16%**
1	9,625	68%	128	77%	102	89%	**9,854**	**68%**
2	1,744	12%	25	15%	5	4%	**1,773**	**12%**
3+	407	3%	8	5%	4	4%	**419**	**3%**
Shifting cultivation								
0	8,165	58%	128	77%	111	97%	**8,404**	**58%**
1	5,335	38%	28	17%	3	3%	**5,366**	**37%**
2	460	3%	5	3%	0	0%	**465**	**3%**
3+	170	1%	4	2%	0	0%	**174**	**1%**
Road-side plots								
0	13,927	99%	160	97%	113	99%	**14,200**	**99%**
1	193	1%	5	3%	1	1%	**199**	**1%**
2+	10	0%	0	0%	0	0%	**10**	**0%**

Suriname: 6th Agricultural Census

Table 4.1 highlights the sharp contrast in land organization between different types of holders. Civil persons are the only category with significant use of shifting cultivation (38% report at least one shifting cultivation plot), compared to 17% of groups of civil persons and a mere 3% of juridical persons. This reflects the near-total reliance of large-scale commercial operations on fixed, titled parcels with secure tenure. Road-side plots are negligible across all categories (less than 1%), suggesting that this informal access modality is a marginal land-use arrangement at the national level, though it may be locally significant in specific peri-urban or roadside areas.

In aggregate, **approximately 42% of all holders manage at least one shifting cultivation plot**, confirming that traditional rotational farming remains a structurally important — and underrepresented — component of food production in Suriname, particularly in the interior districts of Sipaliwini, Brokopondo, and Marowijne.

Land Tenure of Regular Parcels

Table 4.1a Rented from the government is the most common form of land tenure, accounting for 38.8% of the total number of parcels (15,198) in the country. This is followed by the category 'other' with 18.7% and 'privately owned' with 18.5%, indicating that although formal land titles are widespread, a substantial share of the sector operates under diverse and sometimes informal tenure arrangements.

Table 4.1a: Number and percentage of regular parcels by land tenure

Land tenure	Number	Percentage
Rented from Government	5,892	38.8%
Privately owned	2,807	18.5%
Rented from private	806	5.3%
Rented from holding, uniform permanent crop	49	0.3%
Community forest	1,393	9.2%
Squatting	229	1.5%
Right to use	313	2.1%
Assignment	863	5.7%
Community land for pasture	9	0.1%
Other	2,837	18.7%
Suriname - Total	15,198	100.0%

Suriname: 6th Agricultural Census

Traditional and collective systems also maintain a notable presence, with 'community forest' accounting for 9.2% of parcels and 'assignment' for 5.7%. Land rented from private represents only 5.3% of the overall distribution, while smaller categories such as 'right to use' and 'squatting' together account for less than 4% of the total number of parcels in Suriname.

4.2 Crop Type Presence by District

National Overview: Annual versus (Semi-)permanent Crops

At the national level, **annual crops are by far the most widespread**, 10,891 holdings reported growing annual crops in at least one parcel/plot. (Semi-)permanent crops combined are present on 6,549 holdings.

Table 4.2: Number and percentage of holdings with at least one parcel/plot of annual or (semi-)permanent crops by district

	Annual				(Semi-)permanent			
	No		Yes		No		Yes	
District	N = 3,518		N = 10,891		N = 7,859		N = 6,549	
Brokopondo	90	10%	852	90%	627	67%	315	33%
Commewijne	360	41%	511	59%	400	46%	471	54%
Coronie	65	72%	25	28%	44	49%	46	51%
Marowijne	362	16%	1,934	84%	670	29%	1,626	71%
Nickerie	286	21%	1,093	79%	1,225	89%	154	11%
Para	64	34%	126	66%	85	45%	105	55%
Paramaribo	356	42%	486	58%	511	61%	330	39%
Saramacca	342	34%	671	66%	383	38%	630	62%
Sipaliwini	113	3%	4,161	97%	2,094	49%	2,180	51%
Wanica	1,480	59%	1,032	41%	1,820	72%	692	28%

Suriname: 6th Agricultural Census

The census confirms a sharp geographic divide in crop-type presence across districts. Table 4.2 illustrates the proportions of holdings with annual crops and (semi-)permanent crops by district.

Several patterns stand out:

- **Nickerie** is the most mono-crop district in the country: 79% of its holdings grow annual crops (overwhelmingly rice), while only 11% grow (semi-)permanent crops — the lowest rate nationally. This extreme specialization reflects a commercially oriented, mechanized rice economy with little diversification.

- **Marowijne and Saramacca** present a contrasting profile, combining high annual crop presence (84% and 66% respectively) with the highest rates of semi-permanent and permanent crop cultivation (71% and 62%). These districts are Suriname's primary zones of agricultural diversification, where fruit trees, plantains, coconut, and citrus complement food crop production.

- **Sipaliwini** reported a total of 97% of agricultural holdings with at least one planting of annual crops. This reflects an agricultural system that relies primarily on the

production of staple food crops, such as cassava and rice, and to a lesser extent on perennial crops. (Semi-)permanent crops are present on 51% of agricultural holdings, including crops such as plantains, and are mainly cultivated for subsistence purposes.

- **Coronie** is a notable outlier: only 28% of its holdings grow annual crops — the lowest rate in the country — while half grow (semi-)permanent crops, reflecting its traditional orientation towards coconut and other tree crops, though on a very small scale.
- **Wanica**, despite being Suriname's main peri-urban agricultural area, shows relatively low (semi-)permanent crops presence (28%), with annual crops on only 41% of holdings — a pattern consistent with intensive, market-oriented vegetable production combined with livestock, rather than (semi-)permanent cropping.

4.3 Annual Crops: Dominance of Staple Food Crops

National Ranking

Figure 4.2 presents the top ten annual crops by number of holdings nationwide. The ranking is dominated by cassava and rice, which together form the backbone of Suriname's food crop sector.

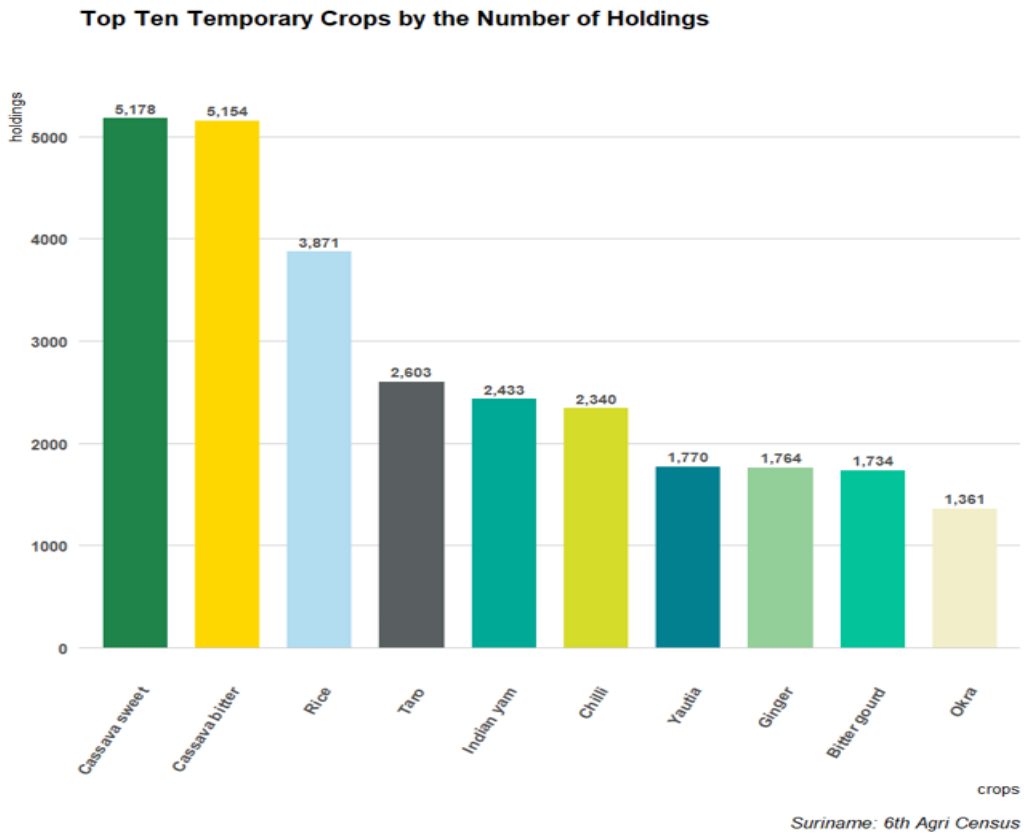


Figure 4.2: Number of holdings with top ten annual crops

Cassava dominates the national ranking by a striking margin: sweet cassava is grown on 5,178 holdings and bitter cassava on 5,154 holdings, together making cassava by far the most widely cultivated crop in the country and serving as the primary food security staple across both coastal and interior communities.

Rice, at 3,871 holdings, ranks third but remains decisive in terms of cultivated land area, driven by Nickerie's large-scale irrigated paddy production. Taro/Chinese tajer (2,603) and Indian yam/pomtayer (2,433) reflect the widespread cultivation of root and tuber crops, particularly in interior and eastern districts.

Ginger (1,764) appears prominently — particularly in Marowijne, where it tops the district temporary-crop ranking with 954 holdings — suggesting it has grown into a significant smallholder cash crop in the eastern region. Chilli pepper, sopropo, and okra round out the

top ten, representing the diversity of vegetable production for household consumption and local markets.

District Profiles: Top Three Annual Crops

Table 4.3 presents the top three annual crops by number of holdings for each district, revealing the deep geographic specialization of Suriname's annual crop sector.

Table 4.3: Number of holdings with top three annual crops by district

District	Top 3 crops	Number of holding
Brokopondo	Cassava sweet	564
	Cassava bitter	372
	Bitter gourd	318
Commewijne	Chili	211
	Eggplant	96
	Cassava sweet	92
Coronie	Eggplant (bitter)	9
	Eggplant	8
	Chili	8
Marowijne	Cassava bitter	1.148
	Taro	977
	Ginger	954
Nickerie	Rice	1.938
	Eggplant	86
	Chili	81
Para	Cassava sweet	62
	Cassava bitter	58
	Chili	31
Paramaribo	Chili	199
	Cassava sweet	144
	Eggplant	125
Saramacca	Chili	162
	Yard long bean	161
	Cassava sweet	124
Sipaliwini	Bittere Cassave	3.360
	Cassava sweet	3.124
	Rice	1.828
Wanica	Chili	352
	Cassava sweet	274
	Tanja leaves	250

Suriname: 6th Agricultural Census

The district profiles reveal three distinct farming systems for annual crops:

Rice monoculture (Nickerie): Rice, cultivated on 1,938 holdings, overwhelmingly dominates the district, with eggplant and pepper as distant second and third. This is Suriname's primary commercial crop district.

Cassava-based subsistence systems (Sipaliwini, Brokopondo, Para): Both cassava varieties dominate, with highland rice as an important secondary crop in Sipaliwini. These are food security crop systems oriented primarily toward household consumption.

Diversified vegetable systems (Commewijne, Saramacca, Wanica, Paramaribo): Chili (Cayenne Pepper) consistently ranks first or second in peri-urban districts of the coastal area, supplemented by **eggplant, yard-long beans**, and **leafy vegetables**. These holdings are more market-oriented, serving urban consumers.

Marowijne's ginger specialization stands out as a unique district profile: **Ginger, yautia**, and **bitter cassava** form a distinctive combination that blends traditional root crop cultivation with an emerging commercial crop.

4.4 (Semi-)permanent Crops: Plantains as the National Backbone

National Ranking

Figure 4.3 shows the top ten (semi-)permanent crops by number of holdings. The chart is dominated by **plantains** to a remarkable degree: 4,555 holdings grow plantain — more than three times the number growing the second-ranked crop, mango (1,445 holdings).

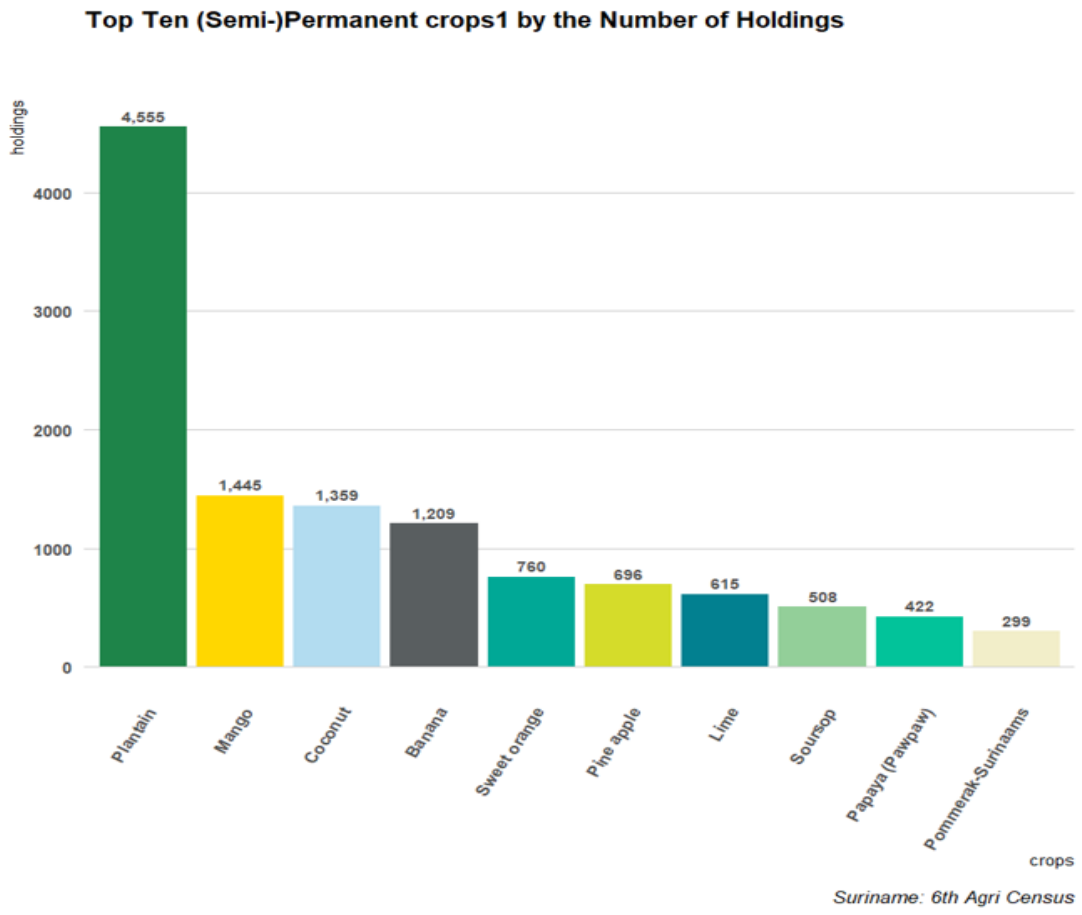


Figure 4.3: Number of holdings with top ten (semi-)permanent crops

This national picture shows that **plantains are by far the most widespread (semi-)permanent crop in Suriname**, present in virtually every agricultural district and production system type. **Mango (1,445)** and **coconut (1,359)** follow, reflecting the importance of tree crops that serve both household consumption and local markets. **Banana (1,209)** and **orange (760)** complete the top five. The remaining crops — **pineapple, lime, soursop, papaya and pommerak** — each appear on fewer than 700 holdings but represent the diverse fruit crop portfolio of Surinamese farms.

It is notable that compared to the Fifth Census (2008), which recorded much lower diversity of mango and citrus at district level, the Sixth Census suggests a broader distribution of fruit

trees across the farming landscape, though direct area-based comparisons require care given methodological differences between censuses.

District Profiles: Top Three (Semi-)Permanent Crops

Table 4.4 presents the leading (semi-)permanent crops by district.

Table 4.4: Number of holdings with top three (semi-)permanent crops by district

District	Top 3 crops	Number of holding
Brokopondo	Plantain	390
	Pine apple	18
	Sweet orange	6
	Sugar cane	6
Commewijne	Plantain	229
	Coconut	157
	Sweet orange	146
Coronie	Plantain	26
	Coconut	18
	Passion fruit	8
Marowijne	Plantain	950
	Coconut	707
	Mango	686
Nickerie	Plantain	82
	Mango	51
	Coconut	39
Para	Pine apple	48
	Plantain	42
	Mango	21
Paramaribo	Mango	165
	Banana	143
	Plantain	135
	Papaya (Pawpaw)	135
Saramacca	Plantain	462
	Sweet orange	134
	Coconut	85
Sipaliwini	Plantain	1.888
	Banana	622
	Pine apple	473
Wanica	Plantain	351
	Sweet orange	182
	Mango	180

Suriname: 6th Agricultural Census

Plantains top the ranking in eight of ten districts. The exceptions are **Para** (led by pineapple) and **Paramaribo** (led by mango), reflecting distinct peri-urban and high-value crop specializations.

Marowijne emerges as Suriname's most significant (semi-)permanent crop district: 950 plantain holdings, 707 coconut holdings, and 686 mango holdings — a scale comparable to Saramacca and far exceeding most other districts in tree crop diversity. The combination of plantain, coconut, and mango in Marowijne points to an established tradition of diversified permanent farming among the district's predominantly Maroon communities.

Sipaliwini presents an interesting interior profile: plantain (1,888 holdings) and banana (622 holdings) are the dominant (semi-)permanent crops, supplemented by pineapple — all crops that fit naturally within shifting cultivation systems and provide household food security without requiring complex management infrastructure.

Commewijne combines plantains, coconut, and orange in a system reflecting its plantation heritage and its position as a district that bridges subsistence and commercial production modes.

Nickerie's low (semi-)permanent crop presence — plantain on only 82 holdings and mango on 51 — confirms the district's near-exclusive focus on rice, with (semi-)permanent crops occupying only marginal roles in its agricultural economy.

4.5 Structural Patterns and Agricultural Vulnerabilities

Three structural patterns emerge from the combined analysis of parcel organization, crop type presence, and planted area data.

First, geographic polarization. Suriname's crop sector is organized around two fundamentally different agricultural worlds. The coastal plains — dominated by Nickerie — account for the vast majority of cultivated land through large-scale, mechanized, irrigated rice production. The interior districts and peri-urban areas account for most of the country's farming households but manage relatively small cultivated areas, using subsistence-oriented systems built around cassava, rice, plantain, and diverse vegetables. This polarization means that national crop statistics are heavily skewed by Nickerie, and interior food security relies on a production system that is largely invisible in aggregated area-based measures.

Second, the persistence and scale of shifting cultivation. With 42% of all holdings reporting at least one shifting cultivation plot — concentrated overwhelmingly among civil persons in interior districts — traditional rotational farming remains structurally embedded in Surinamese agriculture. This practice sustains food security for Maroon and Indigenous communities but is chronically under-counted in area-based agricultural statistics, has limited integration into formal supply chains, and is increasingly vulnerable to environmental pressures including forest loss and climate variability.

Third, limited crop diversification in high-output districts. The low share of (semi-)permanent crop cultivation in Nickerie (11%) and Wanica (28%) points to narrow specialization in districts that otherwise represent high agricultural output. Nickerie's near-total dependence on rice — a single commodity with high exposure to price volatility, water availability, and climate risk — represents a systemic vulnerability. Strengthening diversification incentives and extension support in these districts could improve both income stability and nutritional outcomes.

Key Findings — Crops

- **Farm land is mostly simple and fragmented**: 68% of holdings consist of a single parcel, and 16% have no formal parcel, relying on shifting cultivation or road-side plots. Approximately 42% of all holdings — predominantly civil persons in the interior — manage at least one shifting cultivation plot, confirming its continued role as a food security strategy for rural and indigenous communities.

- **Rented from the government and privately owned land tenure account for the majority:** The principal conclusion drawn from the distribution of land tenure is the structural stability provided by the majority of land tenure title 'rented from the government', which account for 38.8% of the total number of parcels. This title is generally issued for a minimum period of 40 years and confer a legally recognized right that supports long-term agricultural investment. This long-term security is a key driver of the agricultural sector, as it provides farmers with the confidence needed to make substantial capital investments, such as irrigation systems, the establishment of permanent crops, and the adoption of sustainable land management practices. Combined with 'privately owned' parcels, more than 57% of all parcels are held under secure, long-term legal tenure arrangements. This provides a solid foundation for improving access to agricultural finance and supports the long-term growth and development of Suriname's agricultural sector.

- **Annual crops are near-universal and (semi-)permanent crops are regionally concentrated:** Annual crops are present on 76% of all holdings. (Semi-)permanent crops reach their highest rates in Marowijne (71%) and Saramacca (62%), while Nickerie (11%) and Wanica (28%) show very limited permanent crop presence.

- **Cassava (sweet and bitter), rice and plantains are the three pillars of Surinamese crop agriculture**: Cassava (sweet and bitter) leads annual crops by holding count (10,332); cassava (sweet and bitter) is the backbone of interior food security; and plantains dominate the (semi-)permanent crop sector with 4,555 holdings — more than three times any other permanent species.

- **District crop profiles are sharply differentiated: Nickerie is a rice monoculture**; Sipaliwini and Brokopondo are cassava-based subsistence systems; Marowijne uniquely combines ginger, yautia, and cassava for annual crops with plantains, coconut, and mango for (semi-)permanent crops; and coastal districts such as Commewijne, Saramacca, and Wanica show more diversified vegetable and fruit portfolios.

- **Crop diversification in high-output districts is limited and represents a structural vulnerability**: Nickerie's near-exclusive reliance on rice exposes Suriname's primary agricultural district to commodity price, water, and climate risks. Supporting crop diversification in this district — alongside value-chain development for ginger, citrus, and tropical fruits in eastern districts — should be a priority for agricultural policy.

5. Livestock



The census collected detailed data on all livestock held on agricultural holdings, including cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and poultry. Data were collected with reference to 13 January 2025. The following analysis covers the number of holdings with each animal category, total and average head counts, breed composition, sex distribution, and system of operation.

5.1 Overview of Livestock Holdings and System of Operation

Table 5.1 shows that a total of **4,899 holdings** reported at least one category of livestock. Poultry (chicken) was by far the most common livestock category, recorded on **2,801 holdings** (**57%** of all livestock holdings). Cattle was the second most common category, present on **1,198 holdings (24%)**, followed by sheep (**477 holdings; 10%**), goats (**309 holdings; 6%**), and pigs (**89 holdings; 2%**). A small number of holdings (**26; less than 1%**) reported other animal categories.

Wanica was the dominant district for livestock, accounting for 44% of all livestock holdings (2,140). This reflects its status as the main peri-urban agricultural district surrounding Paramaribo, where market-oriented livestock farming — including intensive poultry and smallholder cattle — is most developed. Nickerie ranked second (15% of livestock holdings), followed by Commewijne (10%) and Paramaribo (9%).

Interior districts were almost entirely absent from commercial livestock production: Brokopondo reported only 153 livestock holdings (3% of the national total), Sipaliwini 206 (4%), and Marowijne just 131 (3%). In Brokopondo and Marowijne, livestock was essentially limited to backyard poultry. In Sipaliwini, 55% of the small number of livestock holdings classified as “other” animal types.

Table 5.1: Number and percentage of holdings with livestock by district and animal category

	Cattle		Poultry		Goat		Pig		Sheep		Other		Total	
District	N = 1,198		N = 2,801		N = 309		N = 89		N = 477		N = 26		N = 4,899	
Brokopondo	3	0%	150	5%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	**153**	**3%**
Commewijne	110	9%	311	11%	32	10%	10	11%	44	9%	2	8%	**509**	**10%**
Coronie	32	3%	22	1%	2	1%	14	16%	22	5%	1	4%	**93**	**2%**
Marowijne	2	0%	129	5%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	**131**	**3%**
Nickerie	130	11%	407	15%	54	17%	20	23%	122	26%	1	4%	**734**	**15%**
Para	24	2%	71	3%	3	1%	10	11%	14	3%	3	12%	**125**	**3%**
Paramaribo	32	3%	332	12%	40	13%	11	12%	10	2%	0	0%	**425**	**9%**
Saramacca	119	10%	192	7%	31	10%	6	7%	36	8%	0	0%	**384**	**8%**
Sipaliwini	7	1%	183	7%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	14	55%	**206**	**4%**
Wanica	739	62%	1,003	36%	147	48%	17	19%	229	48%	5	19%	**2,140**	**44%**

Suriname: 6th Agricultural Census

The census recorded the management system applied to each livestock category. Table 5.2 shows that at the national level, intensive/feedlot/pen-based systems were the most common overall, accounting for 60% of all livestock holdings (2,963). This system was dominant for pigs (98% of pig holdings), the majority of poultry (79% of chicken holdings), and nearly half of small ruminant holdings. Open yard systems were recorded for 9% of holdings, primarily for backyard poultry (453 holdings; 16% of all chicken holdings).

For cattle, the dominant system was semi-intensive grazing, reported by 43% of cattle holdings (510), followed by extensive grazing (35%; 424 holdings) and intensive/pen-based (22%; 264 holdings). The prevalence of semi-intensive grazing reflects the character of most Surinamese cattle operations: family-scale or small commercial enterprises using fenced pasture combined with supplementary feeding, rather than either free-ranging or fully intensive systems.

For sheep and goats, semi-intensive grazing was also important (37% of sheep holdings and 37% of goat holdings respectively), though intensive/pen-based systems were the most common for both species (48% of sheep and 49% of goat holdings), consistent with their common role as supplementary household livestock managed in small pens.

Table 5.2: Number and percentage of livestock holdings by system of operation and animal category

	Cattle		Poultry		Goat		Pig		Sheep		Other		Total	
System	**N = 1,198**		**N = 2,801**		**N = 309**		**N = 89**		**N = 477**		**N = 26**		**N = 4,899**	
Battery cage/boxes	0	0%	138	5%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	**138**	**3%**
Extensive grazing	424	35%	0	0%	43	14%	0	0%	71	15%	3	11%	**541**	**11%**
Intensive/feed-lots/pens	264	22%	2,210	79%	152	49%	87	98%	230	48%	20	77%	**2,963**	**60%**
Open yard	0	0%	453	16%	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	**454**	**9%**
Semi-intensive grazing	510	43%	0	0%	114	37%	1	1%	176	37%	3	11%	**804**	**16%**

Suriname: 6th Agricultural Census

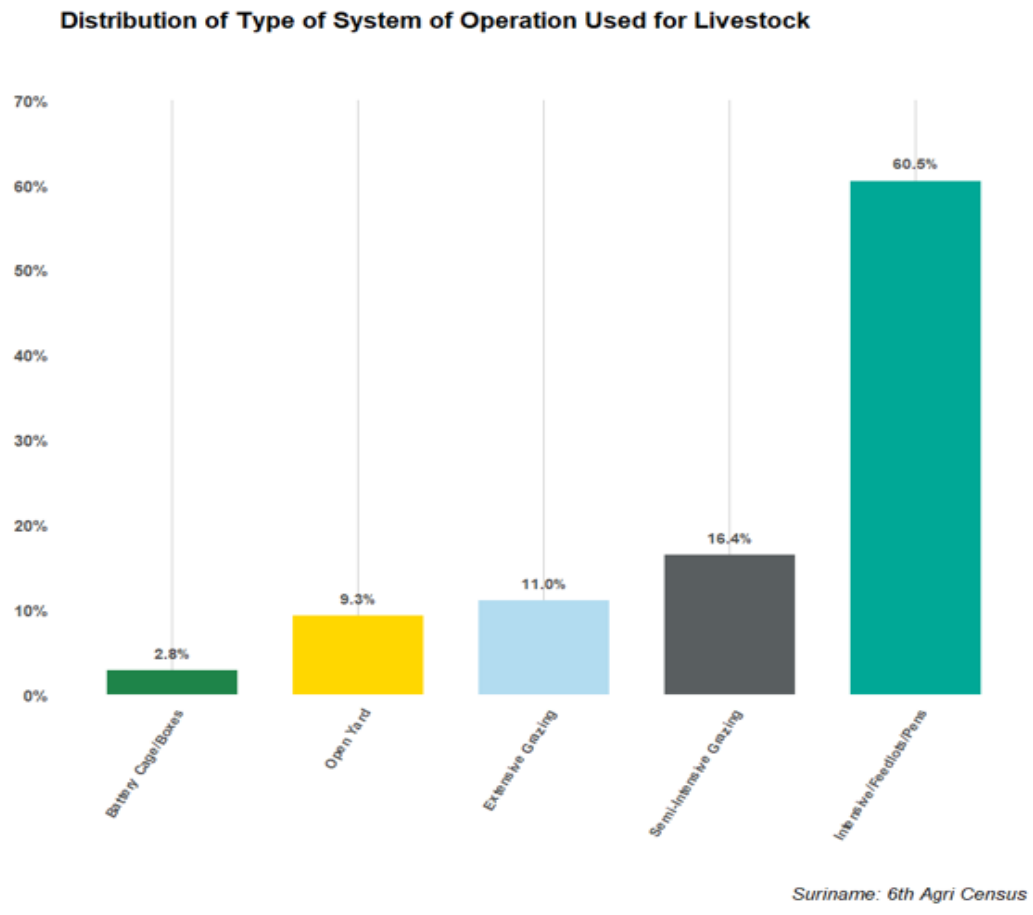


Figure 5.1: System of operation used for livestock

5.2 Cattle

A total of **1,198 holdings** reported cattle (see Table 5.1 for number of holdings and Table 5.3 for number of cattle), with a combined stock of **19,714 heads** and a national average of **17 heads per holding (**Table 5.4). The cattle sector is heavily concentrated: Wanica alone accounted for 62% of all cattle holdings (739) and 6,276 heads (32% of the national total), reflecting the peri-urban cattle sector around the capital. Commewijne was the second most important district in terms of total heads (6,142; 31% of the national total), driven by a smaller number of larger-scale operations — the average holding size in Commewijne was 55 heads, the highest of any district.

Table 5.3: Total number of cattle by district and sex

	Female	Male	Total
District	Cows/Heifers	Bulls	
Brokopondo	3	0	3
Commewijne	4,267	1,875	6,142
Coronie	641	141	782
Marowijne	1	3	4
Nickerie	2,033	1,084	3,117
Para	399	111	510
Paramaribo	199	84	283
Saramacca	1,908	617	2,525
Sipaliwini	31	41	72
Wanica	4,154	2,122	6,276
SURINAME	13,636	6,078	19,714

Suriname: 6th Agricultural Census

Nickerie (3,117 heads; 130 holdings; average 23 heads), Saramacca (2,525 heads; 119 holdings; average 20 heads), and Para (510 heads; 24 holdings; average 22 heads) form the next tier. The interior districts contribute very little to the national cattle population (Brokopondo: 3 heads; Marowijne: 4 heads; Sipaliwini: 72 heads), making the combined share of the national cattle sector minimal (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4: Total and average number of cattle present on the holding by district

District	Total	Average
Brokopondo	3	1
Commewijne	6,142	55
Coronie	782	24
Marowijne	4	2
Nickerie	3,117	23
Para	510	22
Paramaribo	283	9
Saramacca	2,525	20
Sipaliwini	72	10
Wanica	6,276	8
SURINAME - Total	**19,714**	-
SURINAME - Average	-	**17**

Suriname: 6th Agricultural Census

Table 5.3 shows the sex composition of the national herd with a clear predominance of females: 13,636 cows/heifers (69%) compared to 6,078 bulls (31%). This female-to-male ratio is broadly consistent with a breeding herd composition, though it also suggests that castrated males (oxen) may be counted as bulls or that there is a significant contribution from dairy-oriented operations. The female share is highest in Para (78%), Coronie (82%), and Commewijne (69%), suggesting that these districts have more milk-oriented cattle operations. Sipaliwini is an exception, with almost equal numbers of males (41) and females (31), consistent with a small subsistence herd without systematic reproductive management.

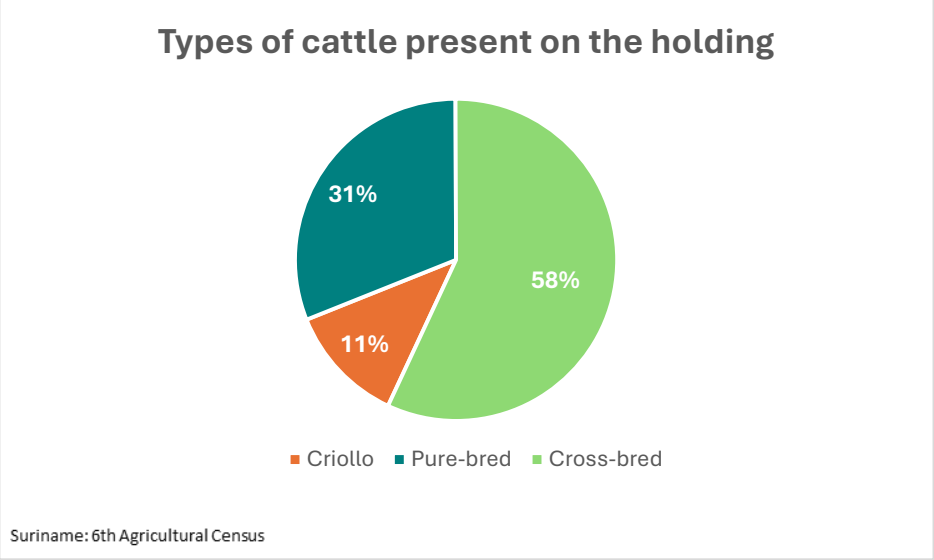


Figure 5.2: Types of cattle present on the holding

Regarding breed composition, crossbreeds dominate the national cattle herd: 58% of cattle holdings (710 of 1,224 counted in the breed classification) keep cross-bred animals, 31% keep pure-bred animals, and 11% keep Criollo (creole) cattle. The dominance of crossbreeds reflects an active but informal breeding improvement effort across the sector, as farmers hybridize locally adapted Criollo cattle with higher-producing breeds. Wanica has the highest share of pure-breds (60% of all pure-bred cattle holdings), suggesting a more commercial breeding orientation in that district.

Table 5.5: Number and percentage of holdings with cattle by district and types

	Pure-bred		Criollo		Cross-bred		Total	
	N = 374		N = 140		N = 710		N = 1,224	
District								
Brokopondo	0	0%	0	0%	3	0%	**3**	**0%**
Commewijne	66	18%	7	5%	39	5%	**112**	**9%**
Coronie	7	2%	3	2%	22	3%	**32**	**3%**
Marowijne	0	0%	0	0%	2	0%	**2**	**0%**
Nickerie	24	6%	25	18%	88	12%	**137**	**11%**
Para	10	3%	0	0%	13	2%	**23**	**2%**
Paramaribo	0	0%	0	0%	32	4%	**32**	**3%**
Saramacca	42	11%	12	9%	70	10%	**124**	**10%**
Sipaliwini	0	0%	7	5%	0	0%	**7**	**1%**
Wanica	225	60%	86	61%	441	62%	**752**	**61%**

Suriname: 6th Agricultural Census

5.3 Sheep

A total of **477 holdings (**Table 5.1) reported sheep, with a national total of **5,506 heads** and an average of 12 heads per holding. The sheep sector is predominantly concentrated in Wanica (228 holdings; 48%) and Nickerie (119 holdings; 25%), which together account for 73% of all sheep holdings and approximately 67% of total sheep heads (2,350 and 1,310 respectively) (Table 5.7).

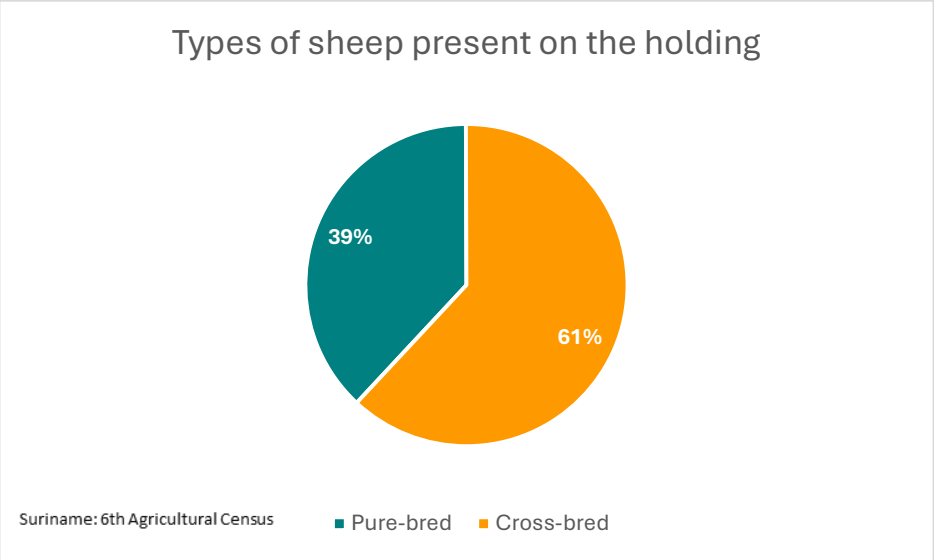


Figure 5.3: Types of sheep present on the holding

Table 5.6: Number of holdings with sheep by district and type

	Pure-bred		Cross-bred		Total	
	N = 183		N = 290		N = 473*	
District						
Commewijne	30	16%	16	6%	**46**	**10%**
Coronie	7	4%	13	4%	**20**	**4%**
Nickerie	28	15%	91	31%	**119**	**25%**
Para	4	2%	9	3%	**13**	**3%**
Paramaribo	10	5%	0	0%	**10**	**2%**
Saramacca	12	7%	25	9%	**37**	**8%**
Wanica	92	50%	136	47%	**228**	**48%**

Suriname: 6th Agricultural Census

*Not all holdings have specified their breeds/types.

The national sheep herd is female-dominated, with 3,646 ewes (66%) compared to 1,860 rams (34%) (Table 5.8). This sex ratio is consistent with a small-scale breeding and fattening sector. Crossbreeds are more common than purebreds (61% vs. 39% of holdings) (Figure 5.3), reflecting a similar improvement dynamic as observed in cattle. Interior districts reported no sheep holdings, confirming the absence of this species in subsistence farming systems in Brokopondo and Sipaliwini.

Table 5.7: Total and average number of sheep present on the holding by district

District	Total	Average
Commewijne	887	19
Coronie	329	16
Nickerie	1,310	11
Para	173	13
Paramaribo	10	1
Saramacca	447	12
Wanica	2,350	10
SURINAME - Total	5,506	-
SURINAME - Average	-	12

Suriname: 6th Agricultural Census

Table 5.8: Total number of sheep by district and sex

District	Female (Ewe)	Male (Ram)	Total
Commewijne	686	201	887
Coronie	268	61	329
Nickerie	858	452	1,310
Para	133	40	173
Paramaribo	10	0	10
Saramacca	296	151	447
Wanica	1,395	955	2,350
SURINAME	**3,646**	**1,860**	**5,506**

Suriname: 6th Agricultural Census

5.4 Goat

Goat holdings totaled **309** (Table 5.1), with **2,303 heads** (Table 5.10) nationally and an average of 7 heads per holding — the smallest average herd size of any major livestock category. Goat farming is again concentrated in Wanica (144 holdings; 48%) and Nickerie (51 holdings; 17%), with Paramaribo accounting for a notable 13% share (40 holdings), reflecting peri-urban small-scale goat keeping for household consumption and sale. Commewijne contributes 11% of holdings (32 holdings).

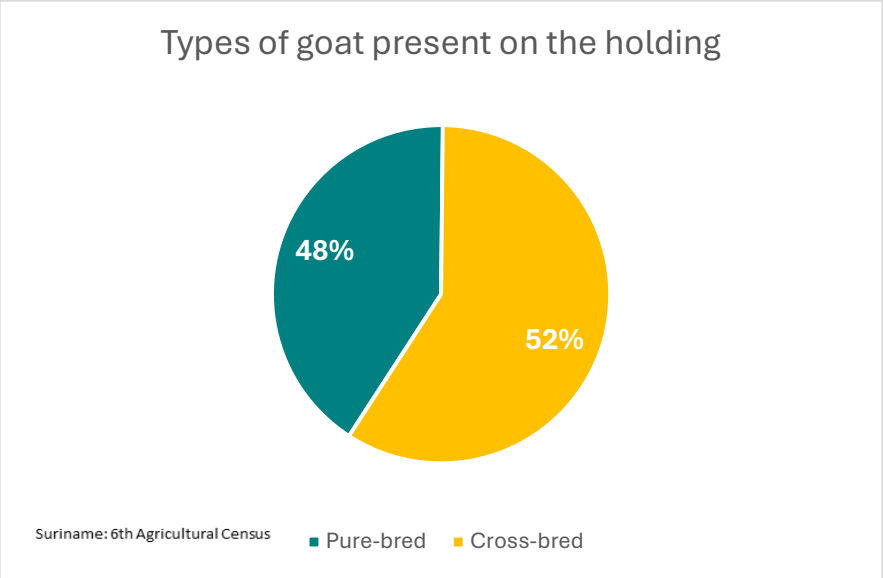


Figure 5.4: Types of goat present on the holding

Table 5.9: Number of holdings with goat by district and types

	Pure-bred		Cross-bred		Total	
District	**N = 145**		**N = 158**		**N = 303***	
Commewijne	21	14%	11	7%	**32**	**11%**
Coronie	0	0%	2	1%	**2**	**1%**
Nickerie	9	6%	42	27%	**51**	**17%**
Para	2	1%	1	1%	**3**	**1%**
Paramaribo	40	28%	0	0%	**40**	**13%**
Saramacca	10	7%	21	13%	**31**	**10%**
Wanica	63	43%	81	51%	**144**	**48%**

Suriname: 6th Agricultural Census

*Not all holdings have specified their breeds/types.

The sex distribution shows 1,476 does (females; 64%) compared to 827 bucks (males; 36%) (Table 5.11), consistent with a small breeding flock structure. The breed composition is nearly evenly split between purebred (48%) and crossbred (52%) (Figure 5.4) animals, suggesting somewhat less systematic genetic improvement compared to cattle and sheep. No goat holdings were recorded in Brokopondo, Marowijne, or Sipaliwini, again reflecting the concentration of formal livestock keeping in coastal areas.

Table 5.10: Total and average number of goats present on the holding by district

District	Total	Average
Commewijne	282	9
Coronie	13	6
Nickerie	497	10
Para	11	4
Paramaribo	90	2
Saramacca	253	8
Wanica	1,157	8
SURINAME - Total	2,303	-
SURINAME - Average	-	7

Suriname: 6th Agricultural Census

Table 5.11: Total number of goats by district and sex

District	Female (Doe)	Male (Buck)	Total
Commewijne	186	96	**282**
Coronie	9	4	**13**
Nickerie	322	175	**497**
Para	9	2	**11**
Paramaribo	80	10	**90**
Saramacca	168	85	**253**
Wanica	702	455	**1,157**
SURINAME	**1,476**	**827**	**2,303**

Suriname: 6th Agricultural Census

5.5 Pig

The pig sub-sector presents a highly skewed distribution. While only **89 holdings** (Table 5.1) reported pigs nationally, the total head count of **11,056** implies a national average of 202 heads per holding (Table 5.13) — by far the highest of any livestock category. This average is driven almost entirely by a small number of large-scale industrial operations in Saramacca district.

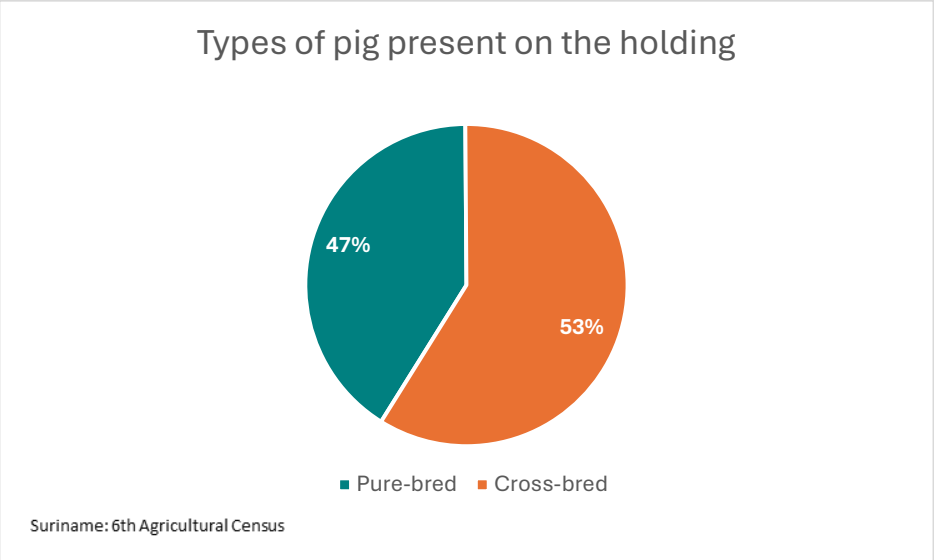


Figure 5.5: Types of pig present on the holding

Table 5.12: Number of holdings with pig by district and types

District	Pure-bred N = 43		Cross-bred N = 48		Total N = 91*	
Commewijne	5	12%	5	10%	**10**	**11%**
Coronie	6	14%	8	17%	**14**	**15%**
Nickerie	5	12%	16	33%	**21**	**23%**
Para	4	9%	6	13%	**10**	**11%**
Paramaribo	11	26%	0	0%	**11**	**12%**
Saramacca	2	5%	4	8%	**6**	**7%**
Sipaliwini	0	0%	1	2%	**1**	**1%**
Wanica	10	23%	8	17%	**18**	**20%**

Suriname: 6th Agricultural Census

*Holdings could have more than 1 breeds/types

Table 5.13 shows that Saramacca alone accounts for 8,431 pig heads (76% of the national total) from just 6 holdings, yielding an extraordinary average of 1,405 heads per holding. This signals the presence of large commercial pig farms of an industrial scale in that district. Wanica (931 heads; 17 holdings; average 52), Para (515 heads; 10 holdings; average 52), and Paramaribo (534 heads; 11 holdings; average 50) represent more typical peri-urban, medium-scale operations.

Table 5.13: Total and average number of pigs present on the holding by district

District	Total	Average
Commewijne	89	9
Coronie	213	15
Nickerie	327	16
Para	515	52
Paramaribo	534	50
Saramacca	8,431	1,405
Sipaliwini	16	16
Wanica	931	52
SURINAME - Total	11,056	-
SURINAME - Average	-	202

Suriname: 6th Agricultural Census

By size type, piglets accounted for 5,466 heads (49% of the total), followed by fatteners (2,457; 22%), breeding swines (2,146; 19%), and weaners (987; 9%). The holdings in Saramacca are dominated by piglets (4,409) and fatteners (1,924), consistent with a production-oriented commercial structure. Coronie and Nickerie represent the smallest pig holdings with more typical smallholder profiles (averages of 15 and 16 heads respectively).

Table 5.14: Total number of pigs by size type and district

District	Piglets	Weaners	Fatteners	Breeding Swines	Total
Commewijne	45	11	3	30	89
Coronie	76	60	17	60	213
Nickerie	99	105	49	74	327
Para	91	6	337	81	515
Paramaribo	534	0	0	0	534
Saramacca	4,409	426	1,924	1,672	8,431
Sipaliwini	7	3	6	0	16
Wanica	205	376	121	229	931
SURINAME	**5,466**	**987**	**2,457**	**2,146**	**11,056**

Suriname: 6th Agricultural Census

5.6 Poultry

Poultry was the most widespread livestock category, with **2,801 holdings** (Table 5.1) nationally. The total number of poultry heads across all types reached **821,644**, with broilers accounting for the overwhelming majority (598,062 heads) (Table 5.16).

The broiler sector is dominated by just two districts: Wanica (345,018; 58%) and Saramacca (135,985 broilers; 23% of the national total) (Table 5.16). This reflects the presence of large-scale commercial broiler operations, particularly in Saramacca, where a small number of holdings manage very large flocks. The concentration in these two districts is consistent with the proximity to processing and market infrastructure and the availability of large land parcels suitable for intensive poultry housing.

Table 5.15: Number and percentage of holdings with poultry by district and types

District	Broilers		Layers		Backyard chicken		Muscovy ducks		Peking ducks (Kwa-Kwa)		Geese		Turkeys		Other chickens		Other poultry (exclude chicken)	
	N = 1,406		N = 666		N = 1,088		N = 1,076		N = 224		N = 45		N = 74		N = 20		N = 25	
Brokopondo	51	4%	21	3%	105	10%	12	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Commewijne	146	10%	43	6%	93	9%	135	13%	7	3%	3	7%	8	11%	3	15%	2	8%
Coronie	4	0%	2	0%	13	1%	4	0%	10	4%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Marowijne	24	2%	12	2%	73	7%	32	3%	14	6%	2	4%	0	0%	0	0%	9	36%
Nickerie	232	17%	83	12%	168	15%	290	27%	25	11%	1	2%	3	4%	5	25%	0	0%
Para	20	1%	20	3%	27	2%	10	1%	18	8%	2	4%	4	5%	3	15%	0	0%
Paramaribo	203	14%	192	29%	80	7%	90	8%	20	9%	10	22%	20	27%	0	0%	0	0%
Saramacca	79	6%	18	3%	106	10%	66	6%	30	13%	5	11%	9	12%	2	10%	8	32%
Sipaliwini	51	4%	47	7%	105	10%	18	2%	3	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Wanica	594	42%	228	34%	318	29%	419	39%	97	43%	22	49%	30	41%	7	35%	6	24%

Suriname: 6th Agricultural Census

The laying hen (layer) sector shows a different geographic pattern. Wanica leads with 105,253 layers (53%), but Para (22,330; 11%), Paramaribo (25,035; 13%), and Marowijne (5,168; 3%) (Table 5.16) also contribute meaningfully. Marowijne contributes relatively more to egg production than to broiler production, suggesting that egg production in this district is primarily oriented toward the local market. Paramaribo's 192 holdings with layers (Table 5.15) confirm the importance of small urban egg production operations.

Backyard chickens (24,473 heads nationally) are more evenly distributed, with notable concentrations in Wanica (6,205), Brokopondo (2,076), Sipaliwini (3,258), and Marowijne (2,194) (Table 5.16), consistent with their role as a subsistence and food-security livestock category in both peri-urban and interior areas.

Table 5.16: Total number of poultry by district and types

District	Broilers	Layers	Backyard chickens	Other chickens	Muscovy ducks	Peking ducks	Geese	Turkeys	Other poultry (exclude chicken)
Brokopondo	2,385	381	2,076	0	285	0	0	0	0
Commewijne	55,063	18,405	1,609	45	5,147	208	10	45	6
Coronie	325	35	294	0	160	386	0	0	0
Marowijne	2,734	5,168	2,194	0	722	360	9	0	483
Nickerie	7,631	8,410	4,669	59	11,705	743	3	140	0
Para	39,856	22,330	1,060	139	623	634	102	101	0
Paramaribo	7,471	25,035	914	0	2,417	866	30	80	0
Saramacca	135,985	10,823	2,194	27	2,619	1,011	45	77	413
Sipaliwini	1,594	3,269	3,258	0	410	155	0	0	0
Wanica	345,018	105,253	6,205	118	14,403	3,326	213	211	157
SURINAME	**598,062**	**199,109**	**24,473**	**388**	**38,491**	**7,689**	**412**	**654**	**1,059**

Suriname: 6th Agricultural Census

Muscovy ducks (38,491 heads) represent the most significant non-chicken poultry category. Their distribution is led by Nickerie (11,705; 30%), Wanica (14,403; 37%), and Commewijne (5,147; 13%). Peking ducks (7,689 heads) follow a similar geographic pattern. Geese (412 heads), turkeys (654 heads), and other poultry (1,059 heads) are present in small numbers and distributed across several districts (Table 5.16).

Key Findings — Livestock

- The livestock sector in Suriname is characterized by a strong spatial concentration in peri-urban coastal districts, a clear segmentation between commercial and subsistence farming, and a limited livestock presence in the interior.
- Wanica, Saramacca, Nickerie, and Commewijne together account for the majority of livestock holdings and virtually all commercial livestock production. The interior districts (Brokopondo, Sipaliwini, and interior Marowijne) contribute minimal to formal livestock statistics, with their agricultural communities relying primarily on backyard poultry and subsistence crop farming.
- The predominance of crossbreeds in cattle and the high average herd size in some districts (notably Commewijne for cattle and Saramacca for both pigs and broilers) point to an emerging — though uneven — commercialization of the livestock sector. However, the continued importance of household-scale pig and poultry keeping across peri-urban and interior areas underlines the dual structure of Surinamese agriculture, where small subsistence-oriented units coexist with a small number of large commercial operations that dominate aggregate production statistics.
- A notable finding is the extreme concentration of pork production in Saramacca (76% of all pig heads from 6 holdings) and broiler production in Saramacca and Wanica (80% of all broilers). This concentration creates significant sectorial vulnerabilities — disease outbreaks, climate events, or market disruptions affecting a handful of large operations would have disproportionate impacts on national livestock production and food supply chains. Diversification and geographic distribution of commercial livestock production may therefore merit consideration as a policy objective.

Conclusion

The Sixth Agricultural Census of Suriname represents a landmark achievement in the country's agricultural statistics. It is the first comprehensive structural survey of the sector in over seventeen years and the first ever conducted using a fully digital, tablet-based data collection system. Enumerated in the period from January to March 2025 — with January 13, 2025 as the official reference day — the census captured detailed information from 14,409 agricultural holdings across all ten administrative districts of Suriname. These results provide the most complete and statistically robust picture of the country's agricultural sector since the Fifth Agricultural Census of 2008 (Ministerie van Landbouw, Veeteelt en Visserij, 2014).

The Preliminary Report presents the first set of findings across five thematic domains: the overall distribution and structure of agricultural holdings, the demographic profile of farm holders, crop systems and land use, and the livestock sector. The analysis has revealed a sector undergoing significant structural transformation — one that is simultaneously growing in the number of farms and contracting in the area of managed land, expanding female participation while deepening gender inequality at scale, and diversifying geographically while becoming more commercially concentrated in a small number of coastal districts.

A Sector Transformed but Structurally Persistent

The most striking headline finding of the **Sixth Agriculture Census** is the 41% increase in agricultural holdings, from 10,234 in 2008 to 14,409 in 2025. This expansion has been driven primarily by the dramatic growth of small-scale and subsistence farming in interior districts — most notably Sipaliwini, where holding numbers nearly doubled — rather than by the expansion of commercially oriented production. At the same time, the total area managed by agricultural holdings contracted by approximately 22%, from 63,989 to around 49,898 hectares, with average holding size falling from 6.3 to 3.5 hectares. Taken together, these trends signal structural fragmentation and intensification: a larger number of smaller operations managing a diminishing agricultural footprint.

The dominance of individual civil persons — who account for 98.1% of all holdings — is essentially unchanged from 2008 and reflects the enduring centrality of family-based, smallholder production to Suriname's agricultural economy. Yet the sector's productive core increasingly depends on a small number of large commercial operations managed by juridical persons, whose average holding size of 61.7 hectares and average Utilized Agricultural Area (UAA) of 39.7 hectares dwarfs that of individual farmers. Land inequality is pronounced: civil persons in the 20+ hectare class, representing just 2% of individual holdings, manage over 55% of all individually held land, while the 16% of holdings under 0.1 hectare together manage less than 0.3% of the total. This structural duality — between a vast majority of small subsistence farmers and a small minority of large commercial operations — defines the essential challenge facing agricultural policy in Suriname.

A Dual Agricultural Geography

The Sixth Agricultural Census confirms and deepens understanding of Suriname's fundamentally dual agricultural geography. The interior — anchored by Sipaliwini, Brokopondo, and interior Marowijne — is characterized by widespread subsistence and shifting cultivation, female-led households, Maroon and Indigenous cultural identities, low educational attainment, limited market access, and a system of land use based on traditional and communal rights rather than formal tenure. The coast — led by Nickerie, Wanica, Saramacca, and Commewijne — represents a commercially oriented, mechanized agricultural system with better infrastructure, stronger market linkages, and a more intensive land use profile.

These two systems differ not merely in scale but in structure, purpose, and institutional context. Nickerie manages 43% of the country's cultivated land area with only 10% of its holdings — almost entirely under irrigated rice — while Sipaliwini holds 30% of all national holdings but manages less than 7% of the land. Commewijne and Saramacca host the bulk of large-scale corporate agriculture, including major livestock operations. This geographic polarization demands that agricultural policy, extension services, investment strategies, and data systems be designed with sensitivity to the fundamentally different realities of interior subsistence farming and coastal commercial agriculture.

Demographic Pressures and Gender Inequalities

The demographic profile of Suriname's farming population reveals two structural vulnerabilities that deserve urgent policy attention. The first is the aging of the agricultural workforce. The 50–64 age group is the most prevalent nationally, with Paramaribo recording the highest average farmer age at 56.5 years. In the coastal commercial districts — where most of Suriname's marketable agricultural output is produced — the concentration of older male farmers, combined with the limited entry of younger people into farming, raises serious concerns about generational succession and the long-term sustainability of commercial agriculture. Without targeted efforts to attract and support younger farmers, these districts risk productivity stagnation and knowledge loss within the coming decade.

The second vulnerability is the persistent and deepening gender inequality in access to land and agricultural resources. While female headship has increased from 35% in 2008 to nearly 40% in 2025, this progress is largely accounted for by the widespread of subsistence and shifting cultivation in the interior, where women have historically held primary roles as cultivators. The structural pattern of female exclusion from large-scale farming is striking and unambiguous: women manage near-parity shares of holdings below 0.5 hectares, but only 2% of holdings over 20 hectares. This means that access to large plots, commercial credit, irrigation infrastructure, and formal land tenure remains almost exclusively the preserve of male farmers. Addressing this disparity — particularly women's access to land of productive scale, formal tenure, and extension services — is both a development imperative and an obligation under Suriname's SDG commitments.

Crops: Specialization and Subsistence

Suriname's crop sector reflects the country's geographic and cultural diversity. Cassava (sweet and bitter), rice, plantain, and a range of tubers and vegetables form the backbone of food production, with crop portfolios strongly shaped by district-level ecology, market access, and ethnic farming traditions. Nickerie remains the dominant agricultural land district with 16,792 hectares under cultivation, almost entirely in rice, with an average planted area of over 15 hectares per holding — sharply contrasting with interior districts where the average is below 0.7 hectares.

The widespread practice of shifting cultivation — reported by 42% of all holdings — remains a critical but structurally invisible component of food production, particularly in Sipaliwini, Brokopondo, and Marowijne. (Semi-)permanent crops, led by bananas and plantains, are particularly concentrated in Marowijne and Saramacca, which together constitute Suriname's primary zones of agricultural diversification. Approximately half of all parcels (39%) are land tenure rented from the government with rights granted for a minimum period of 40 years. As this form of tenure constitutes a legally recognized real property right to use the land in accordance with its designated purpose and the conditions established by the government, it enables the government to maintain long-term control over and influence agricultural policy. A further 18% of parcels are privately owned. Together, privately owned parcels and those rented from the government constitute the majority of landholdings that provide sufficient tenure security for long-term investments, such as the cultivation of permanent crops, sustainable soil management, and the development of agricultural infrastructure.

Livestock: Concentration and Systemic Risk

The livestock sector is one of the most commercially stratified components of Surinamese agriculture. Poultry is the most widely held livestock category (2,801 holdings), but the productive base of the sector — particularly broiler and pig production — is concentrated in a remarkably small number of large operations in Wanica and Saramacca. Broiler production is dominated by just two districts (Wanica at 58% and Saramacca at 23% of all national broiler heads), while pork production is even more extreme: just 6 holdings in Saramacca account for 76% of all pig heads in the country. This means that a significant proportion of the country's animal protein production relies on a very limited number of commercial producers.

This degree of sectorial concentration creates significant systemic vulnerabilities. A disease outbreak, natural disaster, or market disruption affecting even a handful of large livestock operations would have disproportionate consequences for national food supply chains and protein availability. The interior districts contribute negligibly to formal livestock statistics, relying almost entirely on backyard poultry for household consumption. Strengthening the resilience of the livestock sector — through geographic diversification of commercial production and development of smallholder livestock systems in all areas — emerges as a priority concern.

Looking Forward: From Data to Policy Action

The Sixth Agricultural Census has fulfilled its primary mandate: to provide Suriname with a comprehensive, internationally comparable, and statistically reliable baseline of the country's agricultural sector. The data collected represent the most detailed and extensive agricultural information assembled in Suriname since 2008 and lay the foundation for evidence-based agricultural planning over the coming decade.

This Preliminary Report provides an initial set of key findings across the main thematic domains of the census. In the near future, the complete census tables will be published in the Census Final Report, which will expand upon the analysis presented here with additional district-level tabulations, thematic cross-tabulations, and further contextual analysis. The Preliminary Report goes hand-in-hand with the Methodology and Implementation Report (Ministerie van Landbouw, Veeteelt en Visserij, 2026), which provides the conceptual framework, sampling strategy, data quality assessment, and Post-Enumeration Survey results that underpin and contextualize all findings presented here; users seeking to understand the methodological basis and statistical reliability of these findings are encouraged to consult that companion document.

Together, the Preliminary Report, the Methodology and Implementation Report, and the forthcoming Census Final Report provide the foundation for a renewed agricultural information system in Suriname. The census findings point to a cluster of policy priorities that will require coordinated, long-term investment and institutional commitment:

- Addressing the aging farmer profile and facilitating inter-generational succession in coastal commercial districts through targeted youth programmes, incentives, and the modernization of farming as a career pathway.

- Strengthening women's access to land of productive scale, formal tenure, agricultural credit, and extension services — reducing the structural disparity that confines female participation largely to subsistence-scale farming.

- Adapting agricultural extension and support services to the dramatically different educational, linguistic, cultural, and infrastructural contexts of coastal and interior farming communities.

- Reducing the systemic vulnerability created by extreme geographic concentration in commercial livestock production, particularly in the broiler and pig sub-sectors.

- Formalizing and strengthening the land tenure security of smallholder farmers — including recognition of customary land rights in the interior — to incentivize investment in permanent crops, conservation, and farm productivity.

- Integrating the interior's shifting cultivation and subsistence farming systems into national food security planning, value chain development, and market linkage

programmes, recognizing their critical role in rural livelihoods across Suriname's largest district.

- Using the census as the foundation for an annual agricultural survey programme to maintain the currency and reliability of agricultural statistics between census cycles.

The Sixth Agricultural Census of Suriname was made possible through the commitment of thousands of enumerators, supervisors, and the Census Working Group (CWG) at the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries (MAAHF), the financial support of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the technical guidance of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and above all, the cooperation of Suriname's farming communities across every district of the country. Their participation has produced a dataset of enduring value — one that, if used well, can guide the development of a more productive, equitable, and resilient agricultural sector for the benefit of all Surinamese.

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