# Annex B. Quick reference to CropWatch indicators, spatial units and methodologies

The following sections give a brief overview of CropWatch indicators and spatial units, along with a description of the CropWatch production estimation methodology. For more information about CropWatch methodologies, visit CropWatch online at www.cropwatch.com.cn**.**

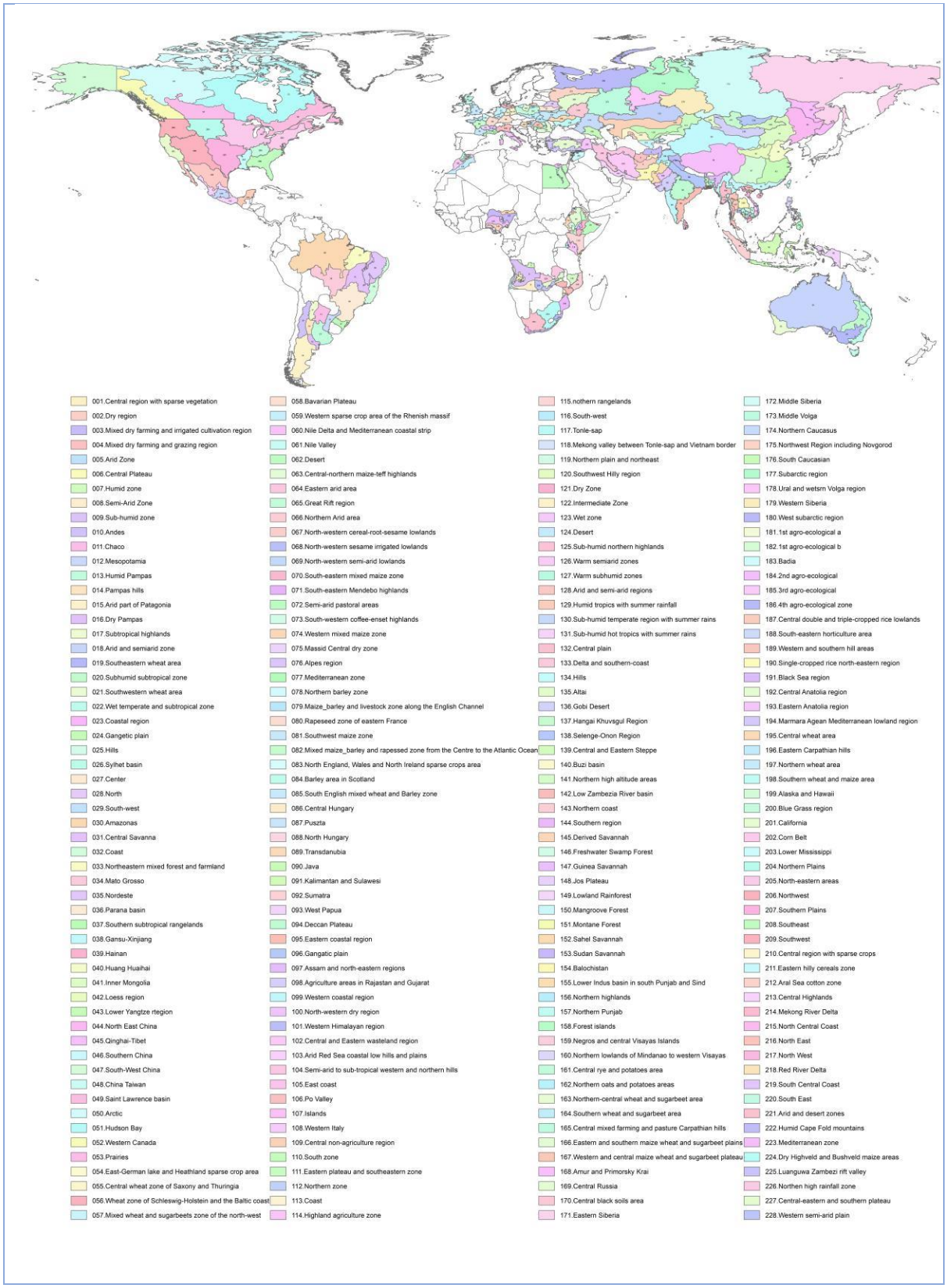
**Agroecological zones for 45 key countries**

***Overview***

228 agroecological zones for the 45 key countries across the globe

***Description***

45 key agricultural countries are divided into 228 agro-ecological zones based on cropping systems, climatic zones, and topographic conditions. Each country is considered separately. A limited number of regions (e.g., region 001, region 027, and region 127) are not relevant for the crops currently monitored by CropWatch but are included to allow for more complete coverage of the 45 key countries. Some regions are more relevant for rangeland and livestock monitoring, which is also essential for food security.


001.Central region with sparse vegetation
002.Dry region
003.Mixed dry farming and irrigated cultivation region
004.Mixed dry farming and grazing region
005.Arid Zone
006.Central Plateau
007.Humid zone
008.Semi-Arid Zone
009.Sub-humid zone
010.Andes
011.Chaco
012.Mesopotamia
013.Humid Pampas
014.Pampas hills
015.Arid part of Patagonia
016.Dry Pampas
017.Subtropical highlands
018.Arid and semiarid zone
019.Southeastern wheat area
020.Subhumid subtropical zone
021.Southwestern wheat area
022.Wet temperate and subtropical zone
023.Coastal region
024.Gangetic plain
025.Hills
026.Sylhet basin
027.Center
028.North
029.South-west
030.Amazonas
031.Central Savanna
032.Coast
033.Northeastern mixed forest and farmland
034.Mato Grosso
035.Nordeste
036.Parana basin
037.Southern subtropical rangelands
038.Gansu-Xinjiang
039.Hainan
040.Huang Huaihai
041.Inner Mongolia
042.Loess region
043.Lower Yangtze rtegion
044.North East China
045.Qinghai-Tibet
046.Southern China
047.South-West China
048.China Taiwan
049.Saint Lawrence basin
050.Arctic
051.Hudson Bay
052.Western Canada
053.Prairies
054.East-German lake and Heathland sparse crop area
055.Central wheat zone of Saxony and Thuringia
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062.Desert
063.Central-northern maize-teff highlands
064.Eastern arid area
065.Great Rift region
066.Northern Arid area
067.North-western cereal-root-sesame lowlands
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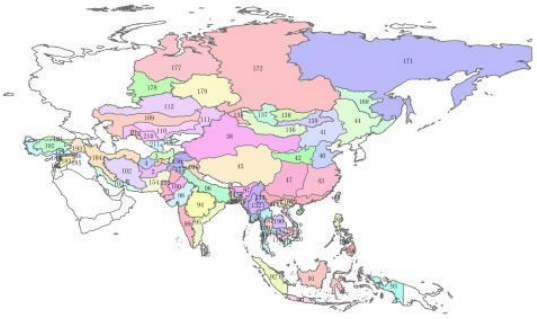
086.Central Hungary
087.Puszta
088.North Hungary
089.Transdanubia
090.Java
091.Kalimantan and Sulawesi
092.Sumatra
093.West Papua
094.Deccan Plateau
095.Eastern coastal region
096.Gangatic plain
097.Assam and north-eastern regions
098.Agriculture areas in Rajastan and Gujarat
099.Western coastal region
100.North-western dry region
101.Western Himalayan region
102.Central and Eastern wasteland region
103.Arid Red Sea coastal low hills and plains
104.Semi-arid to sub-tropical western and northern hills
105.East coast
106.Po Valley
107.Islands
108.Western Italy
109.Central non-agriculture region
110.South zone
111.Eastern plateau and southeastern zone
112.Northern zone
113.Coast
114.Highland agriculture zone
115.nothern rangelands
116.South-west
117.Tonle-sap
118.Mekong valley between Tonle-sap and Vietnam border
119.Northern plain and northeast
120.Southwest Hilly region
121.Dry Zone
122.Intermediate Zone
123.Wet zone
124.Desert
125.Sub-humid northern highlands
126.Warm semiarid zones
127.Warm subhumid zones
128.Arid and semi-arid regions
129.Humid tropics with summer rainfall
130.Sub-humid temperate region with summer rains
131.Sub-humid hot tropics with summer rains
132.Central plain
133.Delta and southern-coast
134.Hills
135.Altai
136.Gobi Desert
137.Hangai Khuvsgul Region
138.Selenge-Onon Region
139.Central and Eastern Steppe
140.Buzi basin
141.Northern high altitude areas
142.Low Zambezia River basin
143.Northern coast
144.Southern region
145.Derived Savannah
146.Freshwater Swamp Forest
147.Guinea Savannah
148.Jos Plateau
149.Lowland Rainforest
150.Mangroove Forest
151.Montane Forest
152.Sahel Savannah
153.Sudan Savannah
154.Balochistan
155.Lower Indus basin in south Punjab and Sind
156.Northern highlands
157.Northern Punjab
158.Forest islands
159.Negros and central Visayas Islands
160.Northern lowlands of Mindanao to western Visayas
161.Central rye and potatoes area
162.Northern oats and potatoes areas
163.Northern-central wheat and sugarbeet area
164.Southern wheat and sugarbeet area
165.Central mixed farming and pasture Carpathian hills
166.Eastern and southern maize wheat and sugarbeet plains
167.Western and central maize wheat and sugarbeet plateau
168.Amur and Primorsky Krai
169.Central Russia
170.Central black soils area
171.Eastern Siberia
172.Middle Siberia
173.Middle Volga
174.Northern Caucasus
175.Northwest Region including Novgorod
176.South Caucasian
177.Subarctic region
178.Ural and wetsrn Volga region
179.Western Siberia
180.West subarctic region
181.1st agro-ecological a
182.1st agro-ecological b
183.Badia
184.2nd agro-ecological
185.3rd agro-ecological
186.4th agro-ecological zone
187.Central double and triple-cropped rice lowlands
188.South-eastern horticulture area
189.Western and southern hill areas
190.Single-cropped rice north-eastern region
191.Black Sea region
192.Central Anatolia region
193.Eastern Anatolia region
194.Marmara Agean Mediterranean lowland region
195.Central wheat area
196.Eastern Carpathian hills
197.Northern wheat area
198.Southern wheat and maize area
199.Alaska and Hawaii
200.Blue Grass region
201.California
202.Corn Belt
203.Lower Mississippi
204.Northern Plains
205.North-eastern areas
206.Northwest
207.Southern Plains
208.Southeast
209.Southwest
210.Central region with sparse crops
211.Eastern hilly cereals zone
212.Aral Sea cotton zone
213.Central Highlands
214.Mekong River Delta
215.North Central Coast
216.North East
217.North West
218.Red River Delta
219.South Central Coast
220.South East
221.Arid and desert zones
222.Humid Cape Fold mountains
223.Mediterranean zone
224.Dry Highveld and Bushveld maize areas
225.Luanguwa Zambezi rift valley
226.Northen high rainfall zone
227.Central-eastern and southern plateau
228.Western semi-arid plain

## Asia



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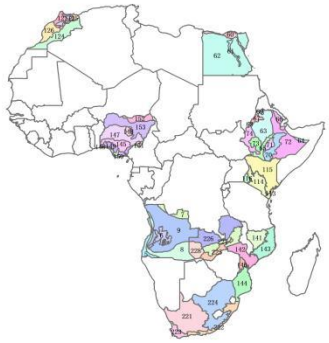
## Africa



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## South America

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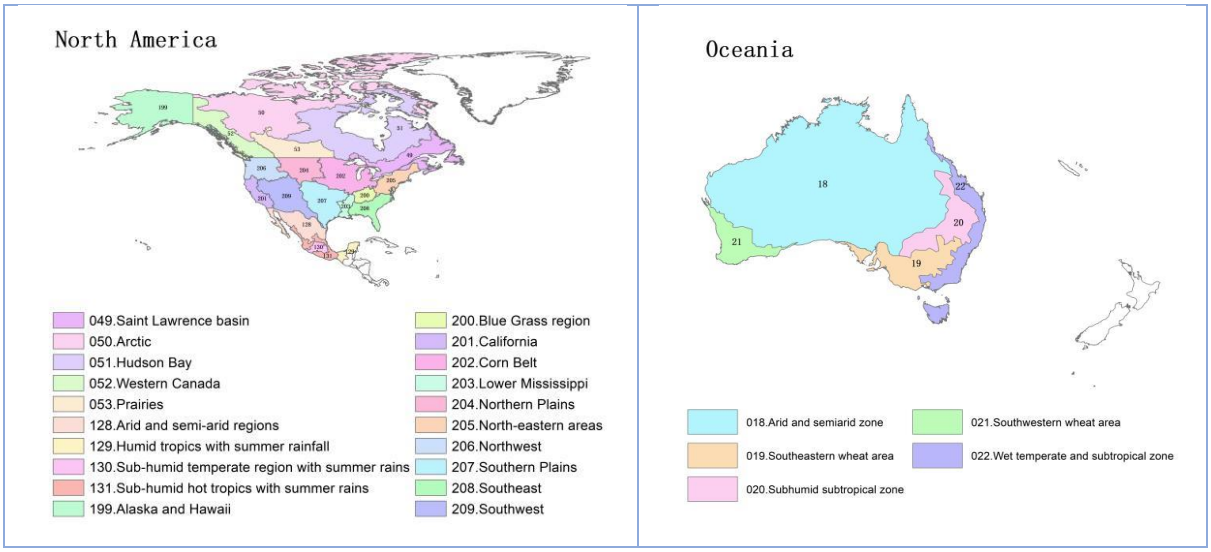



## CropWatch indicators

The CropWatch indicators are designed to assess the condition of crops and the environment in which they grow and develop; the indicators—RAIN (for rainfall), TEMP (temperature), and RADPAR (photosynthetically active radiation, PAR)—are not identical to the weather variables, but instead are value-added indicators computed only over crop growing areas (thus for example excluding deserts and rangelands) and spatially weighted according to the agricultural production potential, with marginal areas receiving less weight than productive ones. The indicators are expressed using the usual physical units (e.g., mm for rainfall) and were thoroughly tested for their coherence over space and time. CWSU are the CropWatch Spatial Units, including MRUs, MPZ, and countries (including first-level administrative districts in select large countries). For all indicators, high values indicate "good" or "positive."

| INDICATOR | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **BIOMSS** | | | |
| **Biomass accumulation potential** | | | |
| **Crop/ satellite** | Grams dry matter/$m^2$, pixel or CWSU | An estimate of biomass that could potentially be accumulated over the reference period given the prevailing rainfall and temperature conditions. | Biomass is presented as maps by pixels, maps showing average pixels values over CropWatch spatial units (CWSU), or tables giving average values for the CWSU. Values are compared to the average value for the recent fifteen years (2007-2021), with departures expressed in percentage. |
| **CALF** | | | |
| **Cropped arable land and cropped arable land fraction** | | | |
| **Crop/ Satellite** | [0,1] number, pixel or CWSU average | The area of cropped arable land as fraction of total (cropped and uncropped) arable land. Whether a pixel is cropped or not is decided based on NDVI twice a month. (For each four-month reporting period, each pixel thus has 8 cropped/ uncropped values). | The value shown in tables is the maximum value of the 8 values available for each pixel; maps show an area as cropped if at least one of the 8 observations is categorized as "cropped." Uncropped means that no crops were detected over the whole reporting period. Values are compared to the average value for the last five years (2017-2021), with departures expressed in percentage. |
| **CROPPING INTENSITY** | | | |
| **Cropping intensity Index** | | | |
| **Crop/ Satellite** | 0, 1, 2, or 3; Number of | Cropping intensity index describes the extent to which arable land is used over | Cropping intensity is presented as maps by pixels or spatial average pixels values for MPZs, 45 |

| INDICATOR | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | crops growing over a year for each pixel | a year. It is the ratio of the total crop area of all planting seasons in a year to the total area of arable land. | countries, and 7 regions for China. Values are compared to the average of the previous five years, with departures expressed in percentage. |
| **NDVI** | | | |
| **Normalized Difference Vegetation Index** | | | |
| **Crop/ Satellite** | [0.12-0.90] number, pixel or CWSU average | An estimate of the density of living green biomass. | NDVI is shown as average profiles over time at the national level (cropland only) in crop condition development graphs, compared with previous year and recent five-year average (2017-2021), and as spatial patterns compared to the average showing the time profiles, where they occur, and the percentage of pixels concerned by each profile. |
| **RADPAR** | | | |
| **CropWatch indicator for Photosynthetically Active Radiation (PAR), based on pixel based PAR** | | | |
| **Weather /Satellite** | W/m$^2$, CWSU | The spatial average (for a CWSU) of PAR accumulation over agricultural pixels, weighted by the production potential. | RADPAR is shown as the percent departure of the RADPAR value for the reporting period compared to the recent fifteen-year average (2007-2021), per CWSU. For the MPZs, regular PAR is shown as typical time profiles over the spatial unit, with a map showing where the profiles occur and the percentage of pixels concerned by each profile. |
| **RAIN** | | | |
| **CropWatch indicator for rainfall, based on pixel-based rainfall** | | | |
| **Weather / satellite** | Liters/m$^2$, CWSU | The spatial average (for a CWSU) of rainfall accumulation over agricultural pixels, weighted by the production potential. | RAIN is shown as the percent departure of the RAIN value for the reporting period, compared to the recent fifteen-year average (2007-2021), per CWSU. For the MPZs, regular rainfall is shown as typical time profiles over the spatial unit, with a map showing where the profiles occur and the percentage of pixels concerned by each profile. |
| **TEMP** | | | |
| **CropWatch indicator for air temperature, based on pixel-based temperature** | | | |
| **Weather / satellite** | °C, CWSU | The spatial average (for a CWSU) of the temperature time average over agricultural pixels, weighted by the production potential. | TEMP is shown as the departure of the average TEMP value (in degrees Centigrade) over the reporting period compared with the average of the recent fifteen years (2007-2021), per CWSU. For the MPZs, regular temperature is illustrated as typical time profiles over the spatial unit, with a map showing where the profiles occur and the percentage of pixels concerned by each profile. |
| **VCIx** | | | |
| **Maximum vegetation condition index** | | | |
| **Crop/ Satellite** | Number, pixel to CWSU | Vegetation condition of the current season compared with historical data. Values usually are [0, 1], where 0 is "NDVI as bad as the worst recent year" and 1 is "NDVI as good as the best recent year." Values can exceed the range if the current year is the best or the worst. | VCIx is based on NDVI and two VCI values are computed every month. VCIx is the highest VCI value recorded for every pixel over the reporting period. A low value of VCIx means that no VCI value was high over the reporting period. A high value means that at least one VCI value was high. VCI is shown as pixel-based maps and as average value by CWSU. |
| **VHI** | | | |
| **Vegetation health index** | | | |

| INDICATOR | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Crop/ Satellite** | Number, pixel to CWSU | The average of VCI and the temperature condition index (TCI), with TCI defined like VCI but for temperature. VHI is based on the assumption that "high temperature is bad" (due to moisture stress), but ignores the fact that low temperature may be equally "bad" (crops develop and grow slowly, or even suffer from frost). | Low VHI values indicate unusually poor crop condition, but high values, when due to low temperature, may be difficult to interpret. VHI is shown as typical time profiles over Major Production Zones (MPZ), where they occur, and the percentage of pixels concerned by each profile. |
| **VHIn** | | | |
| **Minimum Vegetation health index** | | | |
| **Crop/ Satellite** | Number, pixel to CWSU | VHIn is the lowest VHI value for every pixel over the reporting period. Values usually are [0, 100]. Normally, values lower than 35 indicate poor crop condition. | Low VHIn values indicate the occurrence of water stress in the monitoring period, often combined with lower than average rainfall. The spatial/time resolution of CropWatch VHIn is 16km/week for MPZs and 1km/dekad for China. |
| **CPI** | | | |
| **Crop Production Index** | | | |
| **Crop/ Satellite** | Number, pixel to CWSU | The average crop production situation for the same period in the past five years was used as a benchmark to make an overall estimate of the current season's agricultural production situation. | Based on the VCIx, CALF, land productivity and area of irrigated and rainfed cropland in the current monitoring period and the same period in the past five years for the spatial unit, a mathematical model proposed by CropWatch is used to calculate the index expressed as a normalized value. A value of 1.0 represents the basic normal crop production situation in the current period for the spatial unit, and the higher the value, the better the crop production situation in the current period. Conversely, the lower the value, the worse the crop production situation for the spatial unit in the current period. |

*Note:* Type is either "Weather" or "Crop"; source specifies if the indicator is obtained from ground data, satellite readings, or a combination; units: in the case of ratios, no unit is used; scale is either pixels or large scale CropWatch spatial units (CWSU). Many indicators are computed for pixels but represented in the CropWatch bulletin at the CWSU scale.

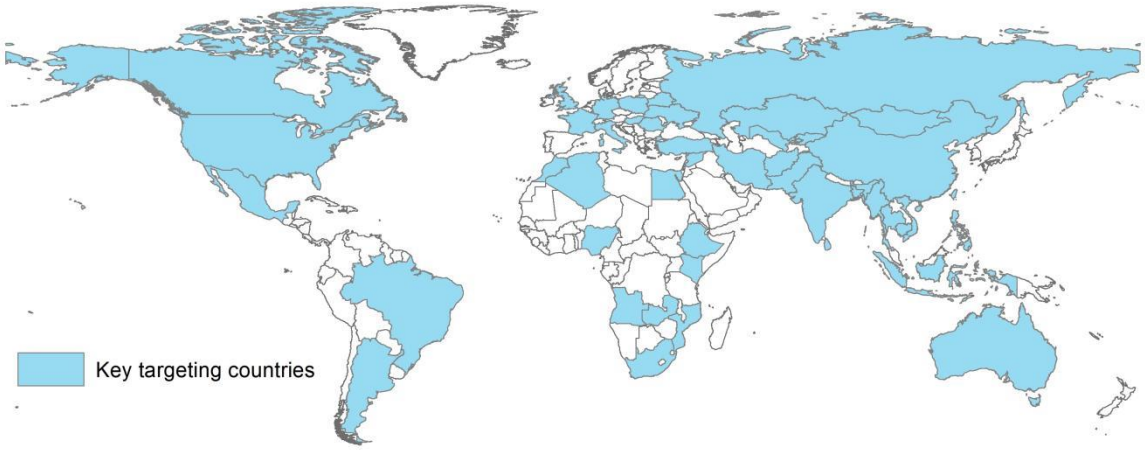
## CropWatch spatial units (CWSU)

CropWatch analyses are applied to four kinds of CropWatch spatial units (CWSU): Countries, China, Major Production Zones (MPZ), and global crop Monitoring and Reporting Units (MRU). The tables below summarize the key aspects of each spatial unit and show their relation to each other. For more details about these spatial units and their boundaries, see the CropWatch bulletin online resources.

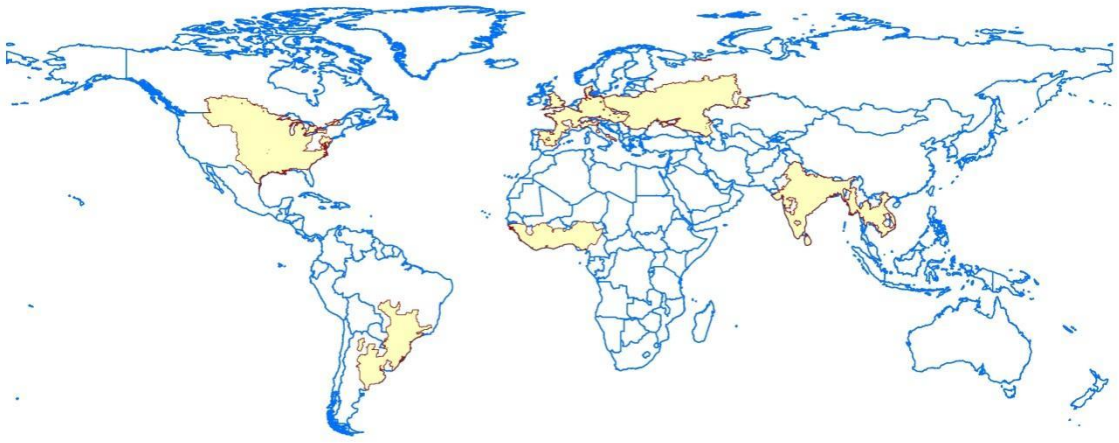
| SPATIAL LUNITS | |
|---|---|
| **CHINA** | |
| ***Overview*** | *Description* |
| **Seven monitoring regions** | The seven regions in China are agro-economic/agro-ecological regions that together cover the bulk of national maize, rice, wheat, and soybean production. Provinces that are entirely or partially included in one of the monitoring regions are indicated in color on the map below. |


Heilongjiang
North East China
Inner Mongolia
Jilin
Inner Mongolia
Liaoning
Gansu
Ningxia
Shanxi
Hebei
Shandong
Loess region
Huang Huaihai
Shaanxi
Jiangsu
Anhui
Sichuan
Hubei
Chongqing
South-West China
Lower Yangtze
Zhejiang
Jiangxi
Guizhou
Hunan
Fujian
Yunnan
Guangxi
Guangdong
Southern China

| **Countries (and first-level administrative districts, e.g., states and provinces)** | |
|---|---|
| *Overview* | *Description* |
| "Forty four plus one" countries to represent main producers/exporters and other key countries. | CropWatch monitored countries together represent more than 80% of the production of maize, rice, wheat and soybean, as well as 80% of exports. Some countries were included in the list based on criteria of proximity to China (Uzbekistan, Cambodia), regional importance, or global geopolitical relevance (e.g., four of five most populous countries in Africa). The total number of countries monitored is "44 + 1," referring to 44 and China itself. For the nine largest countries—, United States, Brazil, Argentina, Russia, Kazakhstan, India, China, and Australia, maps and analyses may also present results for the first-level administrative subdivision. The CropWatch agroclimatic indicators are computed for all countries and included in the analyses when abnormal conditions occur. Background information about the countries' agriculture and trade is available on the CropWatch Website, www.cropwatch.com.cn. |




| **Major Production Zones (MPZ)** | |
|---|---|
| *Overview* | *Description* |
| Six globally important areas of agricultural production | The six MPZs include West Africa, South America, North America, South and Southeast Asia, Western Europe and Central Europe to Western Russia. The MPZs are not necessarily the main production zones for the four crops (maize, rice, soybean, wheat) currently monitored by CropWatch, but they are globally or regionally important areas of agricultural production. The seven zones were identified based mainly on production statistics and distribution of the combined cultivation area of maize, rice, wheat and soybean. |



| Global Monitoring and Reporting Unit (MRU) | |
|---|---|
| *Overview* | *Description* |
| 105agro-ecological/agro-economic units across the world | MRUs are reasonably homogeneous agro-ecological/agro-economic units spanning the globe, selected to capture major variations in worldwide farming and crops patterns while at the same time providing a manageable (limited) number of spatial units to be used as the basis for the analysis of environmental factors affecting crops. Unit numbers and names are shown in the figure below. A limited number of units are not relevant for the crops currently monitored by CropWatch but are included to allow for more complete coverage of global production. Additional information about the MRUs is provided online under www.cropwatch.com.cn . |


## Production estimation methodology

The main concept of the CropWatch methodology for estimating production is the calculation of current year production based on information about last year's production and the variations in crop yield and cultivated area compared with the previous year. The equation for production estimation is as follows:

$$Production_i = Production_{i-1} * (1 + \Delta Yield_i) * (1 + \Delta Area_i)$$

Where i is the current year, $\Delta Yield_i$ and $\Delta Area_i$ are the variations in crop yield and cultivated area compared with the previous year; the values of $\Delta Yield_i$ and $\Delta Area_i$ can be above or below zero.

For the 45 countries monitored by CropWatch, yield variation for each crop is calibrated against NDVI time series, using the following equation:

$$\Delta Yield_i = f(NDVI_i, NDVI_{i-1})$$

Where $NDVI_i$ and $NDVI_{i-1}$ are taken from the time series of the spatial average of NDVI over the crop specific mask for the current year and the previous year. For NDVI values that correspond to periods after the current monitoring period, average NDVI values of the previous five years are used as an average expectation. $\Delta Yield_i$ is calculated by regression against average or peak NDVI (whichever yields the best regression), considering the crop phenology of each crop for each individual country.

A different method is used for areas. For China, CropWatch combines remote-sensing based estimates of the crop planting proportion (cropped area to arable land) with a crop type proportion (specific type area to total cropped area). The planting proportion is estimated based on an unsupervised classification of high resolution satellite images from HJ-1 CCD and GF-1 images. The crop-type proportion for China is obtained by the GVG instrument from field transects. The area of a specific crop is computed by multiplying farmland area, planting proportion, and crop-type proportion of the crop.

To estimate crop area for wheat, soybean, maize, and rice outside China, CropWatch relies on the regression of crop area against cropped arable land fraction of each individual country (paying due attention to phenology):

$$Area_i = a + b * CALF_i$$

*Where, a and b are the coefficients generated by linear regression with area from FAOSTAT or national sources and CALF (Cropped Arable Land Fraction) from CropWatch estimates*

# Data notes and bibliography

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# Online resources

Online Resources posted on **www.cropwatch.com.cn , http://cloud.cropwatch.com.cn/**

This bulletin is only part of the CropWatch resources available. Visit **www.cropwatch.com.cn** for access to additional resources, including the methods behind CropWatch, country profiles, and other CropWatch publications. For additional information or to access specific data or high-resolution graphs, simply contact the CropWatch team at **cropwatch@radi.ac.cn**.

CropWatch bulletins introduce the use of several new and experimental indicators. We would be very interested in receiving feedback about their performance in other countries. With feedback on the contents of this report and the applicability of the new indicators to global areas, please contact:

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