

Agricultural Development in West Africa: Perspectives from Burkina Faso

- Introduction
- Evolution of agriculture
- The factors that have shaped agricultural development
- Looking to the future: which strategies?

1. Introduction

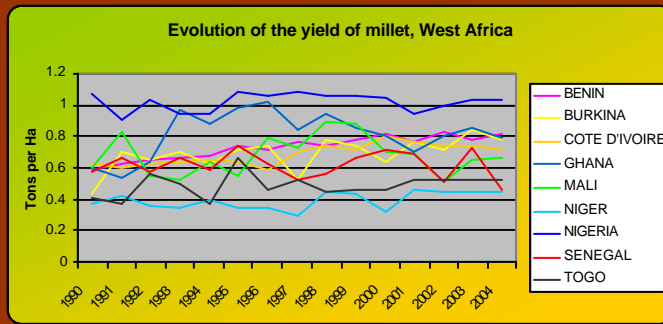
- The centrality of the agricultural sector in West Africa: food security, welfare
- Despite recent improvements, growth still not robust enough
- Indicators of human welfare are still weak
- Key issue in agriculture in West Africa: Productivity
- Objective: Explore the past and make suggestions to improve productivity

2. Evolution of agriculture: Food crops

- Two main lessons:
 - Productivity has not progressed enough...
 - And yields are still unstable
- Comparison with South and Southeast Asia

2. Evolution of agriculture : Food crops

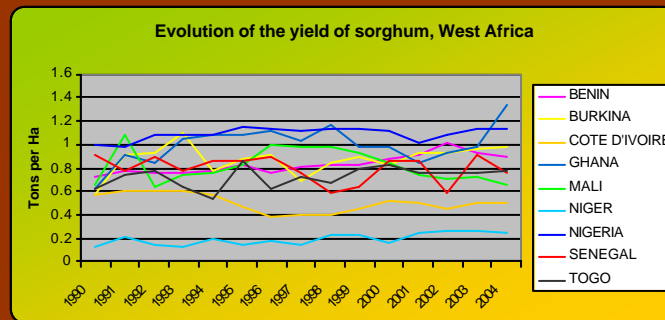
- Millet:
 - Absence of a trend
 - Wide year to year swings



2. Evolution of agriculture : Food crops

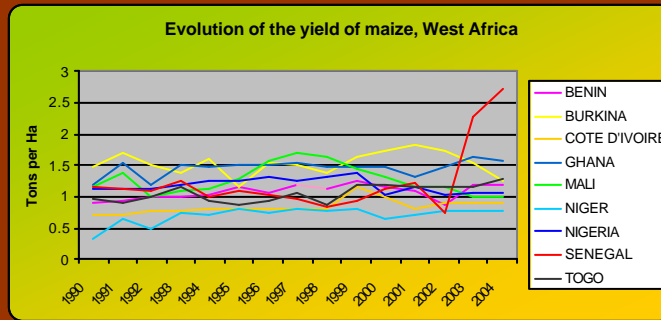
- Sorghum

- Despite the promising results of research, yields show little trend
- Yields are still subject to annual fluctuations



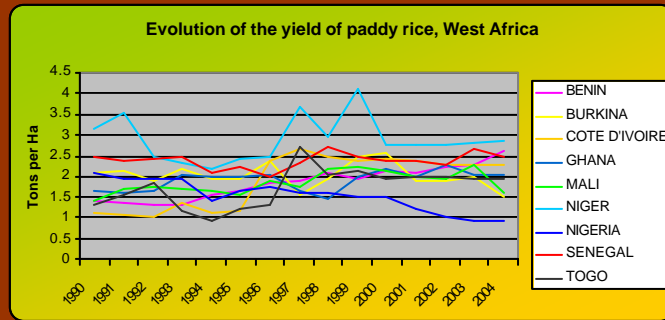
2. Evolution of agriculture : Food crops

- Maize
 - Yields have been flat overtime
 - Contrast with the successful station level research



2. Evolution of agriculture: Food crops

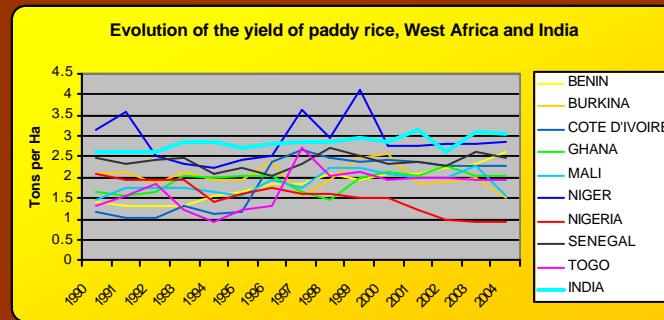
- Rice
 - Again, yields do not show a significant trend
 - Niger: Yields high but unstable
 - Declining yields for Nigeria



2. Evolution of agriculture : Food crops

- Rice

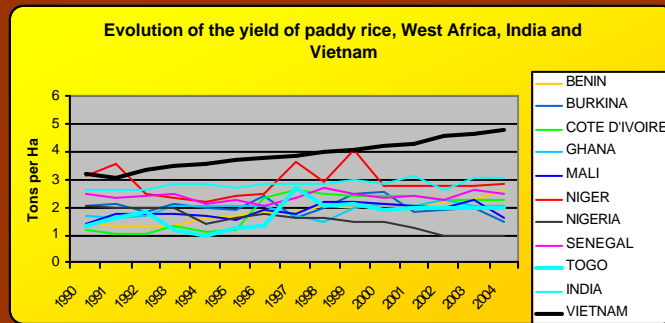
Contrast with India where green revolution has occurred: In India, the yields are more stable and show a modest upward trend



2. Evolution of agriculture: Food crops

- Rice

Contrast with India and Vietnam: Vietnam even shows a more marked trend. Compared to India, this is because the g. revolution started much earlier in India than in Vietnam



2. Evolution of agriculture : Food crops

- **Thus:** For the major food crops, Africa failed to scale up the important research results obtained through crop breeding. There are successful local examples, but overall productivity has remained at best stable, most often fluctuant these past 15 years.

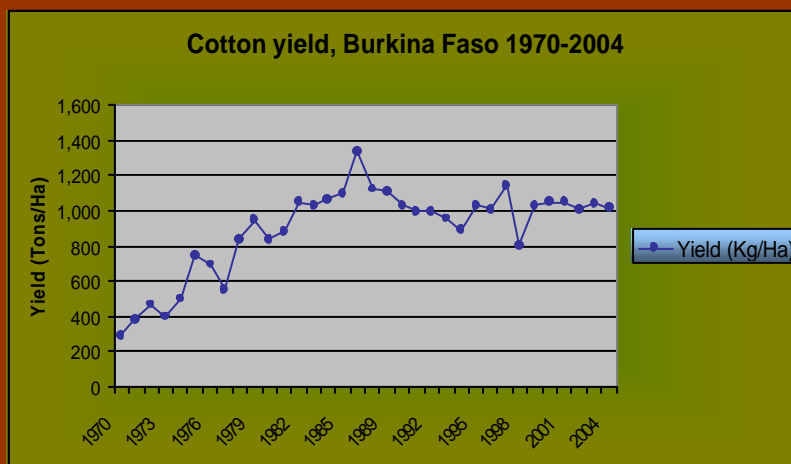
2. Evolution of agriculture : Commercial crops

- Two lessons
 - Success story for cotton in the franc zone
 - Other crops with potential did not fare as well
- Illustrations from Burkina data

2. Evolution of agriculture : Commercial crops (ex. Burkina)

- **Cotton:** Production expands due to yields and area

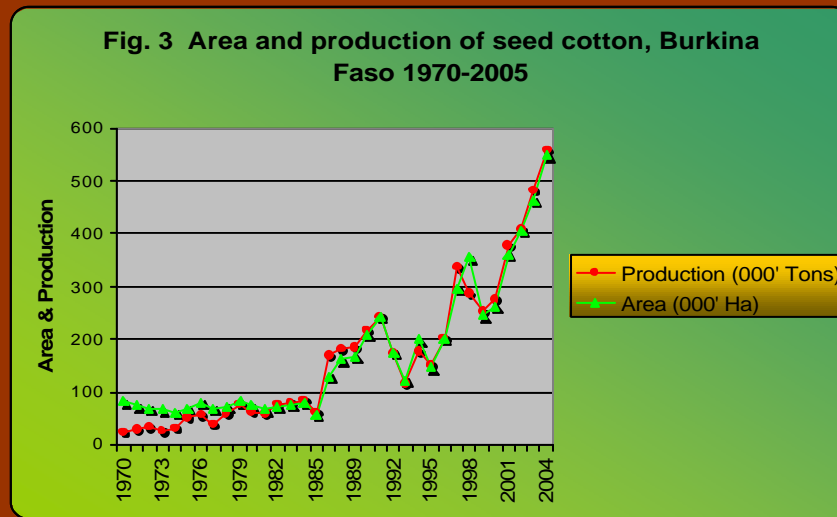
Yields have progressed over the long period, but flattened during the most recent period



2. Evolution of agriculture : Commercial crops

- Cotton

Area has expanded in a continuous way



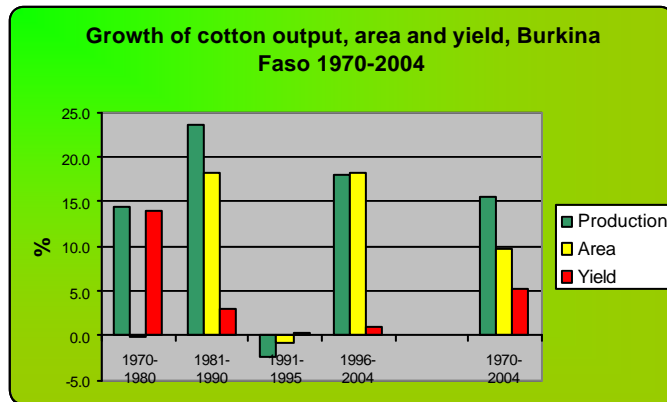
2. Evolution of agriculture : Commercial crops--**Cotton**

One notes two 'revolutions'

- First, during the 1980s
- Second, since 1996

(Slack period: 1991-95)

2. Evolution of agriculture : Commercial crops--Cotton

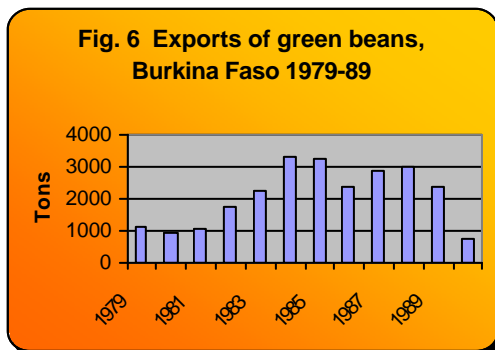


- In the 1980s:
 - Strong increases in area and some yield gains
 - Driving factor=public intervention starting in 70s
- Since 1996
 - Yields have remained stable, with little growth
 - Area was multiplied by 4: Driving factor=currency devaluation, pricing policy, political campaign

2. Evolution of agriculture : Commercial crops

- Fruits and vegetables: Missed opportunities
 - Burkina has good soils for growing mangoes and vegetables such as green beans
 - The country was a big supplier of green beans to Europe (France mainly) in 1980s.
 - Progressively, Burkina lost its market shares to competitors (Kenya, Egypt, Senegal)

2. Evolution of agriculture : Commercial crops—Green beans



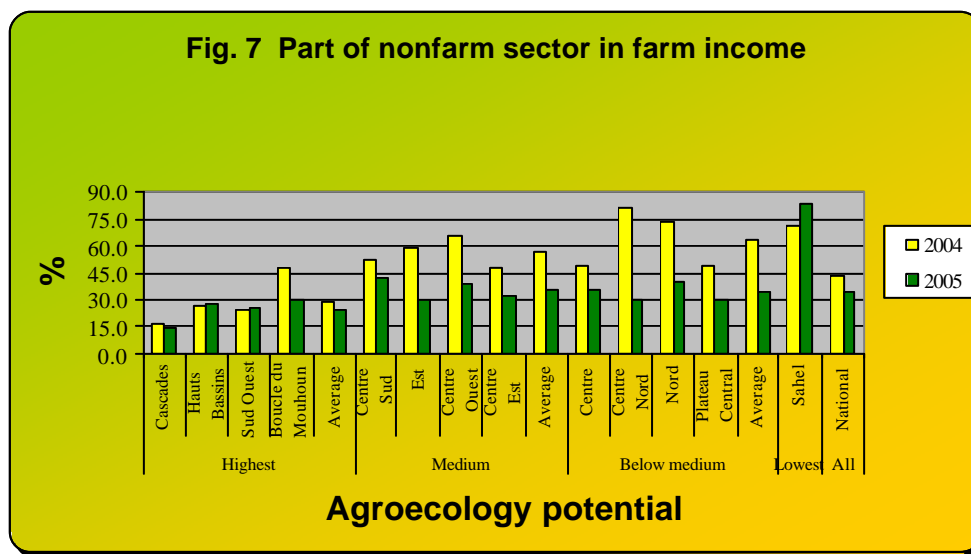
- Some explanations of the drop in a promising crop:
 - Quality, packaging issues
 - Problems with phasing out the public entity that started the process of growing green beans

❖ In an environment of smallholders, fraught with risk, poverty, no gains can be taken for granted as they can be wiped out quickly

2. Evolution of agriculture

- Diversification of the rural economy
 - Developing countries farmers tend to diversify (risk coping mech., income maximization)
 - In Burkina this practice is common and has been documented (Icrisat studies of 1981-85, research by the University of Ouagadougou)
 - Ex: Results from a recent extensive survey of rural households (2004 and 2005)

2. Evolution of agriculture: Issue of diversification



2. Evolution of agriculture: Issue of diversification

- Some facts that emerge from the recent data
 - Low agricultural potential zones tend to diversify more
 - The share of nonfarm income is even higher in good than in bad years (hypothesis: higher financing capacity in a good year?)
- ❖ Important point: intervention in rural areas should not ignore the nonfarm sector.

3. Factors of agricultural development — Conceptual frame

- Agricultural growth is brought about by increases in productivity
- To feed people, output per person of agricultural crops in Africa must be increasing over time. So
 - Either increase in #ha/person (a)
 - Or/and increase in yield/ha (b)

3. Factors of agricultural development—Conceptual frame

- (a) not sustainable as land is limited. But farmers may be using this as there is still some margin in land available—extensific.
- (b) can be achieved through
 - Appropriate inputs (prices, markets, policy)
 - Labor (function of health, education)
 - Knowledge (function of education, public policy, grassroots organizations—ex. Groupement Six 'S' in Burkina Faso)

3. Factors of agricultural development—Actors

- 4 types of actors:
 - Farmers
 - Farmers associations
 - NGOs
 - Central leadership

3. Factors of agricultural development—Actors

- Farmers: described by
 - Input adoption
 - Soil conservation (sweat under the sun)
 - High adoption of fertilizer in public supported production systems (cotton) — 75% of farmers, average 21 kg/farm
 - Lower adoption of fertilizer in areas without such support — 67% of farmers, average 12.kg/farm
 - Supply response
 - If conditions are propitious: farmers respond to markets (area expansion in cotton recently, or shown in past results; off season cropping)

3. Factors of agricultural development—Actors

- Rural farmers' associations (more than 14,000)
 - Traditionally important in Burkina
 - Play a role in information dissemination
 - Play a role in inputs marketing, product market organization (cereal banks)
 - Recently, in the cotton sector: major players, with a share of the cotton parastatal equity
 - Recently : a voice in international negotiations on cotton sector subsidies

3. Factors of agricultural development—Actors

- Non governmental organizations (NGOs)
 - More than 200 functional in Burkina
 - Help communities undertake dev. Projects
 - Bring in capital

3. Factors of agricultural development—Actors

- Central leadership
 - The state in Burkina seems to have always shown interest in rural development (peasant's day e.g.)
 - However, some actions in the context of structural adjustment seem to have taken agriculture backward:
 - Phasing out of all extension activities
 - Phasing out veterinarian services
 - Consequences: handling of sensitive products by non qualified actors (traders selling fertilizers for instance)
 - Big issue: Political will?
 - Question: how do we differentiate between lack of political will and lack of competence?

3. Factors of agricultural development—Actors

- Government policies
 - One significant policy is the sponsored land resettlement policy → occupation of land freed from river blindness by farmers brought from high land pressure areas
 - Macro policy
 - exchange rate management: low flexibility (one time devaluation of the CFA franc)
 - fiscal policy: inputs are taxed

3. Factors of agricultural development—Environment

- Markets
 - Prices: administered at first, then liberalized since 1991
 - Limited market size → price dips during surplus years: deters technology adoption

3. Factors of agricultural development—Environment

- Subregional linkages
 - Remittances from abroad spur farm investment
 - Côte d'Ivoire crisis: negative impacts on agriculture in Burkina (reflux of labor, decreased remittances → lower capacity to invest and/or cope with seasonal production shortages)

4. Strategies for the future

- Two areas:
 - Enhance and stabilize supply and strengthen demand
 - Roles
 - Public policy in support of agriculture (e.g. new form of extension services, information provision)
 - Public-private partnerships
 - International community

4. Strategies for the future

- Measures to enhance and stabilize supply and strengthen demand
 - Improving markets
 - Institutions (e.g. contract farming)
 - Infrastructures (linking surplus and demand zones, mobile telephone services)
 - Exploiting/expanding trade opportunities

4. Strategies for the future

- Improving production potential
 - Investing in health and education
 - Enabling the utilization of agricultural inputs (credit, small credit for non-agricultural activities)
 - Small scale irrigation (started in Burkina and seems promising)
- Strengthening demand
 - Processing
 - Alternative usage of production (e.g. livestock feeding)

4. Strategies for the future

- Public-private partnership
 - Example of SAFGRAD-NESTLE-Cowpea farmers agreement for the production of cowpea in Burkina
- Role for the international community
 - Need to revisit the whole concept of intervention in the agricultural sector
 - The life of millions of individual small farmers and their children at stake