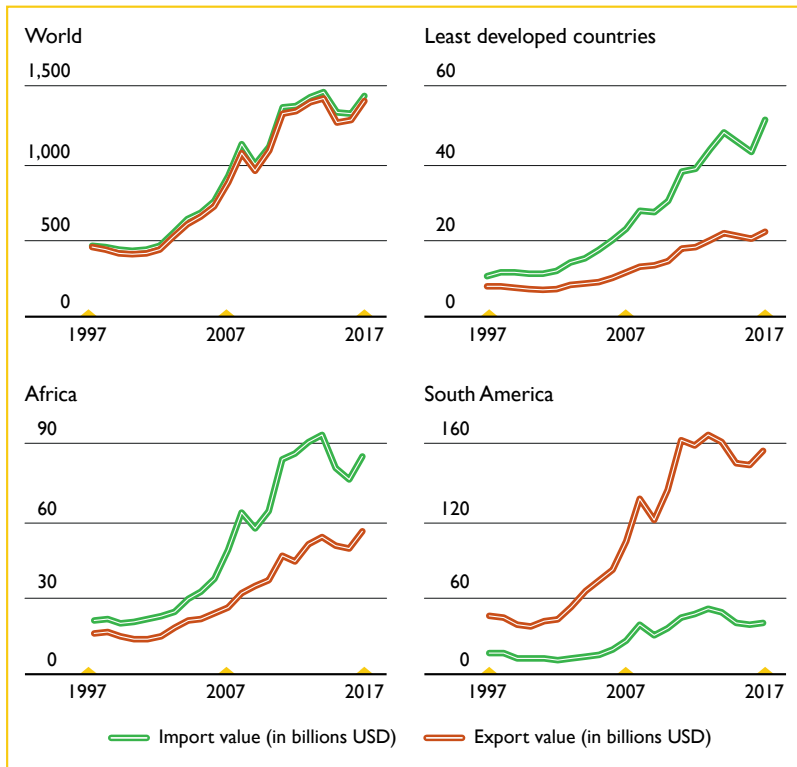


20-Year Comparison

Agricultural imports and exports



Value of agricultural imports and exports of all countries worldwide combined, of the world's currently 47 least developed countries (LDCs), Africa and South America from 1997 to 2017 in billion US dollars

The world trade divide

The agricultural trade balance of many of the world's regions or country groups is unbalanced. Until 1980, the least developed countries (LDCs) still had an agricultural trade surplus, but by the turn of the millennium, imports were already twice as high as exports. Between 1997 and 2017, agricultural imports of LDCs increased by 555%. Africa ceased to be a net exporter in the early 1980s when prices of raw commodities such as coffee, cocoa and spices declined and domestic food production grew only slowly. Basic foodstuffs, such as cereals, dairy products and sugar, make up a large proportion of Africa's total food imports. A food-trade deficit can become a problem for poor countries lacking foreign currency reserves. In South America, the picture looks different. Between 1997 and 2017, agricultural exports almost quadrupled, leading to a trade surplus of \$118 bn. Argentina and Brazil are among the world's largest exporters of wheat, maize, soybeans and sugar.

Sources

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- 3 Rakotoarisoa, M. A., lafrate, M. and Paschali, M. (2011). Why Has Africa Become A Net Food Importer? Explaining Africa agricultural and food trade deficits. Rome: FAO. www.fao.org/3/a-i2497e.pdf