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The entire land area of the country is only 300 sq km of which some 9 000 hectares are covered with permanent crops dominated by coconuts; only 3 990 hectares are considered arable. Practically no cereals are produced, therefore, the population, estimated at 352 000 (FAOSTAT, 2014), is heavily dependent on imported food.

Cereal imports for the 2014/15 marketing year (January/December) are estimated at 51 600 tonnes (comprising rice about 21 000 and wheat about 30 600 tonnes), similar to the above-average level of the previous year. The Maldives has, however, a very productive fisheries sector, which provides a good portion of locally-produced food, as well as income, by supplying the tourism industry which received more than 1.2 million visitors in 2014. Overall, food security is satisfactory.

