

**TITLE:** Agricultural Output Growth in a Proto- and Early Industrial Setting: Evidence from Sharecropping in Western Westphalia and the Lower Rhineland, c. 1740–1860

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**Abstract:** An evidence-based time series on agricultural growth prior to 1850 only exists for very few German territories. Except for Saxony, there is no series available for the pre-1815 period. Based on sharecropping contracts from the estate of Anholt, we reconstruct the development of crop production for western Westphalia and the lower Rhineland c. 1740–1860. Our results show that parallel to Saxony, agricultural growth in this north-west German region was driven entirely by demand from a growing number of households engaged in proto-industrial and early industrial manufacture production. Fully commercialised land tenure systems dominated in Anholt from the beginning of the early modern period, and manorial institutions had little relevance for rural property relations. Hence, the radical French and Prussian agrarian reforms at the beginning of the nineteenth century had no effect on agricultural production. In a north-west European comparison, Anholt's sharecroppers performed rather well during this decisive formation period culminating in early industrialisation.

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