

What are the Most Important Agricultural Regions in More Developed Countries?

Mixed Crop and Livestock Farming

Most common form in the United States west of the Appalachians and east of 98° west longitude

Integration of crops and livestock - most crops are fed to animals rather than being directly consumed by humans

Devotes nearly all land to growing crops but receives more than three-fourths of its income from the sale of animal products

Reduces seasonal variations in income: most income comes during the harvest season, but livestock products can be sold throughout the year.

Crop rotation - farm divided into several fields, and each is planted on a planned cycle, often of several years

Crop rotation helps maintain the fertility of a field, because crops deplete the soil of certain nutrients but restore others

Two-field crop rotation developed in Europe. A cereal grain was planted in field A one year while field B is left fallow.

Choice of crops - Corn belt in the US with cattle. (soybeans are second)

Dairy farming

These are found near large urban areas. It accounts for 20 percent of the total value of agricultural output throughout Western Europe and North America, (Australia, New Zealand and Russia)

90% of the world's supply of milk is produced and consumed in these developed regions

Transportation factors make dairying the most important type of commercial agriculture outside of large cities because of transportation costs. - milkshed

Today almost every farm in the Northeast US and Western Europe is within the milkshed of at least one urban area.

Farms specialize in products other than milk.

Farms located farther from consumers are more likely to sell their output to processors who make butter, cheese, or dried, evaporated, and condensed milk. Almost all the milk in Wisconsin is processed as opposed to only 5 percent in Pennsylvania.

Dairy farmers do not sell their products directly to consumers. Instead, they sell milk to wholesalers who sell to retailers.

Distribution differs between the US and the UK. Milk is still delivered in the UK.

Dairy farming is labor intensive. The cows must be milked twice a day. Dairy farming requires constant attention throughout the year.

There is an expense of feeding cows through the winter,

Minnesota for example is losing 800 dairy farms a year, a decline of 6 percent a year. Lack of profitability and workload are the reasons given.

Grain Farming

Crops on a grain farm are grown primarily for human consumption rather than livestock.

Commercial grain farmers sell their output to manufacturers of food products, such as breakfast cereals and snack chip makers.

The most important grain grown is wheat, used to make bread flour.

- Wheat can generally be sold for a higher price than other grains.
- It has more uses as human food.
- It can be stored easily without spoiling and can be transported a long distance.

- Wheat has a relatively high value per unit weight and can be shipped profitably from remote farms to market.

Large-scale commercial grain production is found in only a few countries. (the United States, Canada, Argentina, Australia, France and the UK.) China and India are major producers of grain through subsistence agriculture.

Commercial farms are generally located in areas that are too dry for mixed crop and livestock agriculture.

In North America large-scale commercial grain farming is concentrated in three areas.

- Winter Wheat Belt (Kansas, Colorado, Oklahoma)
- Spring Wheat Belt (Dakotas, Montana, Saskatchewan)
- Palouse region of Washington state

Large-scale grain production is highly mechanized- the reaper and then the combine make this possible. Combine companies begin working in Oklahoma in early summer and begin working their way north.

Wheat is grown for a large extent as a product for international trade. It is the world's leading export crop.

The United States and Canada account for more than half of the world's output of wheat, the North American prairies are known as the world's "breadbasket."

Livestock Ranching

Ranching is the commercial grazing of livestock over an extensive area.

This is adapted to semi-arid or arid land.

Practiced in relatively developed countries where the vegetation is too sparse and the soil too poor to support crops.

In the US, the importance of ranching is evident because of its prominence in popular culture. Cattle ranching in Texas, though glamorized in popular

culture, actually dominated commercial agriculture for a short period of time - from 1867 to 1885.

Cattle were brought to the Americas during Columbus' second voyage.

Immigrants from Portugal and Spain - the only Europeans with a tradition of cattle ranching - began ranching in the Americas.

US cattle ranching expanded because of the demand for beef in East Coast cities during the 1860's. The challenge came in transporting cattle to market. Ranchers who could get their cattle to Chicago were paid \$30 to \$40 a head, compared to only \$3 to \$4 a head in Texas.

Cattle were driven by hoof by cowboys over trails to the nearest railhead.

Abilene became a major transshipment point because of the efforts of Joseph G. McCoy. (The real McCoy)

Cattle ranching declined in importance in the 1880s, after it came in conflict with sedentary agriculture.

The US government began to sell land to farmers, leaving ranchers with no legal claim to the land.

Barbed wire led to the defeat of the cattle ranchers.

60 percent of cattle ranching today is on land leased from the US government.

Ranchers were induced to change from cattle drives to fixed-location ranching by a change in the predominant breed of cattle. (Longhorns, Hereford)

Large ranches may be owned by meat processing plants rather than individuals.

Commercial ranching is conducted in other relatively developed regions of the world. (Europe?, South America) Sheep are commercially ranches in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa.

Ranching became a part of the meat processing industry rather an economic activity carried out on isolated farms. This is how it differs from pastoral nomadism.

Ranching has followed similar stages around the world.

- Herding of animals in open ranges in a semi-nomadic lifestyle
- fixed farming by dividing the open land into ranches
- Farms continued to grow crops and ranching was confined to drier lands.
- Ranchers experimented with new methods of breeding and sources of water and feed.
- Became part of the meat processing industry rather than an economic activity carried out on isolated farms.

Mediterranean Agriculture

Exists in Mediterranean Climates. Where are these areas? What are their characteristics?

Farmers derive a smaller percentage of income from animal products in the Mediterranean regions because it is hindered by lack of water in the summer.

Transhumance was practiced in many Mediterranean areas.

Horticulture abounds. Horticulture is the growing of fruits, vegetables, and flowers.

Tree agriculture also abounds.

Most of the world's grapes, olives, fruits and vegetables are grown in Mediterranean agricultural regions.

Along the Mediterranean Sea the two most important crops grown are olives and grapes.

Two thirds of the wine in the world is produced in countries that border the Mediterranean Sea.

Cereal crops are also grown along the Mediterranean. The wheat is grown in a similar way to winter wheat in the US.

30 percent of California farmland is devoted fruit and vegetable horticulture. California provides much of the citrus fruits, tree nuts, and deciduous fruits consumed in the US.

Water is increasingly a problem as agriculture competes with the influx of humans who also value the Mediterranean zones of the world.

Commercial Gardening and Fruit Farming

Predominant in the Southeast US. It has a long growing season and humid climate and is accessible to the large markets of New York Philadelphia, Washington and other eastern cities.

This is frequently called **Truck farming**. (truck is a Middle English word meaning "bartering" or "exchange of services.")

They produce the fruits and vegetables that consumers in relatively developed societies demand, such as apples, asparagus, cherries, lettuce, mushrooms, and tomatoes.

Some of these products are sold fresh, but most are sold to large processors who can or freeze the produce.

Truck farms are highly efficient, large scale operations that take advantage of machinery available.

They are willing to experiment with new seed varieties, fertilizers, and other inputs to minimize costs and maximize efficiency.

Labor costs are kept low by the hiring of migrant farm workers.

Farms specialize in a few crops and a handful of farms may dominate national output of some fruits and vegetables.

Specialty farming is the growing of crops that have limited but increasing demand among affluent consumers, such as asparagus, peppers, mushrooms, and nursery plants.

Plantation Agriculture

This type of agriculture is found in the tropics and subtropics.

A **plantation** is a large farm that specializes in one or two crops. Among the most important grown are cotton, sugar cane, coffee, rubber, and tobacco. Also produced in large quantity are cocoa, jute, bananas, tea, coconuts, and palm oil.

They are situated in sparsely populated area and import workers and provide them with food, housing, and social services.

Plantation managers must try to spread the work as evenly as possible to maximize the use of imported workers.

Where weather permits, they grow more than one crop a year.

Crops are processed at the plantation before shipping because the product is less bulky and therefore cheaper to ship long distances to the North America and European markets.

Until the Civil War plantations were important in the US where the principal crops was cotton, followed by tobacco and sugar cane.