

Revision Notes

Characteristics of farming

Agriculture, or farming, is the cultivation of the land and the rearing of animals for food. It is affected by many of the same factors and concerns as other types of industry. There are many types of agricultural process in the modern world and both large commercial farms and small subsistence farms work to supply the constant demand for agricultural produce.

Primary industry

Primary industries are those that use the Earth's natural resources: farming, fishing, forestry and mining.

Farming

Sheep graze on a farm in Devon

Farms can be categorised according to what is being grown or reared, the size of the operation, and the agricultural techniques being used.

Farming can be: sedentary or nomadic; subsistence or commercial; arable, pastoral or mixed; extensive or intensive.

Sedentary or nomadic?

Sedentary farming is when a farm is based in the same location all the time. Nomadic farming is when a farmer moves from one place to another.

Subsistence or commercial?

Subsistence farming is when crops and animals are produced by a farmer to feed their family, rather than to take to market. Commercial farming is when crops and animals are produced to sell at market for a profit.

Arable, pastoral or mixed?

Arable farms grow crops. Pastoral farms rear animals - either for by-products such as milk, eggs or wool, or for meat. Mixed farms grow crops and rear animals.

Extensive or intensive?

Extensive farming is where a relatively small amount of produce is generated from a large area of farmland. Inputs will be low with either poor quality land or few workers. Intensive farming is where a large amount of produce is generated from a relatively small area of land. Inputs will be high to achieve a high yield per hectare. Inputs could be either technology (fertilisers or machines) or labour.

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