

# Different Types of Agricultural Activity

- Agriculture involves rearing of animals and crop cultivation
- Agriculture aims at providing enough, healthy food to feed the population
- worldwide
- Different types of agricultural activities are practiced in different regions across the world
- Factors such as climate affect the type of agricultural activity a farmer can practice
- Types of agricultural activities include subsistence farming, nomadic herding, commercial plantation, livestock rearing, etc.

## Types of Agriculture

Although agriculture is not uniform across the world, it is the most widespread activity. It is classified based on the type of crop being grown, scale of cultivation, intensity, mechanization level, combinations of livestock and how farm produce is distributed. The following are the different types of agricultural activities worldwide:

### 1. Shifting Cultivation

Shifting cultivation is commonly practiced in the tropics. It involves forest clearance through burning and slashing. The cleared land is cultivated until its fertility declines, or for three to five years or until native flora and weeds overtake it. When that happens, farmers abandon the land for a fallow period and clear another forest area for cultivation. It is a type of subsistence farming usually done manually. People in the tropical regions such as south-east Asia tend to adopt this type of agricultural activity with a focus on growing grains. However, due to the pressure environmentalists and activists exert to support environment protection from such unsustainable practices, the activity is declining.

### 2. Nomadic Herding

Nomadic herding is the practice of keeping and grazing animals on natural pastures. It is common in the arid and semi-arid regions such as certain parts of Saudi Arabia, northern Africa and northern parts of Eurasia. The practice resembles pastoral farming.

Nomads move with their animals from one place to another in search of water and pasture for their animals. The type of animals herded vary from one region to another. They include sheep, cattle, camel, goats, donkeys and horses. The activity is a form of subsistence farming meant to feed the family.

### 3. Rudimentary Sedentary Tillage

Unlike other types of agricultural activities, rudimentary sedentary cultivation is a type of subsistence farming practiced on the same piece of land year-in, year-out. Land is then left fallow after some years to regain its soil fertility. It is

commonly practiced in the tropics and involves the growth of tree crops such as the Para rubber tree and grains.

#### **4. Livestock Ranching/Pastoral Farming**

Livestock ranching focuses on rearing animals. Unlike nomadic herding, farmers do not move from one place to another in search of pasture and water, but live in settlements. Pasture lands are developed for grazing the animals. Many areas across the globe with large pieces of land with enough grazing areas for animals practice this type of agriculture for commercial reasons. South America, North America and Australia are some regions across the world that intensively practice commercial pastoral farming on large-scale due to low rains received in the areas. The animals in ranches are mainly kept for wool and meat. Dairy farming is also a critical aspect of pastoral farming.

However, the activity is not sustainable because excessive grazing can lead to destruction of natural pastures. Therefore, farmers end up buying feeds for their animals, making the practice costly.

#### **5. Commercial Plantations**

Also known as tree crop farming, industrialized agriculture or plantation farming, commercial plantations cover large land areas. Even if practiced on a smaller piece of land, the activity has a high commercial value. It involves the cultivation of tropical crops such as tea, rubber, coffee, coconut, cocoa, grapes, apples, spices, oranges, avocado, mangoes and palm oil.

It is commonly practiced in regions with European colonial influence such as Africa, Asia and Latin America. Colonial governments established most of the plantations in their colonies to supply the European markets with tropical crops. It requires high capital to establish with the majority of the crops grown being tree crops. Some plantation farms have processing factories. Various farming techniques are adopted to increase farm yield because the goal of such farms is to make profits.

#### **6. Mixed Farming**

Also known as grain and livestock farming, mixed farming involves the growing of crops and rearing of animals. It has its origins in the humid, mid-latitudes, excluding Asia. It is an agricultural activity with its roots mainly in Europe. Mixed farming develops in close relation to market infrastructure. It is commonly practiced in New Zealand and Great Britain. Mixed farming involves continuous cropping and the growth of crops with varying maturity periods on the same piece of land. It does well in areas with sufficient rainfall or proper facilities for irrigation.

#### **7. Specialized Horticulture**

Increased demand for horticultural products in highly urbanized areas with dense populations led to the development of specialized horticulture. It has been successfully adopted in northern Hungary, France and the Swiss Lake regions for vineyard cultivation.