

FARMING IN THE THIRD WORLD

About two thirds of the world's 4,000 million people live in the Third World. About three quarters of these people, that is half of the world's population, do not get enough to eat. Most of the Third World countries are located in the mainly tropical parts of the world where there is the most hunger, sickness, illiteracy and poverty. Hunger and malnutrition are linked in a vicious circle with sickness and inability to work. More and better food will only be produced if this circle of poverty can be broken.

Some scientists predict that famine is inevitable in the Third World. Others say that famine can be avoided by growing new and better kinds of crops (they call this the "Green Revolution"), by improving farming techniques, for example with better irrigation, fertilisers and pesticides, and by bringing more land into cultivation. Some experts say that the whole structure of farming and of land owning needs to be changed

and that countries need to alter their economic and political systems. Many experts think that small scale improvements are necessary, for example, improving traditional ploughs rather than introducing modern tractors.

There is no single solution to the problems of Third World farming; nor are the answers to the problems to be found in the Third World alone. Changes are needed in the attitudes of the world's more developed countries towards the Third World and in the patterns of world trade. At present the world trade pattern benefits the richer, developed, countries more than the Third World countries. Most of the Third World countries cannot make sufficient profits on the world markets by selling their agricultural produce, minerals and industrial goods. As a result most of them cannot raise the capital needed to improve their farming without borrowing money or receiving aid.

1. Too many people produce too little food. This farmer in Bangladesh puts all of his energy into his work. He has a large family, a small plot of land, poor seed, few tools and nothing to live on if the crop fails — as it often does.
2. Poor breeds of animals produce very little milk or meat. Many animals die of thirst, hunger or disease. They compete with people for food and many animals kept for work do not earn their keep. In India there are many millions of useless cows, such as these, kept because they are sacred.
3. Most farmers in the Third World have to walk for several hours a day. They have to carry produce from the fields and to and from market. Water may have to be carried a long distance. Most areas have only rough tracks which are unsuitable for carts or motor trucks. It is not much good growing surplus food unless it can be taken to market.
4. Many Third World countries grow cash crops such as tea, coffee, bananas and rubber for export. Although the prices for these crops may be high in the shops of countries such as Britain, the farmers in the Third World do not receive much for growing them. Many of these crops are grown on large plantations, or estates, which may be owned by foreigners. Some crops, such as bananas, are those which the rest of the world could, if necessary, do without. If a country relies on growing these crops, it will lose a lot of much needed income if the harvest is bad.
5. Many tropical soils will support crops for only a few years. Then the land must be rested and new areas must be cleared by cutting and burning the vegetation. Many of these farmers are subsistence farmers who grow just enough for their own needs and have no cash crops to sell.
6. Lack of water is a major problem for many farmers. In some areas the methods used to irrigate the crops have not changed for thousands of years, as here in the Punjab, India. Most irrigation is found in river valleys where the soil is more fertile and water more plentiful.
7. Methods of harvesting the crop may also have changed little for many centuries. Here, in Fayum, Egypt, the corn is being threshed and winnowed in the traditional method which is slow and wasteful.
8. Many Third World countries are in Tropical areas where the rainfall is unreliable. When there is a drought, cattle and draught animals die and people must move away or starve. Some of the most serious droughts in recent years have been in the Sahel lands, to the south of the Sahara desert, and in Ethiopia.
9. It can be expensive to control the supply of water. Some schemes, such as this one on the Volta River in Ghana, West Africa, have cost too much and have not always been as successful as was hoped.

10. Other schemes to secure a regular water supply may be on a smaller scale. These include drilling deep wells but if there are too many wells in one area they may dry up. Help and advice from water experts from other countries is often needed.
11. Not all farmers in Third World countries should be thought of as poor. This farmer in India has a fine house and takes expensive holidays like many farmers in other parts of the world. He is well educated and can benefit from such modern farming methods as are available to him, including chemical fertilisers and better seeds, but he is not allowed to own a very large farm.
12. Careful studies are needed to find out which crops are best suited to particular areas. These studies include the soil and the climatic conditions not only for wide areas but also for individual farms. This weather station is in East Africa.
13. Here, in Indonesia, mountain slopes have been cleared and new farmland is being created using improved methods of terracing the land. Unfortunately, the areas of land in the Third World that are suitable for new farms are nowhere near enough to meet the needs.
14. Changes in methods of land ownership are necessary in many countries; for example, in many parts of Africa the plots of land which have been divided between families are now too small. In some parts of Latin America tenant farmers work on vast estates and pay half their crops to their landlords as rent. In some areas these estates have been broken up and the farmers now own their farms. Here, in Ecuador, the FAO has helped the farmers to build new homes, has introduced ploughs and provided good seed.
15. Tractors and ploughs which are suitable in countries such as Britain may not be appropriate in many areas of the Third World. They are expensive, difficult to repair and may damage the soil. Simple tools, such as this plough, may be more appropriate. They can be introduced where none existed before or can be an improvement on traditional methods, as here in Gambia, West Africa.
16. Rice is the world's most important food crop. Recently, new types of rice with better yields were welcomed as the "Green Revolution". It was hoped that they would largely solve the food shortages. Unfortunately, as here in Liberia, they needed careful irrigation and expensive fertilisers and pesticides which were too costly for poor farmers.
17. Modern methods of farming, such as this winnowing machine in the Philippines, are more efficient but they also put farmers and farm labourers out of work.
18. Many unemployed people leave the villages and countryside and go to the cities to seek work although most of them do not find it. This new pottery industry in the Philippines is an attempt to provide work for the unemployed in their own villages.
19. Research stations, such as this one in Costa Rica, Central America, try to find ways to control insect pests and diseases which kill or reduce the yields of both crops and animals.
20. Nearly a third of the food grown in the Third World is destroyed by pests after the crops have been harvested. Proper storage facilities, such as these in East Africa, are essential.
21. Cattle production can be improved in many areas by growing better grass, controlling diseases and introducing new breeds. In Cameroun, West Africa, these grasslands have been improved by the School of Agriculture.
22. Farmers need to be taught better methods of cattle rearing and given help to begin new herds. These modern cattle sheds are a great improvement for this farmer in Tanzania, East Africa.
23. Most people in the Third World not only have too little to eat, they also have a poorly balanced diet. New crops, which are a valuable source of vitamins, such as these sunflowers in Bangladesh, must be introduced to provide a better diet.
24. Fish farming is being encouraged in the sea, reservoirs and irrigation ponds to supply essential protein. These rice fields in South East Asia are used not only for rice but also for fish and ducks.

The pictures and notes in this set are not intended as a complete treatment of the subject. They provide a core of material to which the teacher can add further materials and questions. Additional sets in the series will provide a useful library of pictures to illustrate the general themes of development studies in the Third World. There is a large amount of case study material available, such as that published by Oxfam and the Centre for World Development and Education. Well illustrated studies of these general themes may be found in "The Third World" by R.Clare (Macdonald Educational : World Topics. Colour Units) and other books in the same series.

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FARMING IN THE THIRD WORLD : QUESTIONS

(Numbered to correspond with the related slides)

1. a. What are some of the problems facing this farmer and his family?

2. a. Describe these cattle.
b. Why are better breeds of cattle and other livestock needed in most Third World countries?
c. Why are too many cattle a problem in India?

3. a. Which is the easiest way for a person to carry a heavy load?
b. Find examples of various ways of carrying loads in different parts of the Third World.
c. Why are many new roads and improved methods of transport necessary?

4. a. Find out how bananas are grown.
b. What are the disadvantages of relying on cash crops for exports?

5. a. Why do many farmers in the Third World practice "slash and burn" farming?
b. What are the disadvantages of relying on "subsistence farming" from the point of view of
1. the farmer 2. the country?

6. a. How is this land being irrigated?
b. Find out about 1. traditional and 2. new methods of irrigation in different parts of the Third World.
c. Why are the traditional methods wasteful?
d. Why is it necessary to irrigate more land?

7. a. How is this harvest being threshed?
b. Find examples of traditional harvesting methods in different parts of the Third World.
c. Why may the traditional methods be wasteful?

8.
 - a. Why is the careful management of water supplies essential in areas where the rainfall is unreliable?
 - b. Find out about the droughts in Africa in the 1970's.

9.
 - a. Find the Volta River on a map of Africa.
 - b. Why was aid from other countries needed for this scheme?
 - c. Find out about large scale irrigation schemes in the Third World. How successful have they been?

10.
 - a. Why might help from experts from other countries be needed to drill water wells such as this?
 - b. What are the advantages of small scale irrigation schemes?

11.
 - a. What advantages does this farmer have for improving his farm?
 - b. Find other examples of prosperous farms in the Third World.

12.
 - a. What is this meteorologist doing? How does her work aid farm improvement?
 - b. Which other scientific studies are necessary to improve farming?

13.
 - a. Where is Indonesia?
 - b. How is the farmland being extended to feed Indonesia's rapidly growing population?
 - c. Find out how new farmland is being obtained in other parts of the Third World. What are some of the problems of trying to farm new areas?

14.
 - a. How have these farmers in Ecuador been given 1. an interest and 2. help in farming?
 - b. Find out about the problems of land ownership in other parts of the Third World.

15.
 - a. Find Gambia on a map of Africa.
 - b. What kind of instruction is being given these farmers?
 - c. Why are tractors not always suitable for Third World farmers?

16.
 - a. Find Liberia on a map of Africa.
 - b. What was the "Green Revolution"? Find out more about it. Why was it not as successful as was hoped?

17.
 - a. What does this machine do?
 - b. What are 1. the advantages and 2. the disadvantages of mechanised farming?

18.
 - a. What has been done in this village to give work to unemployed farmers?
 - b. What might this farmer have done otherwise?

19.
 - a. What important job is this scientist doing?
 - b. Find out about different ways of controlling insect pests.

20.
 - a. Why is proper storage of the harvest essential?
 - b. How can farmers be encouraged to change their traditional methods?

21.
 - a. Find Cameroun on a map of Africa.
 - b. What important developments have taken place at this School of Tropical Agriculture?
 - c. Find out about the tse-tse fly.

22.
 - a. Farmers can learn new methods but they also need practical help. How has this African's farm been improved?

23.
 - a. How has this farmer 1. improved his diet and 2. obtained a valuable crop to sell?
 - b. Find out about new kinds of crops that can be grown in the Third World.

24. a. How have 1. the diet and 2. the food supply been improved by this farmer?
b. Find out about fish farming and the introduction of new kinds of food.
c. What are the advantages of these new developments?

General. Some points to consider. Select slides which help to illustrate them.

1. What kinds of change are best?
2. How can changes be introduced?
3. Who will pay for the changes?

CIRCLE OF POVERTY

