

What factors influence farming?

Farming, or **agriculture**, is the growing of crops and raising of animals. Farming has changed the natural landscape in many parts of the world. There are three main types of farming:

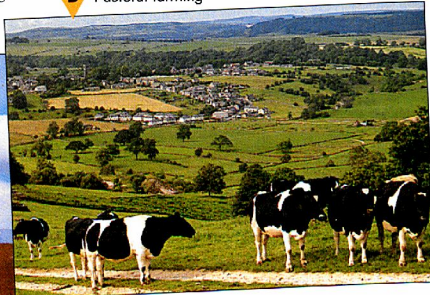
- **Arable** is the ploughing of land and the growing of crops.

- **Pastoral** is leaving the land under grass for the grazing of animals.
- **Mixed farming** is when crops and animals are found in the same area.

A Arable farming



B Pastoral farming



Farming, especially in Britain, is big business. Farmers must carefully choose the best type of farming for the place where they farm. Deciding which is the best type depends upon several physical and human factors (sketches C, D and E).

Physical factors influencing farming

C We grow fruit and other crops. They need a lot of sun to ripen them.

Climate is very important

My crops need some rain, but not too much.

It has to be warm enough for several months for the fruit and crops to ripen.

My cows need grass. Grass is best if there is a lot of rain.

Relief and soils are also very important

I grow crops in lowland areas. Here the relief is low and the slopes are usually gentle. The soil is often deep and has a lot of goodness in it.

I look after sheep in hilly areas. Here the relief is high and the slopes are often steep. The soil is usually thin and has little goodness in it.

E Human factors influencing farming

Size ...

Some farms are **very large**. This is where **either**

- farmers need a lot of land on which to grow crops or raise animals
- or
- where there are only a few farmers in a large area.

Some farms are **very small**. This is where **either**

- farmers only need a little land to support their families
- or
- there are lots of farmers working in a small area.

... **technology, transport and markets**

The **technology** (machinery) available to farmers is also important. In Britain most farmers use modern machines to help them with their work. In poorer countries most of the work on a farm has to be done by hand.

What a farm produces may also depend on its distance from the **market**. The market is where farmers sell their produce. Farmers who grow crops that are heavy (e.g. potatoes) or soon go bad (e.g. strawberries) must be near to the market.

Farmers have been helped in some parts of the world by improved **transport**. In Britain dairy farmers have been helped by special milk lorries which keep the milk fresh on the journey to market. Better roads and motorways get the milk to markets more quickly.

Activities

- 1** Match the following beginnings to the correct endings.

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Arable farming | is rearing animals |
| Pastoral farming | is rearing animals and growing crops |
| Mixed farming | is growing crops |

- 2** Diagram F shows some newspaper headlines about problems which affect farming. Draw table G below and sort the headlines into the correct columns.

E X T R A

If there is a farm near you:

- Is it mainly an arable, a pastoral or a mixed farm?
- How have physical factors influenced the farmer?
- How have human factors influenced the farmer?

G

Problems which affect farming	
Physical	Human

F

- Ferry strike – fruit rots in French ports
- High electricity prices – dairy farmers with milk machines hit hard
- Sheep are stranded in snowdrifts
- Wet summers cause disease in potatoes
- Crops ruined by flooding
- Fruit blossoms killed by frost
- Rise in petrol prices
- Daffodils flattened by strong winds
- Farms too small for family to earn a living

Summary

Farming is influenced by physical and human factors. Physical factors are climate, relief and soils. Human factors include farm size, technology, distance from markets, and transport.