



# Food on our plate

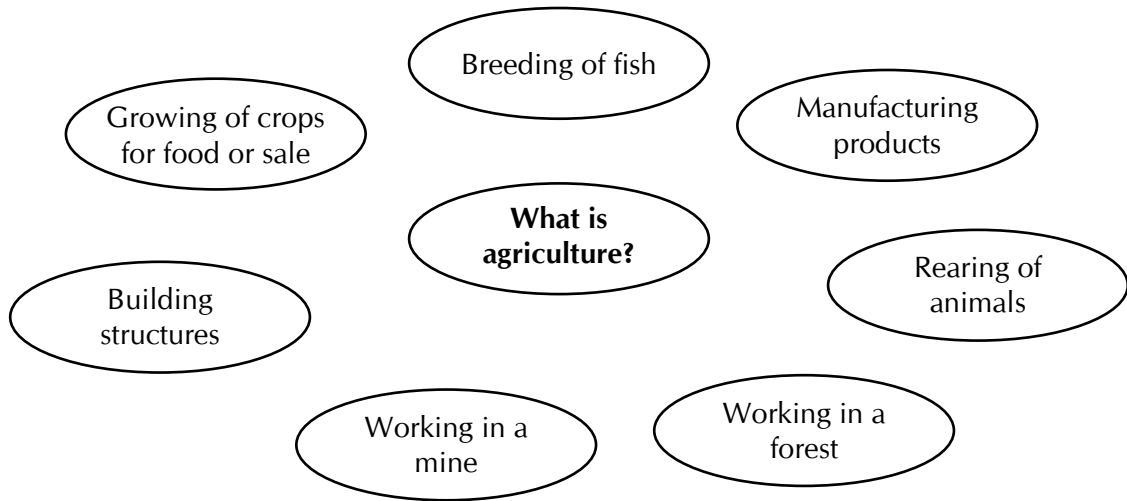
Neha Pradhan Arora



This is a Primary level worksheet  
and is suitable for children from  
Classes IV and V.

## I. What is agriculture?

1. Colour in the correct shapes that answer the question – What is agriculture?



A person who practices agriculture is called a \_\_\_\_\_. Draw a picture of a person who practices agriculture.

(Encourage children to show their drawings and describe their farmer. Talk about the assumptions about farmers and compare it to different farmers in our country – small farmers, large farmers, plantation owners, etc).

## II. How do we grow food?

Agriculture means growing crops and domesticating animals to get food for human beings. Agriculture is done in different ways. It may be done by one person or family for their own needs (subsistence farming), by a group of farmers, or by a company (cooperative farming) or industry (commercial and industrialized farming). The process of growing food, however, remains much the same. Study the images on the next page and answer the questions after that.



a) Preparing the land by digging and ploughing



b) Sowing the seeds in furrows



c) Deweeding, irrigating (watering) and guarding against pests and insects must be done continuously



d) Harvesting or cutting the ready crop



e) Threshing or separating the grain from the husk



f) Winnowing or separating the dust from the grain



g) Storing the grain for use or sale

1. What are the possible problems the farmer may face during this process?

---



---

2. How can he deal with these?

---



---

3. What would you call a farmer's friends and who/what would be his foes?

---



---

4. Create a new implement(s) you feel could help the farmer in his hard work.

### III. Equipment and Infrastructure

Given below are the images of some implements used in agriculture by small or large farmers. Their names are written alongside. Can you state what they are used for?

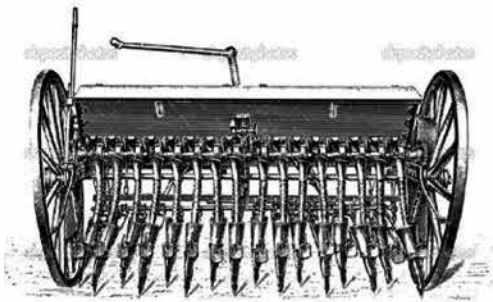


Tractor with plough

---

---

---



Seed Drill (to be attached to Tractor)

---

---

---



Sickle

---

---

---

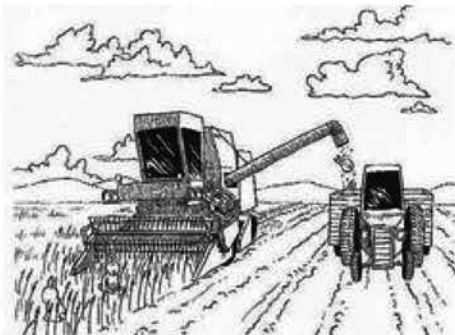


Water canal

---

---

---



Harvester

---

---

---



## IV. The crop calendar



The process of growing food needs a lot of hard work over many days. Given below is an outline of the crop calendar for India. The two main crop cycles are Rabi and Kharif. Rabi are sown in winter and harvested in spring while Kharif are sown in the monsoons and harvested in autumn. On an average most grains take between 6 to 8 months to complete their cycle. Between the Rabi and Kharif cycle, the Zaid cycle allows for the growing of seasonal fruits and vegetables.

Look at this calendar and find out –

1. Crops sown around September –

---



---

2. Crops which are sown during the rainy season (June-July) –

---



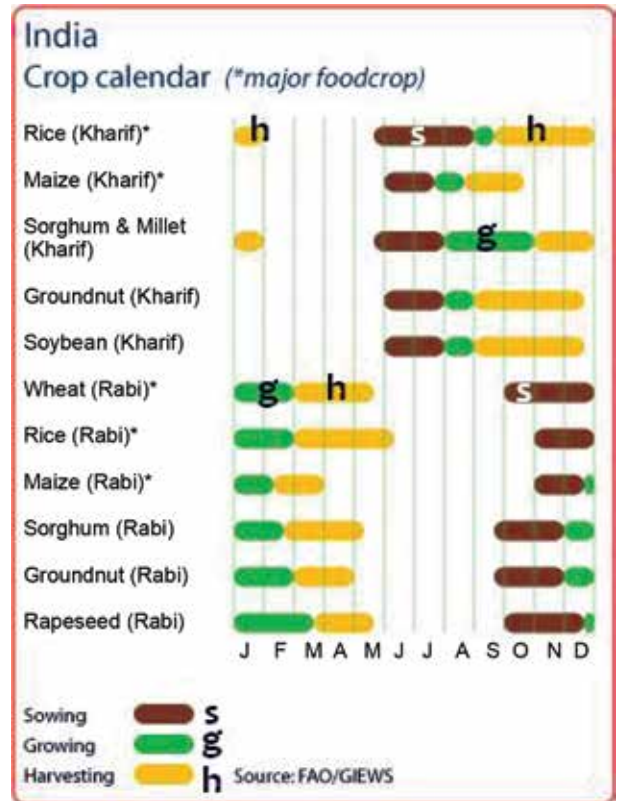
---

3. Month in which Rabi crops are sown and harvested –

---



---



4. Month in which Kharif crops are sown and harvested –

---



---

5. Do you think it is possible for the farmer to grow something on his land, all year round? What can possibly prevent this from happening?

---



---

### Did you know?

The terms 'kharif' and 'rabi' originate from Arabic where Kharif means autumn and Rabi means spring.

## V. Celebrating the harvest

Find out which are the different harvest festivals in your region and in states across the country. Fill in the table below –

Region	Name of festival	When is it celebrated?	Which crop is harvested?	How is it celebrated?

Can you see the connection between the crop calendar and the festivals? Can you also see the link between the food cooked for the festivals and the harvest? Try and find out the special rituals and recipes for the celebrations! A few photographs would also be useful!

## VI. Small farmers vs large farmers

Small farmer	Large farmer
Has a small piece of land – owned by himself or family	Has many pieces of land, in one place or multiple places – owned by himself or family
Uses simple machines and tools	Uses big machines
Uses natural manure / chemical pesticides / fertilizers / simple seeds	Uses chemical pesticides and fertilizers along with seeds that produce more
Uses most of what he produces and sells some crops in the market	Sells most of what he grows
Works on his own on the farm along with family members and hired help	Hires people to work on his farm
Also has a few animals to help with the farm	May have more animals and livestock for commercial purposes

1. Patil is a small farmer. He has a small piece of land and uses a plough to grow crops. He only grows enough for his family. He does not have money to spend on tools, fertilizers, machines. What will help him grow more and earn more money?

---

---

---

---

---

2. Singh is a farmer who has a large piece of land and machines to work on his land. He uses chemical fertilizers, pesticides and seeds which grow more. He has been getting a good crop for the last 20 years. However, now his land has become weak and he grows less food every year. Why is this happening?

---

---

---

---

---

### To think and ponder

We have used new technology to be able to grow more food for all the people in our country. We now grow many million tonnes of food grains. Yet many poor people, including farmers, in our country, do not get food to eat. We have also spoilt many of our farm lands by using too many chemicals. Are we growing food for our need or for our greed? What do you think will happen to our soil, water and air if we keep working out of our greed?

## VII. Sustainable agriculture

Sustainable agriculture is agriculture done in a manner that is good for the land, animals and people. Identify the actions given below as being sustainable or not. Put an S on the actions which are sustainable and H on those which are harmful.

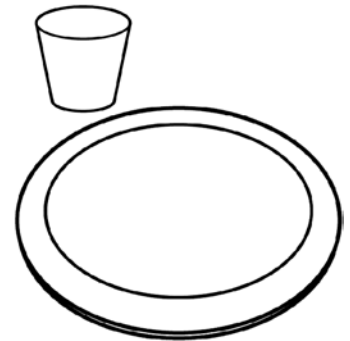
1. Brings in new varieties of seeds and crops from other regions. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Feeds cattle food that makes them produce more milk; but which may make them sick over time. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Forms a cooperative to grow food together with others for a longer period of time – more produce, more sale, less loan on one farmer. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Grows different kinds of crops based on season. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Grows only one or two cash crops through the year. \_\_\_\_\_

6. Grows the grain, vegetables and plants that are local. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Grows the wrong crop in the wrong season or region – for example a crop which needs lots of water is grown in an area which does not get much rainfall. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Recognizes some insects and birds as friends which help the crop and tries to increase their presence around the farm. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Regulates grazing of cattle in the fields. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Sells everything to a big company with nothing kept for the family or the local market. \_\_\_\_\_
11. Takes huge loans to buy equipment and fertilizers. \_\_\_\_\_
12. Uses all vegetable and food waste in a kitchen garden. \_\_\_\_\_
13. Uses local produce from the forest, ponds, rivers and land for his and his family's use. \_\_\_\_\_
14. Uses manure from the livestock. \_\_\_\_\_
15. Uses natural remedies for pests or mild chemicals. \_\_\_\_\_
16. Uses renewable energy sources like solar energy. \_\_\_\_\_
17. Uses strong chemical fertilisers to have a larger crop. \_\_\_\_\_

Remember, sustainability means farming a single area so that it can produce food indefinitely. To do this, a farmer must ensure that he does not use up all the natural resources or cause irreversible damage to them. Using renewable and varied resources will ensure long-term ability to grow food and other resources.

### VIII. Know your food

Here is your plate of food. Write names of 2-3 foods you like to eat. Then break down each dish into its ingredients and trace its journey back to the field. Find out where it was bought, where it was grown and how it travelled the road in between. Visit the market with your teacher or parent to understand the adventure your food has before it gets to your plate.



Food	Crop	Bought where	Grown where	Journey

The author continues to explore the purpose of education and learning through her work with schools and communities. She believes it is only through the creation of empathic, empowered and joyful learning communities that this purpose can be achieved. She currently lives in Bengaluru and can be reached at < [neha7779@gmail.com](mailto:neha7779@gmail.com) >.