

# Types of Farming

Types of farms refer to the nature and degree of products and their combination and various methods followed in the production of the same.

Under the types of farming, the major types that studied are (1) Specialized farming (2) Diversified farming (3) Mixed farming (4) Dry farming and (5) Ranching.

## 1. Specialized Farming

When a farm business unit derives more than 50 per cent of its income from a single enterprise it is called as a specialized farm. This means that among the possible crops or livestock enterprises taken up by a farmer, one particular crop or livestock enterprise contributes more than 50 per cent of the income. The reasons for specialized farming are; 1) assured income from the enterprise; 2) its suitability to the area, 3) its relative profitability, etc. The examples that can be cited are paddy farming, sugarcane farming, tobacco farming, etc., among crop enterprises and poultry, sheep farming, fish farming, etc., among livestock enterprises. The favourable environment though encourages specialized farming, apart from the advantages; disadvantages too are associated with it.

## Advantages

1. *Better Utilization of Land:* Land can be put to most productive use, by opting the enterprise that is best suited. A given type of land no doubt allows options for alternative crops; still there is a possibility of a particular crop capable of rewarding the farmer with better income.
2. *Better Management:* Specialization since is bestowing attention on a particular enterprise, it reduces the pressure on the farmer to care for several enterprises. Naturally it reduces the wastage of resources.
3. *Less Requirement of Equipment:* The farmer can carry on the business activity with the equipment that is required for the chosen enterprise. There are no pressing requirements to equip the farm with a variety of equipment.
4. *Increase in Skill of the Farmer:* The efficiency of the farmer increases as he can concentrate on one enterprise. His experience in the enterprise sharpens his skills in running the enterprise.
5. *Allows Better Marketing:* On marketing front, the farmer is better placed. He is saved from the pressure of finding market if he were to sell diversified products. It allows for better marketing functions i.e., assembling, transport, grading, financing, etc.

### Disadvantages

1. *Failure of Crop:* The farmer runs the risk of losing heavily in case, failure of crop occurs. There is no possibility of compensation. This is the biggest drawback of specialized farming.
2. *Non-utilization of Productive Resources:* Since the farmer confines to one or few enterprises, the various farm resources like land, water, labour, capital, etc., may not be fully utilized. In view of the limited enterprises, some of the resources may remain untapped or under-utilized.
3. *Affect on Soil Health:* Continuous raising of one crop or few crops may be exerting greater pressure on soil health. This practice does not allow crop rotation, thereby affecting the soil health.

### 2. Diversified Farming

It is also known as general farming. Here farming is diversified *i.e.*, a number of enterprises are taken up on the farm at the same time. It also connotes production and sale of the different product at different times during a year. There is not much significance for a single enterprise under this situation. No single enterprise contributes as high as 50 per cent of the total income derived in farming. This type of farming is associated with the following advantages.

#### Advantages

1. *Better Utilization of Farm Resources:* In view of the diversified cropping and crop rotations, land, labour and farm machinery and equipment are better utilized compared to specialized farming.
2. *Reduction of Farm Risks:* As a variety of crops are found, failure of one or two crops will not much affect the income from farming. Farmer can withstand the loss incurred from one or two enterprises.
3. *Flow of Income:* The farmer enjoys the advantage of deriving regular income, as different crops are grown.

#### Disadvantages

1. *Ineffective Supervision:* The presence of a number of enterprises on the farm will stand in the way of the farmer in bestowing effective supervision. Effectiveness can be found when there is a limit to the number of enterprises. The diversified enterprises allow the scope for the leakages in the farm business go unnoticed. This is likely to affect the farm economy.
2. *Less Possibility for Maintaining a Variety of Implements and Machinery:* It becomes expensive to purchase and maintain the required suitable implements and machinery for the various enterprises taken up on the farm.
3. *Probable Marketing Insufficiencies:* The growing of a variety of crops is likely to bring in problems on marketing front. The farmers have to search for markets.

### 3. Mixed Farming

It represents a type of farming in which crop production and livestock production are combined to sustain and satisfy as many needs of the farmer as possible. There are limits specified regarding contribution of livestock production, poultry, fisheries and bee keeping, etc., to the gross income on the farm. These enterprises are supposed

to contribute at least 10 per cent of gross income. However, this contribution should not exceed 49 per cent. Mixed farming facilitates the application of organic manure to soil, thus helping the maintenance of soil health. It provides employment to the farmer and his family throughout the year. Agricultural byproducts are properly used in mixed farming. It further provides a sort of stability to the farm business.

#### 4. Dry Farming

Growing of crops entirely under rainfed conditions is known as dry land agriculture. Depending on the amount of rainfall received, dry land agriculture is categorized into dry farming, dry land farming and rainfed farming. Dry farming means cultivation of crops in areas where rainfall is less than 750 mm per annum. Crop failure is the most common due to prolonged dry spells during the crop period. Dry farming regions are equivalent to arid regions and moisture conservation practices are important in this region. Dry land farming is the cultivation of crops in regions with an annual rainfall of more than 750 mm. Dry spells during crop period are necessary for crop production. Rainfed farming is crop production in regions where annual rainfall of more than 1150 mm. It is practiced in humid regions where crop failures are rare and drainage is the important problem. In dry farming and dry land farming, emphasis is on soil and water conservation, sustainable crop yields and limited fertilizer use according to soil moisture availability. In rainfed agriculture emphasis is on disposal of excess water, maximum crop yield, high levels of inputs and control of soil erosion.

#### 5. Ranching

Grazing of livestock on public pastures is called ranching. These lands are not fit for cultivation.

### FACTORS INFLUENCING TYPES OF FARMING

Type of farming is influenced by several factors. These factors can be broadly grouped into two categories *viz.*, physical factors and economic factors, the details of which are presented below:

#### 1) Physical Factors

1. **Climate:** It includes sunshine, rainfall, wind, length of sunlight, etc. These factors predominantly influence the choice of crops, thereby affecting the type of farming. Crops like paddy and sugarcane requires substantial water while others like oilseeds, millets and pulses can withstand low rainfall.
2. **Soil:** The type of soil, depth of soil and fertility status of the soil affect the selection of crops. Deep soils facilitate production of a variety of crops bringing prosperity to agriculture. If soils are fertile, manurial costs can be reduced thereby the cost of cultivation.
3. **Topography:** It means the general contour of the land, whether it is hilly or plain. Temperatures are low and growing seasons are shorter at higher elevation and therefore more suitable for establishment of plantation crops like tea, coffee, etc. Contour also determines the type of machinery that can be used and the rate of soil erosion, which in turn influences the choice of crop.

## 2) Economic Factors

1. *Relative Profitability:* Given the option of choosing among several crops in an area, farmers first look into the relative profitability of a given enterprise. A particular enterprise is found to be relatively profitable, farmers are inclined to go for it. In a dynamic situation the options are bound to change with changes in the relative profitability of crops. These changes occur in view of changes in yields, changes in prices, risk factors, introduction of incentives, crop restrictions, technology, etc.
2. *Availability of Funds:* Different enterprises require different levels of funds. For example, commercial enterprises like sugarcane, chillies, onion, prawn culture, etc., require large amount of funds over enterprises like oilseeds, millets, etc. Therefore availability of funds determines the type of farming.
3. *Availability of the Inputs:* All the inputs like labour, seed, fertilizer, etc., should be available as per the requirement. If labour shortages are common in an area during peak periods, certainly the farmers do keep this in mind in the selection of the enterprises. Timely availability of other inputs in required quantities also influences their decision with regard to selection of enterprises.
4. *Marketing Arrangements:* The marketing facilities available for the products are also given due weightage in the selection of enterprises. Mere assured output with inadequate marketing arrangements will not influence the farmers to opt for a given enterprise and
5. *Personal Choices:* Apart from aforesaid factors individual farmer's likes and dislikes have a say, in the selection of enterprises.