

CHAPTER NINETEEN

INTRODUCTION TO AGRICULTURE

Agriculture:

This refers to the growing of crops and the raising of animals for sale or for consumption. (i.e. to be eaten). The early men who lived many years ago did not practice agriculture. This means that they did not make farms or keep animals. They therefore roamed in the forest looking for food. They also killed some of the animals they came across, and ate them as food. On certain days, they had a lot of food, but on other days they had none. This made them to go hungry and some of them even died. Sometimes they were killed by some of the animals they tried to kill. In order to get food always, the early men started growing some of the food they came across near their homes. They also started keeping some of the animals they caught near their homes. This was the beginning of agriculture or farming.

The importance of agriculture:

- Agriculture is very important for a number of reasons, and some of these are:

(1) Provision of employment:

- The growing of crops and the raising of animals, serve as the work of many people.

(2) Income:

- Through agriculture, many people such as farmers get the money they need.

(3) Provision of food:

- Agriculture provides us with the food we need for living.
- It is this food which makes us healthy and also provides us with the energy we need to do work.

(4) Provision of raw materials:

- Through agriculture we get raw materials such as tomato, cotton and pineapple.
- Some of these raw materials are used to manufacture or make other products.
- For example tomato can be changed into tin tomato, cotton into cloth and pineapple into pineapple juice.

(5) Provision of foreign exchange:

- We export some of the agriculture produce to other countries.
- By so doing, we get a kind of money called foreign exchange.
- It is this foreign exchange which we used to buy goods such as fans, televisions and washing machines from other countries.

Selection of a land or site for making a farm:

Before you choose a site for the making of a farm, there are certain factors which you must consider and these factors are:

(a) The topography:

- This refers to the nature of the land or how the land looks like.
- You must choose a level or a gentle sloping site for your farm.
- If the site you choose has a steep slope, then erosion can occur on it and this will affect your farm.

(b) The type of soil:

- The site you choose must have rich soil, which means that it must contain a lot of humus.
- Humus is a kind of food needed by plants for their growth.
- The soil must also be able hold a good amount of water.

(c) Nearness of the site to the farmers house:

- The site chosen for making the farm , must not be too far from the house of the farmer.
- This will enable the farmer to easily visit the farm as often as possible.

The nearness of the site to the market:

- Your farm site must not be too far from the market.
- This will easily enable you to send your farm produce to the market.

- It will also make the farmer to pay less money, when he is transporting his produce to the market.

Nearness to a water source:

- The site you choose must be near a water source such as lake, pond or river.
- This will enable you get water to water your crops.

Access to road:

- There must be an access road to your farm, which means that you must choose a site which is close to a road.
- This will enable a lorry to come to the farm, and transport or carry your farm produce to the market.
- Apart from that, the road will enable you to easily transport farm inputs such as fertilizer to your farm.

Agricultural land:

- An agricultural land is any land which is used for the growing of crop and the rearing of animals.
- Agricultural land is always being lost or destroyed for a number of reasons.
- Agricultural land may be destroyed in order to make room for a road to be constructed.
- Construction of new houses can also lead to the lost or destruction of agricultural land.
- Bushfire can also cause the lost or destruction of agricultural land.
- Land which is not used for the growing of crops, or the rearing of animals is referred to as non – agricultural land.

Land tenure system:

This refers to the conditions or terms, under which a person can acquire or get a land. The types of land tenure systems we have are:

(a) Inheritance:

- This is the type in which land owned by an ancestor, is transferred within the family from one generation to another.
- For example a land owned by your grandfather, can be transferred to your father, who can in turn transfer it to you.
- This land can later on be transferred by you to your child.

(b) Leasehold:

- Under this system, an agreement is signed in which the land is given to an individual for a number of years.
- The land is given to the individual by a person or a group of people having the authority to do so.
- This person or group may be a chief, a family or a clan.

(c) Freehold title:

- Under this system, a person gets or acquires the land by buying it from a person or a group, who have the right to sell it.
- Apart from the buying of the land, the land can also be given to the individual as a gift, from the person or the group who owns the land or have authority over it.

(d) Communal land ownership:

- Under this system, the land is owned by all the members of a group or a community.
- Any member who needs land for any use or purpose, is given a small portion of the land by the head of the community.

Factors influencing agriculture in Ghana:

- These factors are:

(1) Climate:

- Weather conditions such as rainfall, temperature and humidity can affect agriculture.
- For example, at the time that the crops need water badly, the rain may not fall.
- This may cause the death of the crops or affect their growth.

(2) Soil:

- Crops do well in certain types of soil.
- This affects agriculture, because a farmer who wants to plant certain crops may not do so.
- This is due to the fact that these crops will not grow well in the soil, which is found in the area where the farm is.