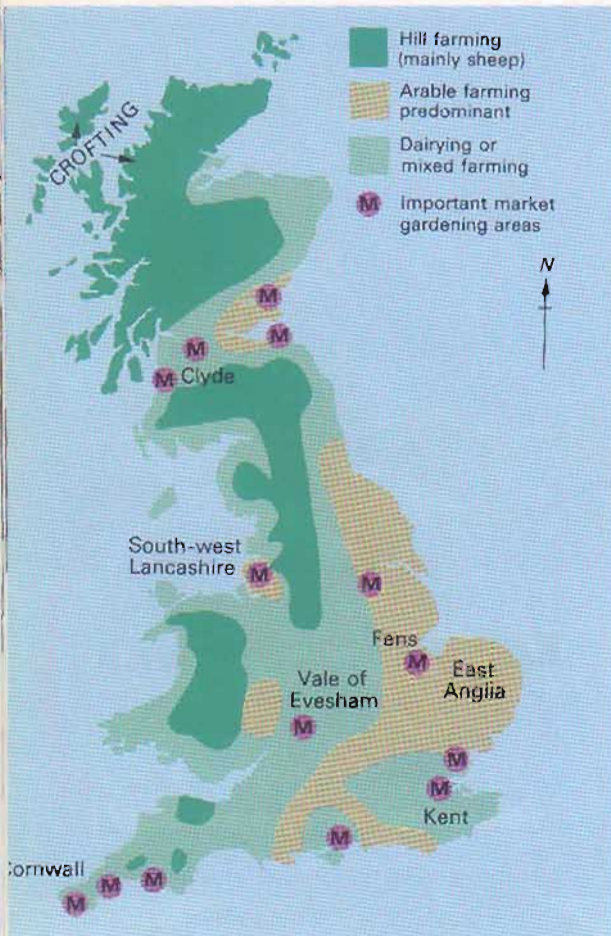


## Farming systems



The most important farming areas in Britain

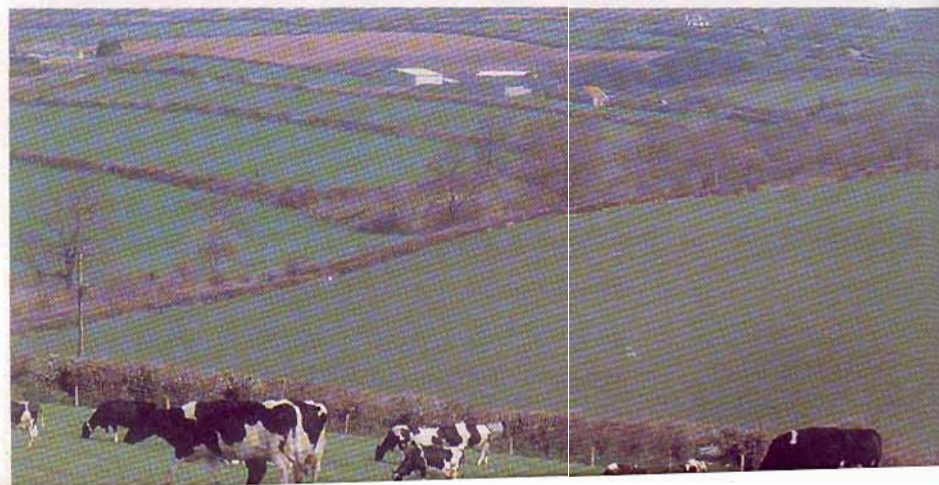
Farming is Britain's largest single industry. Although the number of farm workers has been declining for the last 50 years, the productivity, amount of machinery used and total amount of food grown have all been increasing. Also, many people are employed in factories making tractors or fertilizers for the farming industry or in transporting the crops and animals. All this makes farming one of our most important industries.

There are many different types of farming in Britain. Pastoral farming is the raising of animals such as beef or dairy cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry. Arable farming is the growing of crops and therefore ploughing the land. Cereals such as wheat, oats and barley are important arable crops. So too are root crops like sugar beet and potatoes. Many of Britain's farmers grow crops and keep animals – these farms are called mixed farms.

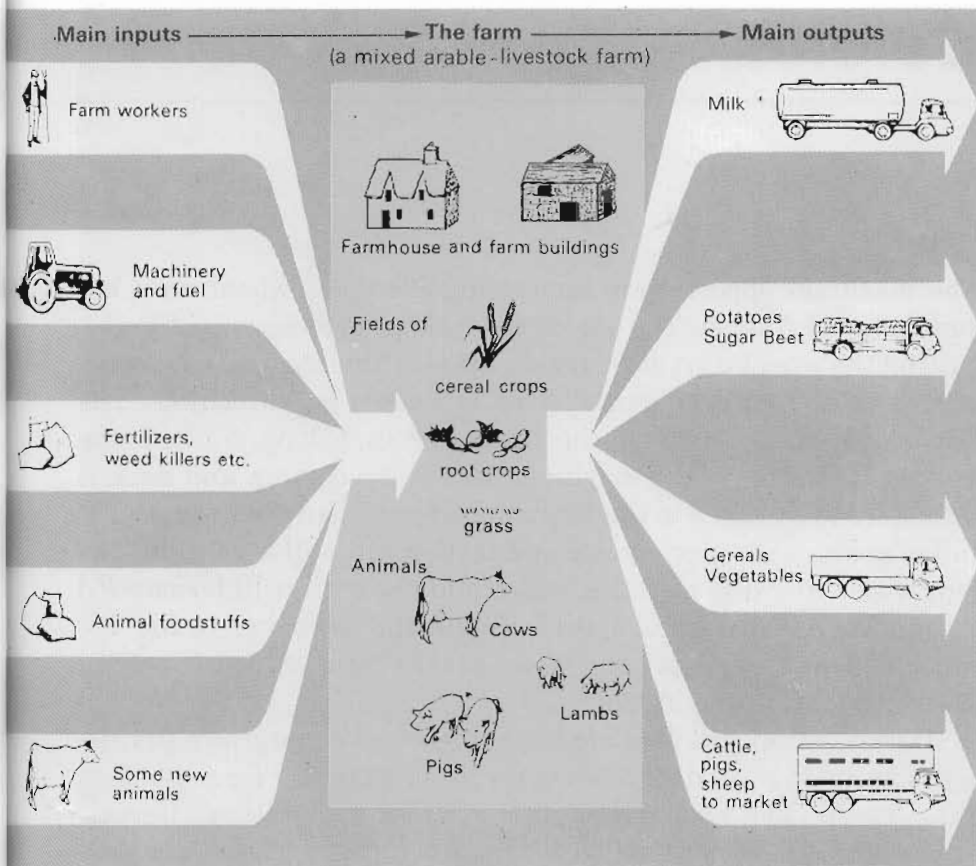
Whatever type a farm is, it can be looked at just like a factory, with raw materials going in and products for sale coming out. The farmer's fields and his animals are like the machines in a factory – they produce the things the farmer can sell.

When deciding what to grow, the farmer must consider a large number of things. The farmer must consider the quality of the soil, its depth and fertility. Weather conditions such as frosts, rainfall and temperature are also very important. Sunshine too is vital to ripen the crops. The farmer can help the crops by spraying them against pests, adding extra fertilizer, and irrigating them (giving them extra water) in dry weather conditions.

If he or she has chosen a suitable place, prepared the soil properly, carefully tended the plants (and had reasonable luck with the weather!), the farmer should get a good crop.



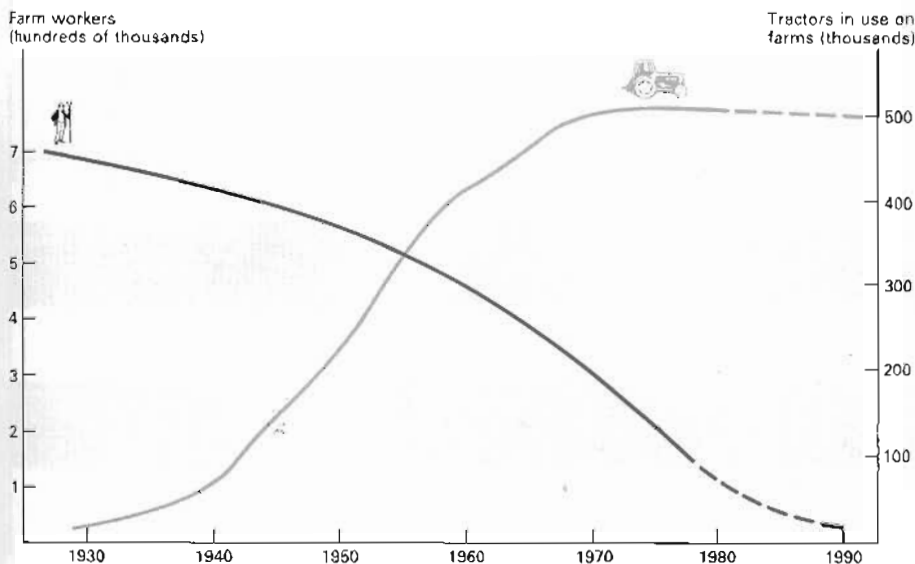
Dairy cows



Inputs and outputs in a mixed farm

- 1 Look carefully at the map and describe the distribution of the four main farming types shown.
- 2 What two things does the graph tell us about changes in the British farming industry?

### Changes in British farming



#### Farming scenes.

*Top:* Loading hay bales. Grass, cut and left to dry, is called hay. It is a fodder crop, meaning that it is then fed to animals.

*Middle:* A field of oil-seed rape in early spring, with its distinctive yellow flowers. This crop is now more widely grown in Britain than it used to be.

*Bottom:* Unloading grain on an arable farm