Subsistence Agriculture

Extensive vs. Intensive Swidden, Wet-Rice Cultivation, and Nomadic Herding
Types of Agriculture: Subsistence versus Commercial

Subsistence
- Family or social group works together
- People live on food they grow
- Small surplus traded or sold locally

Commercial
- Products raised for market
- Low consumption of food by farmers
Extensive versus Intensive

**Extensive**
- A lot of land
  - Slash and Burn
  - Nomadic Herding
- Less labor

**Intensive**
- Small amount of land
- Labor intensive
  - Wet Rice
Extensive Subsistence Agriculture
Intensive Subsistence Agriculture
Shifting Cultivation

• Also called slash-and-burn or swidden
• Practiced in Tropical rainforests
  • Amazon
  • Congo
  • East Indies
Process for Shifting Cultivation

• Cut down non-useful trees and shrubs
• Burn felled trees to release nutrients into soil
• Clear space and till soil for agriculture
Problems of Shifting Cultivation

• Sustainability
  – Land is only productive for 2-5 years
    • Then needs to sit fallow for 15-20

• In-efficiency
  – 20% of land used to feed 5% of population

• Deforestation

• Loss of native flora and fauna
Wet-Rice Cultivation

- Paddy rice farming
  - Intensive Subsistence
- Tropical regions, nutrient-rich, with monsoon seasons
  - China
  - Philippines
  - India
Labor Intensive Process

• Field Preparation
  – Build, repair, clean canals and dikes
  – Plow and smooth soils in paddies
  – Grow seedlings in nursery

• Planting
  – Plant seedlings
  – Raise water level as plants grow
  – After flowering, water level is lowered

• Harvesting
  – Rice stalks hand picked
Nomadic Herding

• Subsistence Agriculture
  – Changing more so to wage earning business

• Arid, Semiarid, and Arctic Regions
  – Migratory based on trend of herds
    • Horizontally – Across a large area
    • Vertically (transhumance) – Changes in elevation
  – Declining Lifestyle
    • Cultural diffusion and governmental regulations
Location of Nomadic Herding Agriculture