

Agricultural Change - I

Will cover:

- i) Background
- ii) Enclosure
- iii) Other improvements

INTRODUCTION

Changes in 18th/19th centuries known as 'Agricultural Revolution'

Between 1750 and 1825 population nearly doubled - from 11 to 21 million

Farming still based on less efficient method known as strip farming

BACKGROUND

More of these people lived in towns and did not produce their own food.

Main problem was that farming had changed little since the Middle Ages.

Therefore necessary to increase food production.

The grouping together, and fencing in, of small pieces of land to create larger fields.

Effects:

- a) Landowners said benefit everyone
- b) Fall in common grazing land
- c) Rise food produced
- d) Rise in land value

ENCLOSURE

Enclosure made other improvements possible

Used big fields instead of strips

Enclosure needed agreement of landowners because a new law had to be passed to make the changes legal

Parliament then passed Act of Enclosure

1750-1825
5 million acres enclosed

This survey would be used to reallocate land amongst the landowners

Enclosure commissioner from Parliament would visit a village and find out who owned what land

DEFINITIONS

Fallow year: Fallow means to leave a field with no crop so that the land can recover and be planted with a crop the year after it has been left fallow. This meant that there would be some land not being used.

Strip farming: Farming land in small strips rather than large fields. These strips could be spread throughout a village and much time could be lost moving between these plots of land. Replaced by enclosure.

Seed drill: A machine invented by Jethro Tull which dropped seeds at a regular interval for even planting. More efficient than *broadcasting seed* which simply meant taking a handful and throwing it.

Threshing machine: A machine which separated the parts of wheat that a farmer wanted to keep from the parts he did not want (the chaff). (Hence the phrase 'separating the wheat (or grain) from the chaff').

Investment: putting money into a business with the aim of making it more profitable. Often investment is made in new forms of machinery or in using new ways of producing something.

Tenants: People who pay to rent land from the owner of that land, usually known as a landlord.

Livestock: Collective name for farm animals, cows, pigs, sheep and so on.

Selective breeding: Choosing to breed two good animals in order to produce a better cow, sheep etc. For example, you may choose two large sheep with the aim of producing a much larger child. Selective breeding can only be done on enclosed lands where the farmer can make sure which animals breed together. In the 18th century this led to much larger animals.

Smithfields: The main London meat market where animals were bought and sold.

Agricultural Change - II

Enclosure used land more efficiently and gave farmers more choice over which changes they wished to introduce

New machinery:
Seed drill-Jethro Tull
Horse powered threshing machine

Tools and equipment improved. Growing iron industry meant stronger ploughs.

IMPROVEMENTS-1

Clay and lime used as fertiliser

Four course rotation, developed by Townshend. Grow wheat, turnips, barley and clover in that order on a piece of land.

Improvements often due to increased price of and demand for food

New crops such as turnips, swedes and clover put nourishment back into soil. No need for a fallow year

Led to increase in average weight of cattle at Smithfield.
1710= 320 pounds
1795= 800 pounds

Major change in size of livestock due to selective breeding. Pioneer was Robert Bakewell with his *New Leicester* sheep. He bred stronger, healthier, heavier animals.

IMPROVEMENTS -2

Farmers realised that they could profit by improving their farming techniques

Investment in farms led to increase in rents. Some landlords preferred to rent to tenants using the new methods

Information about changes spread by writers like Arthur Young and agricultural societies

Poor often lost out.

Period of rapid change

CONCLUSION

Farming profitable

Huge increase in food production