

# Sustainable Farming in Developing Countries

10,000 years ago, humans were primarily nomadic, wandering the land in search of game and other wild food sources. Gradually, these hunter-gatherer societies settled into sedentary communities, cultivating the land and domesticating animals. The history of agriculture is in a sense the history of human civilization, as the food surplus created by farming large quantities of staple grains allowed for steady population growth and the beginnings of urbanization.

Through the centuries, humans have continued to innovate agricultural methods, developing new tools and technologies to more efficiently raise crops. Today, sustainable farming is the new workshop of agricultural invention. Sustainable farming in developing countries is in its early stages but may prove a solution to food scarcity in those nations. [https://www.crestcapital.com/tax/history\\_of\\_agriculture](https://www.crestcapital.com/tax/history_of_agriculture)

## What is Sustainable Farming?

Sustainable farming isn't a buzzword – it's a practice. Sustainable agriculture is a science-minded approach to farming, predicated on an awareness of agriculture's place in the local ecosystem. Sustainable farmers take a mindful approach to their work, attempting to encourage biodiversity, maintain soil fertility, protect water sources and prevent erosion. <https://science.howstuffworks.com/environmental/green-science/sustainable-farming3.htm>

## Sustainable Farming in the Developing World

The most obvious benefit sustainable farming initiatives offer developing nations is the potential to dramatically increase crop yields. A study conducted by the American Chemical Society determined that sustainable farming methods could improve harvests by about 80 percent within four years. Because sustainable agriculture incorporates water preservation techniques, it also contributes to water security. The Global Agriculture and Food Security Program plans to revamp irrigation and drainage networks across 44,415 hectares of farmland in 12 developing nations. <https://theecologist.org/2018/jun/12/how-sustainable-food-production-can-change-developing-countries>

To be sure, while sustainable farming in developing countries has a lot of advantages, it isn't without limitations. Given that most farmers in developing nations operate at a subsistence level, the possibility of long-term gains provided by a shift to sustainable farming might not be enough incentive to change. Additionally, the farmers might not even be aware that sustainable methods exist or have access to guidance in implementing those methods. <https://naldc.nal.usda.gov/download/IND20394137/PDF>

## Agriculture and Poverty Reduction

Sustainable farming in developing countries provides tangible macroeconomic benefits, including

poverty reduction. Research from the World Development Journal found agricultural growth to have two to three times more impact on poverty reduction than equivalent growth in other industries. Moreover, the poorest segment of society reaps the lion's share of wealth gains from agricultural development. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/jobs/five-new-insights-how-agriculture-can-help-reduce-poverty>

The OECD organized a research study designed to reveal why certain countries made faster progress than others at poverty reduction and to what extent agriculture played a role in this disparity. The results indicate that agriculture may be the key to alleviating poverty: agriculture revenues contributed an average of 52 percent to poverty reduction in developing countries. Once again, the extremely impoverished benefitted the most. It seems clear that sustainable farming is more than an efficient and environmentally friendly set of agricultural procedures, it is also a path out of poverty. <http://www.oecd.org/indonesia/agriculturalprogressandpovertyreduction.htm>

- Dan Zamarelli