

The Golden Age of Agriculture 1850 - 1875

Why was there a 'Golden Age of Agriculture'?

1. The R_ _ _ _ _ o_ t_ _ C_ _ _ L_ _ _ in 1846 forced British farmers to become more efficient as they now faced foreign competition.
2. There was a growing demand for f_ _ . The population was still increasing. There was a rise in the standard of living among industrial workers who had more m_ _ _ _ to spend.
3. The rapid growth of the r_ _ _ _ _ in the 1840s had a huge impact on British farming. Farmers could reach a wider market and therefore sell more produce. Farmers could receive artificial fertilisers, feedstuffs and machinery from L_ _ _ _ _.
4. Foreign countries which might have exported their g_ _ _ _ to Britain needed the surplus for themselves. Hence it was largely home grown grain which was being sold in Britain.
5. New machinery and new t_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ made it easier to carry out changes quickly and on a big scale.
6. Most of the land in Britain had been e_ _ _ _ _ _ _ by the end of the 1840s.

Many farmers during this period of 'H_ _ _ Farming' invested money in agricultural improvements in order make their farms e_ _ _ _ _ _ _ . There were many new farming ideas which were actively encourage and explained by various new organisations.

What were the main features of the 'Golden Age of Farming'?

Scientific Research

Animal Feedstuffs

Animal feedstuffs were made from linseed, rapeseed and cottonseed. In the 1870s over £5 million worth of artificial feed was being sold per year. Firms specialised in making these feeds; e.g. T_____ of Hull and Paul's of I_____.

There was an increase in the use of chemical fertilisers to improve the quality of the soil. They were developed through scientific research, e.g. Sir B_____ -L_____ and J.H Gilbert founded an Experimental Station at R_____ and then Lawes set up a factory in London to manufacture super phosphates as a fertiliser and were imported from C_____. In the 1870s farmers were spending nearly £8 million per year on fertilisers.

With the development of feedstuffs and artificial fertilisers, farmers could now s_____ in livestock or arable farming. They could now use their own land in whichever way was best and so the y_____ rose.

Better Land Drainage

Helped by cheap government loans (The D_____ Act - 1845) and the abolition of t_____ on clay pipe in 1850 landlords spent more than £20 million of underground drainage and pipes. Clay pipes could be cheaply and quickly manufactured using factory machinery. They could be bought for £1 per 1000. Previously u_____ land could now be used effectively and so the yield rose.

taxes	Bennett-Lawes	Drainage
specialise	nitrites	Rotherhamstead
uncultivated	Ipswich	Thorleys yield Chile

Selective Breeding

Selective breeding was further improved in this period. There were signs that p_ _ _ _ _ farming was becoming more important than arable farming. There were new breeds such as the L_ _ _ _ _ sheep produced by Bakewell, Aberdeen A_ _ _ _ beef cattle, and the Suffolk P_ _ _ _ (huge work horses).

Model Farms

Farmers invested money in improving and reorganising farm buildings in order to improve e_ _ _ _ _; e.g. tramways ran alongside the cattle sheds leading to the feedstuffs at one end and the manure house at the other. Animals were stall fed so that they put on w_ _ _ _ _.

Mechanisation

Steam Powered Machinery

Machines now became popular on farms. Machinery could be produced easily and cheaply by the new I_ _ _ industry. Steam engines were now used in farming and drove many machines such as t_ _ _ _ _ , chaff cutters, turnip s_ _ _ _ _ and ploughs. These machines speeded up work, saved l_ _ _ _ costs and therefore increased the yield. These machines were owned by c_ _ _ _ _ and hired out to farmers. Specialist firms made these machines e.g. Howard's of B_ _ _ _ _ .

Bedford	pastoral	Lincoln	contractors	Angus
labour	Punch	slicers	efficiency	threshers
		weight	Iron	

How were new ideas on farming spread?

The Royal Agricultural Society

This was founded in 1838 and was set up to finance s_____ research in a_____. It publicised the effectiveness of its findings at large a_____ s_____ and offered rewards for new f_____ m_____.

The Royal College of Agriculture

This was founded in 1846 at C_____ and specialised in educating students on the merits of new farming methods. It was a two year course which cost £60.

James Caird

In 1849 Caird wrote a booklet called 'H_____ F_____'. Caird argued that British farmers would overcome the threat of foreign competition by becoming more b_____ and progressive. Caird's writing had considerable i_____.

What were the limitations of 'High Farming'?

1. Not all steam-powered machinery was successful; e.g. the steam plough only worked effectively on very large fields so much of the land was left u_____.
2. All farmers did not accept new ideas and methods. The machinery was e_____ and many farmers still used h_____ power until the coming of the early 20th Century. Not all farmers specialised, some m_____ farming continued.
3. The government's l_____ -f_____ attitude hindered progress. There was no government department responsible for agriculture so they did not help or direct developments.
4. 3_____, _____ labourers were made unemployed.

Scientific	300,000	agriculture	laissez-faire
expensive	agricultural shows	mixed	farming methods
horse	Cirencester	unploughed	
'High Farming'	impact	businesslike	