CLUB OF BOLOGNA

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
12st MEMBERS' MEETING

Bologna (Italy), 18th-19th November, 2001

XXXII EIMA

Edizioni UNACOMA Service srl

Development of agricultural mechanisation to ensure a long-term world food supply

Topic 1 – General background information and requirements

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1. Foreword

The general title of this subject requires a preliminary study of the food requirements of the world's various areas, of the agricultural methods used in each of them and of the crops grown as a result, so as to be able to pinpoint clearly and unequivocally the mechanisation needs (power, performance, costs, etc.,) for each area. The latter are derived from knowledge of the climatic, pedological, environmental, structural, social, economic and managerial factors of each area to be cultivated. It would, therefore, seem appropriate to offer a brief analysis of the current conditions before presenting the technical reports, as a preliminary to the correct identification of the mechanisation necessary to ensure - in the medium-long-term and within an essentially globalised market - a long-term world food supply.

According to a recent study [1], "at the present time sufficient food is produced globally to feed the current population (6.1 billion). The fact that nearly 800 million people nevertheless go hungry is a problem of distribution rather than one of a technological nature". This mainly affects the following areas: Sub-Saharan Africa, where production is at a standstill; the former Soviet Union and some Eastern Block countries, where the breakdown of the socialist economy has had a negative effect on food supplies to the population; a few other Latin American and south-east Asian countries, particularly North Korea.

However, the forecasts in the rates of food production for the next 25 years (with the population increasing to a total of almost 8 billion inhabitants and the continuing use of currently available specific technologies in the various areas) show a global food production capable of feeding more than 12 billion people. In practice, this means that there will be surpluses in North America, Europe, Japan, China and India, while there will be a food shortage in Latin America and on the African continent in particular. Hence, there is no doubt that parallel to the development of agriculture in poor areas, *it is necessary to create a functional, reliable distribution system operating independently so that the food reaches the populations for whom it is destined*. And this also because there is no guarantee [2] that industrialized countries will continue to produce at the hypothesized levels, therefore one cannot think of resolving the problem through the aforementioned organization of a good trading system. The situation, is then serious, even in relation to environmental problems within the various areas, and to the fact that the hungriest populations lend limited consideration to such problems, which is understandable. Lastly, it must be remembered that current agricultural production has an annual average growth of 1.8%, as compared to the 3% in the '60s and, therefore, at a lesser pace than the demographic growth. Also, the World Bank has shown that in Sub-Saharan Africa the annual food increase needs to reach 4%, i.e. more than double the current figure. This can be reached through a significant progress in breeding that plays a key role in the development of the agricultural sector as well as a significant impact on the appropriate farmer mechanization.

In the face of this complex situation we must ask what role the "mechanisation system" has to play and how it has to be developed so as to be able to contribute to solving the problem. Obviously, this very much depends on: internal and international political conditions; the degree of cultural development of individual populations; the overcoming of firmly established agricultural traditions, and also on local pedoclimatic conditions.

2. Analysis of location factors

2.1. The division of countries

All this justifies a short analysis of the various aspects of the agricultural situations of the world' different areas. The results of this study are reported later on, according to problem. At this point it is enough to under-line that this analysis has been carried out by dividing the various nations into 9 main groups [3], which are as follows:

I Industrialized countries whose average farm sizes are over 100 hectares of Agricultural Used Area (AUA): Canada, USA, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa.

II Industrialized countries based on small farms (Japan, II[a]; Western Europe and Israel, II[b]).

III Central and East Europe.

IV Russian Federation (Eurasian country).

V Former Asian Soviet Republics.

VI South and East Asia and Pacific islands.

VII Near East and North Africa.

VIII Sub-Saharan Africa.

IX Latin America.

Of course, there are substantial differences not only between various regions but also between countries within the same region and even within each country. An example is the variety of different ways in which the land is used.

2.2. Climatic conditions

The division of countries into groups is not fully convergent with climatic zones of the world (**Fig. 1**). Some groups include countries of different continents. This is the case in **group I**, which comprises countries of Africa, North America and Oceania. Most of North America has cold climates with wet winters, and the average temperature of the warmest month is below 20°C in Canada and Alaska and above this figure in the north and mid-west of the USA. In northern parts of Canada and Alaska the tundra climate prevails. On the other hand, in the south-east of the USA, along some parts of Pacific coast of the USA and Canada and in the south-east of Australia wet, temperate climates prevail and the average temperature of the warmest month is above 20°C. New Zealand has a similar climate. Most of Australia's territory consists of dry desert and steppes with periodically dry savanna climates. Warm, temperate climates with dry winters prevail in South Africa.

The dominant climate in Europe, Israel and Japan (**group II**) is damp and moderate with wet winters and the average temperature of the warmest month is below 20°C. A warm climate with an average temperature of the warmest month above 20°C prevails in the Mediterranean zone. However, in Scandinavia, as well as in a large part of central and eastern Europe (**group III**), there are cold climates with wet winters; in southern parts of the Ukraine a steppe climate with dry summers and cold winters prevails. Cold climates with wet winters are typical of most of the Russian Federation (**group IV**). Cold climates with dry winters prevail in eastern Siberia, and tundra climates in northern Siberia. In some southern regions of the Russian Federation there is continental steppe climate with cold winters and hot summers.

In **group V** countries (Central Asia - former Soviet republics) desert and steppe climates are typical. Warm, temperate, rainy climates with the driest season during winter are typical of Central, South, East and Far East Asia (**group VI**). However, the climatic zones in this group of countries are differentiated, with a tundra climate in the Himalayas, Karakorum and the Tibetan highlands, dry desert and steppe climates in western parts of China and Mongolia, cold climates with dry winters prevailing in northern China and North Korea. Hot, humid rainforest and periodically dry savanna climates prevail in Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and in most territories of the Oceanic islands. Desert and steppe climates are more widespread in North Africa and the Near East (**group VII**). Only terrains near the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean, as well as along the Euphrates and Tiger rivers, have a warm, temperate climate with long, hot, dry summers and an average temperature of the warmest month above 20°C.

Hot, humid rainforest and periodically dry savanna climates dominate in Sub-Saharan Africa (**group VIII**). However, there are also large areas with steppe and desert climates in the north and in the south-west of the region, and a warm, temperate climate with long, hot, dry summers and an average temperature of the warmest month above 20°C in the southern part of the continent and in Ethiopia. Most Latin American countries (**group IX**) have hot, humid rainforest and periodically dry savanna climates, but there are also steppe and desert areas, as well as some with warm, temperate climates with moderate precipitation in all months (southern Brazil, Uruguay, north-east Argentina, southern Chile, some parts of Mexico).

2.3. Soil and vegetation conditions

Soils (**Fig. 2**) and vegetation (**Fig. 3**) distribution is correlated with climates. In Asia and in Eastern Europe soils are evenly distributed across a parallel of latitude. Red soils occupy the largest area on the Earth. Present in equatorial and tropical zones, they are typical of hot climates. Grey desert-soils are typical of desert areas of all the continents. Podzols occupy large areas in northern parts of Eurasia and North America, while brown soils feature in Western Europe, North America and Eastern Asia. The best mould (humus) soils prevail in the steppe and savanna climates of Eurasia, North and South America, Africa and Australia. Climate and the configuration of terrain determine soil erosion.

Water erosion is more of a danger in uncovered, hilly terrains with high levels of precipitation. Wind erosion prevails in areas with dry climates and lack of plant cover makes it more likely and dangerous. *Soil degradation is a serious problem*. One of the causes is inappropriate farming methods (implying also inappropriate mechanisation). Here the main types of degradation are chemical (loss of soil fertility) and physical (loss of soil structure). In irrigated areas 10 to 15% of fields suffer from salt contamination [1]. According to FAO data *1,214 million hectares has been degraded. In this water erosion contributed 61.6%, wind erosion 23.1%, chemical degradation 12.1% and physical degradation 3.2%*. Particular types of degradation were caused by 4 groups of factors in different proportions (**Fig. 4**).

3. Conditions for development

3.1. Production systems

On the basis of the aforementioned conditions there are, obviously, different farming systems which, [4], fall into 4 main categories: i) *plantation perennial*; ii) *tillage*; iii) *alternating*; iv) *grassland and grazing*. For each of these the production techniques used are different and four different levels of mechanisation emerge: i) *hand tools*; ii) *draught animal power*; iii) sim*ple motor mechanization*; iv) *sophisticated technology*. The first two levels are peculiar to Africa (with the exception of South Africa); the first three are found in various countries throughout South America and South-East Asia; lastly, the fourth (sophisticated technology) is characteristic of the countries in **groups I** and **II** (western Europe, North America, Australia and South Africa) [5]. This is clearly correlated with the salary levels in the different areas. Also, in any case, it must be remembered [4] that a biologically efficient production system which, in temperate areas, has to supply approximately 1,000 Mcal per person per year, must:

- provide adequate storage and distribution facilities, given that the climate, and hence production, is highly seasonal;
- provide, with minimum "off the farm" wastage, the processing methods, equipment and cooking needed to reduce crops and animal products digestible by and attractive to man;
- maximize plant growth and minimize "on farm" plant and animal wastage;
- achieve the above by applying the more appropriate input ratios of energy in skill labour, animal work, mechanical work and scientific and industrial inputs;
- be reliable between and within years, months and weeks;
- be consistent over decades;
- be capable of reduction, expansion or adjustment (production flexibility) to meet changes in population or in demand.

As can be seen, without going into excessive detail, it is clear that to deal with the title of the subject, it seems necessary to: *minimize both farm stock losses and "off the farm" processing losses; maximize output with adequate agricultural practices and therefore, suitable mechanization, optimising energy costs; develop flexible agricultural production to adapt to the market demand.*

A farmer's choice of a production system [6] is governed by physical constraints relating to farm resources (e.g.: soil quality), as well as climate influences, financial considerations, and in increasingly, environmental standards. All this involves a decision making process very much influenced by the farmer's knowledge, awareness, skills and aspiration. *There is* consequently *the need to support any initiative for the development of specific educational programmes all over the world.* This means an increasing importance of knowledge, so to assume appropriate decisions, and a reduction of the intensity of equipment and energy. The general trend is in fact in favour, also in agriculture, of a progressive *dematerialisation* [7].

3.2. Use of land

There are significant differences in the use of land between regions (**Fig. 5**).

In Japan and on the islands of Oceania forests dominate. However in Eastern and Central Europe the AUA amounts to more than 50% of the land. The predominant share of AUA is observed also in former Asian Soviet Republics. However, in this region this is due to the high share of pastures with a very low share of forest and woodland. In particular groups of states the share of different kinds of AUA as compared to the total area varies greatly, particularly:

- in **group VII**: the share of AUA varies from 3.3% (Egypt) to 72% (Syria); arable land from 0.1% (Oman) to 34.3% (Turkey); permanent crops from 0.01% (Mauritania) to 12.3% (Lebanon) and permanent pastures from 0% (Egypt) to 42.2% (Syria);
- in **group I** the share of AUA varies from 7.4% (Canada) to 77.4% (South Africa), arable land from 4.6% (Canada) to 18.9% (USA), permanent crops from 0.01% (Canada) to 6.4% (New Zealand) and permanent pastures from 2.8% (Canada) to 64.1% (South Africa).

On average, about 36% of the world's land are used for agricultural purposes. The climatic conditions make it impossible to use some areas for crop production (tundra, deserts). With irrigation it is possible to enlarge agricultural areas if water sources are available. The large-scale use of the waters of the Syr Daria and Amu Daria rivers for irrigation purposes in former Soviet Central Asia caused a serious lowering of the water level in the Aral Sea. Irrigation can also lead to salinity of the soils irrigated. The transformation of forest areas into agricultural ones would be very dangerous, causing negative changes in climate and in the natural environment in general. Therefore, increasing the AUA cannot be considered as a method for ensuring a food supply for the world's increasing population.

Permanent meadows and pastures (PM&P) dominate in the structure of AUA **in regions I, V, VI, VII, VIII** and **IX**, where agricultural production is rather of extensive nature. In Japan and Europe, on the other hand, arable land and permanent crops amount to more than 50% (**Fig. 6**).

The lowest AUA per inhabitant is found in Japan (this is the case of all categories of the area) and the highest one in former Soviet Asian republics (**group V**) where, however, permanent pastures have the dominant share in the AUA. Instead, the highest area of arable land per inhabitant exists in the Russian Federation (**group IV**), followed by **group I** (**Table 1**).

The AUA per inhabitant has a decreasing tendency. There are two main reasons for this: the increase in population and the losses of AUA through population settlement, industrial development, infrastructures etc.

Also in the future, the resources of the AUA will decrease. According to FAO forecasts, in Third World countries (excluding China) a further 20 million hectares of land with agricultural potential will be taken out of use because of other destinations or degradations. Together with the immediate degradation of soils, the question of water must be seen as becoming more and more critical, particularly when linked with soil compaction and erosion. In many regions today the loss of water is as serious as the loss of soil [1].

3.3. Structure of farms by size

The average size of farms differs very much from one country group to another, from very small (Japan (**II**) and Central, South, East and South-East Asia (**group VII**)) to large (**group I**) and very large (Russian Federation) (**Table 2**).

The farm size is correlated with the number of people engaged in agricultural production. Generally speaking, the smaller the average size of the farm, the greater the number of people working (full- or part-time) in agriculture.

4. Mechanisation

4.1 General problems

An appropriate mechanisation must therefore take into account all the above mentioned requisites, which are fundamental and specific to each area, and must be based on groups of machines and systems to be used efficiently and profitably, hence with productivity correlated to labour costs according to [14] basic, well-known principles (**Fig. 7**). In any case, it must not be limited to field equipment, but must also include post-harvest technology, with a particular focus on the storage of the produce. This means that developing countries must focus on the work options offered by machinery without allowing themselves to be blinded by inappropriate means available on the market, and they must pay particular attention to options which minimize energy and agro-chemical inputs, thus enabling them to safeguard the environment while trying to increase yields. At the same time they must also consider [1] that: in very broad terms a farmer relying solely on his own labour can feed himself and another 3 persons, using draught animal power he can feed 6 people and using tractors he can feed up to 50 or more persons.

Fig. 8 shows a graph [4], which highlights the relationship between "soil factors and farming systems". Lastly, it must be remembered that inputs – even mechanical ones – can be grouped into categories according to their intensity. Rich countries have intensely cultivated high yield areas and use sophisticated technologies that focus on ecological management while ensuring excellent cultivation flexibility at the same time. On the other hand, in poorly developed areas with a low population the conditions are the opposite. In any case [5; 15] it is necessary *to create a network of activities (institutional and/or private)* (**Fig. 9**) *aimed at contributing to the progress of agricultural mechanisation.*

Therefore, for the fruitful development of agricultural mechanisation, all involved groups from donor countries as well as from the developing ones and, last but not least, the target group, together should aim at the production of demand-oriented quantity and quality of food, fodder and commercial/industrial agricultural products and energy plants under the following conditions:

to save resources and energy;
to protect the environment;
to maintain soil productivity;
to satisfy social-cultural, economic and political aspects.

Consequently, any farming enterprise requires [6] a multilateral manager capable of addressing numerous issues more or less simultaneously. Once again, there is a big problem of developing educational programmes.

In addition, [16], it is a must to take into consideration that the formulation of the world trend system and the Information Technology (I.T.) revolution have changed the external environment of agricultural development for all countries. In fact, the information and knowledge-based era will create new opportunities to accelerate the transformations of traditional farming into modern agriculture. Therefore, it is necessary to learn the new trends of modern I.T. for agriculture in the developed world and to investigate appropriate ways of promotions of new technologies applications in developing countries, starting from the more advanced ones. *These have the potential to act as incubators for new ideas and sophisticated technologies based on their domestic conditions*. Within this framework, it is stated that *precision farming practice may be seen as a support for cost reduction and environment protection in any country for tomorrow* [17].

One additional point to be considered is the role that contracting companies can play from the technical and economic view points. Their activities [9] require specific types of tractors and implements, more sophisticated and with higher working capacities.

4.2. Labour force in agriculture

As we have seen, [1], the term "Farm power" includes human, animal and mechanical sources. The share of agriculture in employment of the labour force depends on the level of economic development of a country. In many developing countries, up to 80% of farm power in agriculture comes from humans. In Sub-Saharan Africa (**group VIII**) and in the Far East (**group VI**) people working in agriculture account for more than 60% of the total economically active population (EAP) of countries (**Table 3**).

The proportion of the population engaged in agriculture has decreased steadily due to urbanization. First of all this has been the case with industrialized countries. In the future the process of migration from rural areas to towns will become an increasing feature in developing countries too. Even in Sub-Saharan Africa it is estimated that the proportion of the population in rural areas will fall below 50% by the year 2025.

The economically active population involved in agriculture in relation to AUA as well as to Arable Land (AL) and Permanent Crops (PC) is correlated with the level of mechanisation, the intensity of agricultural production, the size-structure of farms and the situation on the labour market. The percentage figure of economically active population in agriculture per 100 hectares of AUA ranges from 0.54 in **group I** to 95.48 in **group VI**. The differences between groups of countries are slightly smaller where the area of arable land and permanent crops is taken as the point of reference. In both cases the highest indices are found in **groups VI**, **VII** and **VIII**.

In developing countries, the average salary of working people is very low, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Far East. Relatively low remuneration of work is typical also for former COMECOM countries (**groups III**, **IV** and **V**). Instead, in industrialised countries the level of salaries is high. This fact makes the mechanisation of agriculture necessary to assure the agricultural production economically effective and the farming at least sufficiently profitable.

4.3. Farm machines and mechanical power in agriculture

There are about 25.9 million tractors in use all over the world (0.59 tractors per 100 hectares of AUA and 1.88 tractors per 100 hectares of AL). The regional distribution of tractors (and other farm machinery) is very unequal. The number of tractors per 100 hectares of AUA and AL as well as the number of combine-harvester per 100 hectares of cereals varies from one region to another (**Table 4**).

Considerable differences exist not only between industrialized and developing countries, but also within particular groups of countries. However, the low number of tractors and combines in **group I**, as compared to **group II**, does not mean that the equipment of farms in **group I** is insufficient or that of **group II** is excessive. The reason for these wide differences is the size of the farms. The smaller the farm is, the higher the number of machines in relation to adequate area and the smaller the number of machines per 100 farms is. The data in **Table 5** gives an example of such dependencies.

The average number of tractors per 100 hectares of AUA depends on the share of farms of different size in the farm structure of a country. In Poland, the share of smallest farms with the highest number of tractors per 100 hectares of AUA is higher than in Germany. Therefore, Poland has a higher average number of tractors per 100 hectares of AUA, even though in all particular size groups of farms the indices are higher for Germany.

This example shows that the numbers of machines in relation to adequate areas are not a sufficient criterion to evaluate the situation of farm mechanisation in different countries. Also, the farm size structure must be taken into consideration. Therefore, the number of tractors in **group VIII** should not be directly compared to the situation in **group I**, but rather to that of **group II**[a] (Japan), where farm structure is similar (average size of farms about 2 hectares).

Also the power of means of mechanisation should be taken into consideration (**Table 6**). Lower average unitary power can be observed in Japan. It is the result of adjusting the farm machines to the structure of farms in the country.

4.4. Animal power

In developing countries working animals are still an important source of power for agricultural production. In this study only horses, mules and asses have been taken into account. In regions **VIII** and **IX** the number of these animals (as converted in horses) per 100 hectares of AUA and per 100 hectares of AL is the highest (**Fig. 10**).

In **groups III** and **IV** the use of animal power in agriculture now has a marginal importance. On the other hand, in developing countries other animals besides horses, mules and asses are used as a source of power.

Working animals are competitive with the human population as "users" of potentially convenient areas for food production. It is a paradox that animal power mostly exists in countries with a food shortage and not in the ones with an overproduction of food. In industrialized countries some experts are calling for a return to animal power in countries with a food surplus. They argue that the use of horses as a source of power would be favourable to the environment and could help to reduce the consumption of fossil fuels.

5. Inputs in agriculture

In countries of **groups I, II^{a}** and **II^{b}** field operations are fully mechanised. However, number of hours worked by tractors and combines-harvesters per 100 hectares of arable land (**Table 7**) are strongly diversified.

The inputs of work hours per 100 hectares of arable land depend not only from the level of mechanisation, but also from working capacities of machines in use, from working conditions (size of fields) and intensity of agricultural production. Therefore, in Japan (**group II^{a}**), where the power of tractors and combine-harvesters is the lowest, the fields are very small and the level of production per unit of agricultural used area is high, the inputs per 100 hectares of the AL are significantly higher as compared to **group I**. In the case of combine-harvesters, the inputs per 100 hectares of the AL depend also on the per cent share of cereals in the area of the agricultural land. The lowest inputs of number of hours worked by tractors and combines-harvesters per 100 hectares of arable land have been observed in Sub-Saharan Africa (**group VIII**) where the level of mechanisation is very low. There is no correlation between the annual use of tractors and combine-harvesters and the number of hours worked by these equipment per 100 hectares of arable land. The annual use depends on scale of production. Generally, it is higher on larger farms. It also depends on number of machines per unit of surface of adequate area and on form of utilisation. In cases of multi-farm use it is higher as compared to the individual use system. Therefore, in Japan, where farms are small and the rate of equipment of agriculture in tractors and combine-harvesters relatively high, the annual use is low. In other, generally developing, countries the use of tractors "off the farm" is usual and this gives us non correct figures.

Inputs of energy per unit of AUA depend on level of motorization, per cent share of arable land and permanent crops in the AUA, intensity of agricultural production and natural conditions (climate, soils etc.). Intensive agricultural production and high per cent share of arable land and permanent crops in Japan resulted in highest value of energy inputs per 100 hectares of agricultural used area. At the same time, the value of index of energy inputs per unit of agricultural production is the lowest in Japan (**Table 8**).

In Japan, the relatively low energy inputs per unit of production has been achieved under conditions of a very high use of commercial fertilisers (**Table 9**). The use of agro-chemicals per unit of AUA differs very strongly from a region to another. In Sub-Saharan Africa, inputs of NPK in commercial fertilisers are about 200 times lower than that of Japan. This is one of the reasons of low level yields in Africa.

Japan has also a very high consumption of pesticides and herbicides per hectare of AUA. In Western Europe (**group II^{b}**) the use of these chemicals is also very high but, as an average, lower than in Japan. Instead the consumption of pesticides and herbicides per hectare of AUA in **groups I** and **III** is significantly lower. The reasons for **group I** are the high share of permanent meadows and the pastures in AUA and the extensive type of agricultural production, possible and rational there thanks to high land resources per inhabitant. In countries of Central and Eastern Europe (**group III**), the use of agro-chemicals during the transformation period has been decreased because of rise in prices of these products and the relatively low profitability of agricultural production. In Japan, where the AUA per inhabitant is low, an intensive production system is necessary.

6. Crop production

Central and Southeast Asia (**group VI**) and countries included in **group I** have the highest share in cultivated area of four cereals (wheat, barley, rye and oats). However, countries of Western Europe and Israel (**group II^b**) are the second, following central and Southeast Asia, producer of the cereals, even though their share in area cultivated for these crops is limited. This is due to significantly higher yields of cereals in countries of **group II^b** as compared to **group I**.

Central and Southeast Asia is also the greatest producer of rice, pulses and potatoes and the second, following countries of **group I**, producer of maize-grain (**Table 10**). Latin America and Central and Southeast Asia are main producers of sugar cane while Western Europe is the main producer of sugar beets.

Yields are, in general, positively correlated with the use of agro-chemicals as well as the intensity of mechanisation, even though the soil and climatic conditions play also an important role. Low level of yields in Sub Saharan Africa is the main reason for food deficit in the region.

Labour inputs per hectare of particular crops depend on level of mechanisation, production systems, working conditions (size of fields etc.) and, of course, on kind of crop and its yield. In Japan, the inputs are significantly lower than in other industrialised countries. The reason is not only the above mentioned very intensive agricultural production system, but first of all it is due to the small size of fields, hampering achievement high operation capacities of farm machines. Besides, most of farm machines in use in Japan are adjusted to existing farm size structure. They are small and they have rather low working capacities. The use of such a kind of farm machines is economically justifiable. The potential of theoretical working capacities of larger machines would not be sufficiently used on fields of small farms and the costs of their use would be too high. Instead, on large farms of countries included to **group I** use of high capacity machines is common. On large fields high working capacities have been achieved. Therefore, the labour inputs per hectare of particular crops are lowest in **group I**. The large size of most farms are also typical for Russian Federation and for the majority of countries of central and eastern Europe and former Asian Soviet republics. However, the insufficient qualitative and quantitative levels of the agricultural equipment in these countries cause that the labour inputs per hectare of particular crops are, in **groups III**, **IV** and **V**, higher as compared to **group I**.

High unitary labour inputs in developing countries are a result of low mechanisation. Highest labour inputs are in Sub Saharan Africa, where the use of hand labour is still common. Labour inputs per one hectare of maize-grain (yield 9 dt/ha) in a case of hand operation amount to 786 hours (women) or 725 hours (men) and in a case of using animal power – 319 hours [25].

7. Animal production

In central, south and east Asia there are more than 50% of the world population of cattle, pigs and goats. In the world's scale the milk cows amount to about 17.5% of the total number of cattle. Milk production is predominant only in central and Eastern Europe (**group III**) with 51% share of cows in total number of cattle (**Table 11**).

Number and structure of farm animals depends not only on natural conditions (resources of feed staffs), but also on other factors (religion). Number of pigs is, of course, very limited in Islamic countries.

8. Selected agricultural products

8.1 Unitary values

The highest yields of all cereals (including rice) and of cow milk are in Japan, followed by Western Europe in the case of cereals and by **group I** in that of milk. However, in countries of **group I** there is the highest production of cereals per inhabitant while in Western Europe the highest per capita production of milk (**Table 12**) is found.

The lowest production of cereals per capita in Japan is due to limited area of arable land in this country whilst the insufficient production in Sub Saharan Africa is a result of low yields. The comparison of yields shows the potential of theoretical increases in production both of cereals and milk in some regions of the World. In the case of cereals, increase of yields in Sub Saharan Africa to the level achieved in countries of group I would result the per capita production in the region comparable to the European one (**Fig. 11**).

8.2. Prices and value of agricultural production

Prices of agricultural products are effected by natural conditions, deciding about the supply of food raw materials, on production systems and on Governments policies. All this causes significant differences between particular regions of the world as far as the level of prices is concern (**Table 13**).

Limited land resources and very intensive production are the direct and indirect reasons of high level of food products in Japan. The care about food self sufficiency causes a strongly supported farming by Japanese Government. Different forms of subventions are present also in other countries. The level of prices has its influence on value of Gross Agricultural Output (GAO). This is one of the reasons for the highest value of GAO per 100 hectares of AUA and per 100 hectares of Arable and Permanent Crops Lands (AL+PC) in Japan (**Table 14**).

The number of Economically Active Population (EAP) and the value of GAO are the main determining factors in the productivity of labour. Broadly speaking, data on labour productivity in agriculture is to be considered as approximate. There are several reasons for this: the calculations for most groups have been based on data from various countries (and sometimes only one) and not from all the countries included in the different groups; there are discrepancies between data from different sources; the level of prices of agricultural products in given countries differs significantly and the exchange rates between national currencies and US dollars do not fully reflect the real values.

9. Conclusions

The analysis carried out confirmed the existence of considerable differences between the various regions of the world in terms of yields, agricultural practices adopted, intensiveness of human labour, production costs, profits obtained etc. This diversity of situations is ascribable not only to the specific climate, pedological cultural and social conditions which exist in the different areas, but also to the varying levels of mechanisation adopted and to appropriateness, or lack thereof, of the methods and machinery currently in use. All this needs to be taken into account when evaluating the local requirements for a new agricultural mechanisation capable of assuring “a long-term world food supply”. After having defined, in line with the above criteria, the most appropriate characteristics for the various machines in technical and management terms, it is then necessary to make these characteristics known, divulging them and recommending them in the various countries to the governments, farmers and manufacturers, so as to effectively accomplish the proposed objectives.

This is undoubtedly a difficult task, but one that must be undertaken because – in the absence of any realistic prospects for significantly increasing the cultivated agricultural surfaces – it is imperative not only to create a functional and reliable distribution system which can ensure that foodstuffs effectively reach the populations for which they are intended, but also to increase agricultural production through:

increasing crop yields especially in the less developed regions;

minimise post-harvest product losses, both inside and outside the farm;

develop production flexibility to be able to adapt to changes in demand;

safeguard the environment, also by optimising the utilisation of energy and other inputs.

All this relies on an appropriate mechanisation. This, however, is an extremely wide-ranging problem, which requires in depth technical analysis and a holistic approach. To solve this problem, mechanisation needs to be considered not just in technical terms, but also as a component in a system where development relies upon establishing a series of essential “collateral” activities within the various countries. These concern networks of: applied research and testing centres; extension services; after-sales services; contracting companies; education and training schools, etc. All this with the ultimate objective - once the political and legislative aspects specific to each region (or country) have been acquired and resolved - of promoting the development of the sector.

For this reason, in proposing the general topic under discussion, it was considered necessary to address, after the general overview briefly outlined above, both the innovative technological aspects, the aspects pertaining to I.T. and finally also the development of a permanent training network for the populations involved.

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Figure 1 – World map of agricultural climate classification [*Source*: [3]]

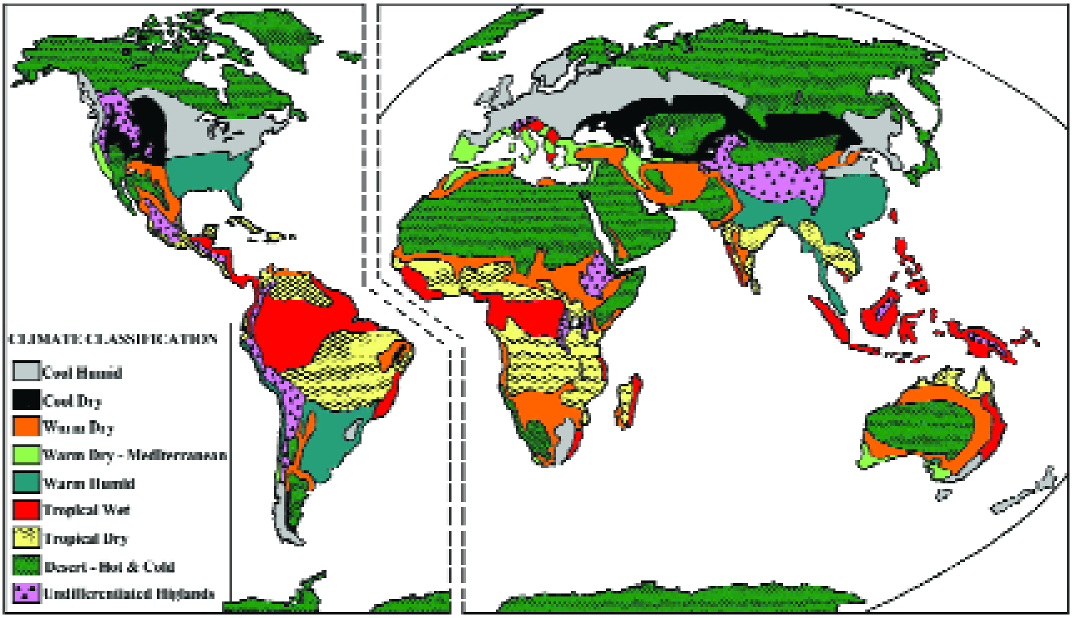

Figure 2 - World map of types of vegetation [*Source*: [3]]

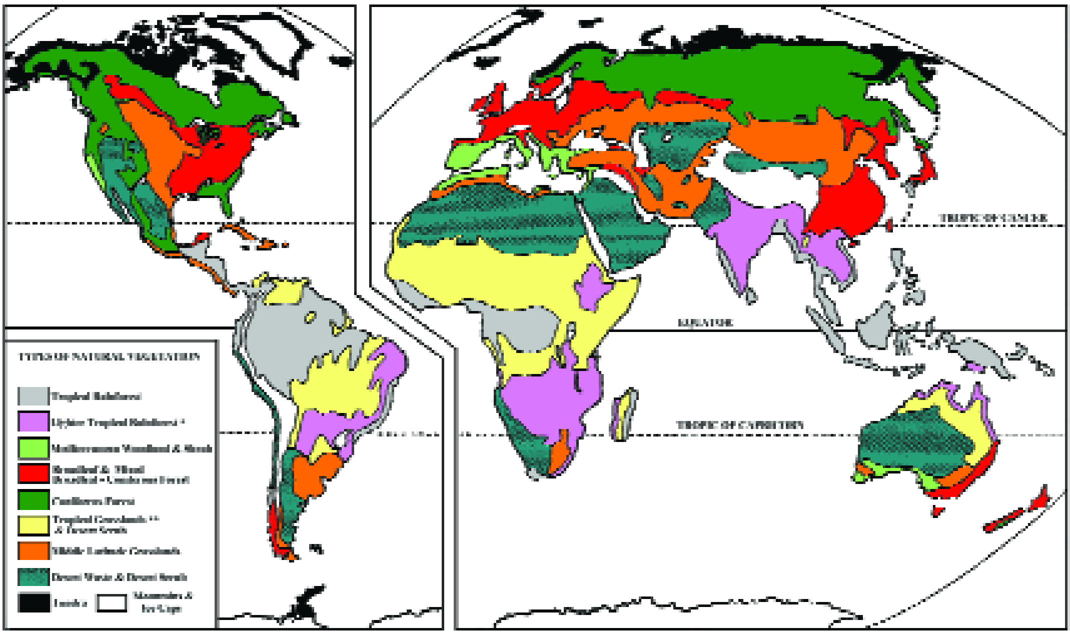

Figure 3 - World map of categories of soil types [*Source:* [3]]

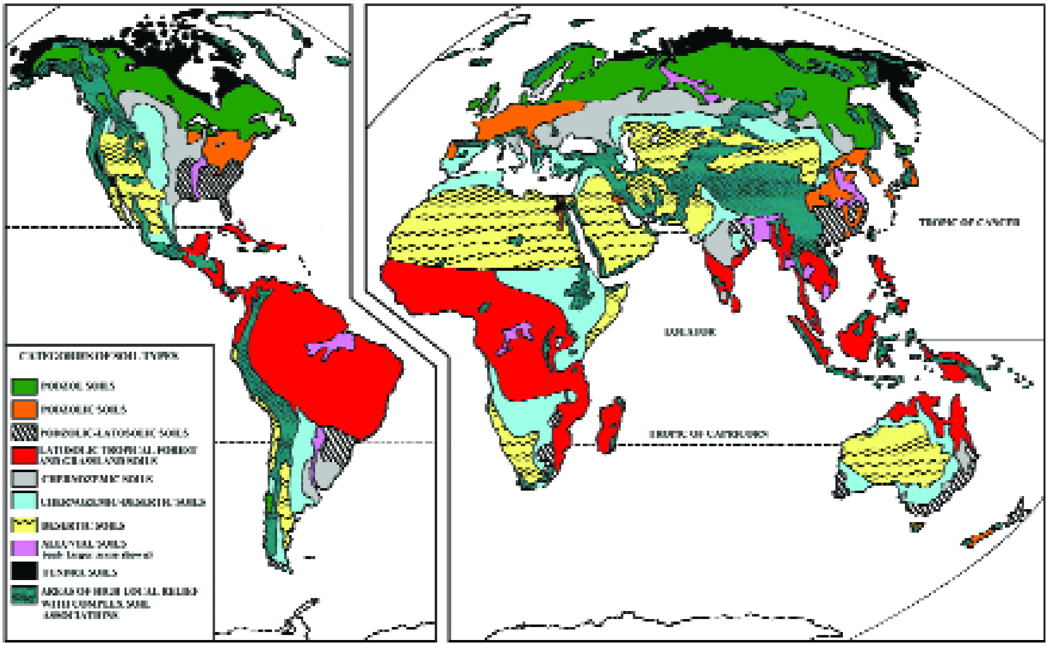

Figure 4 - Land degradation according to cause (%)

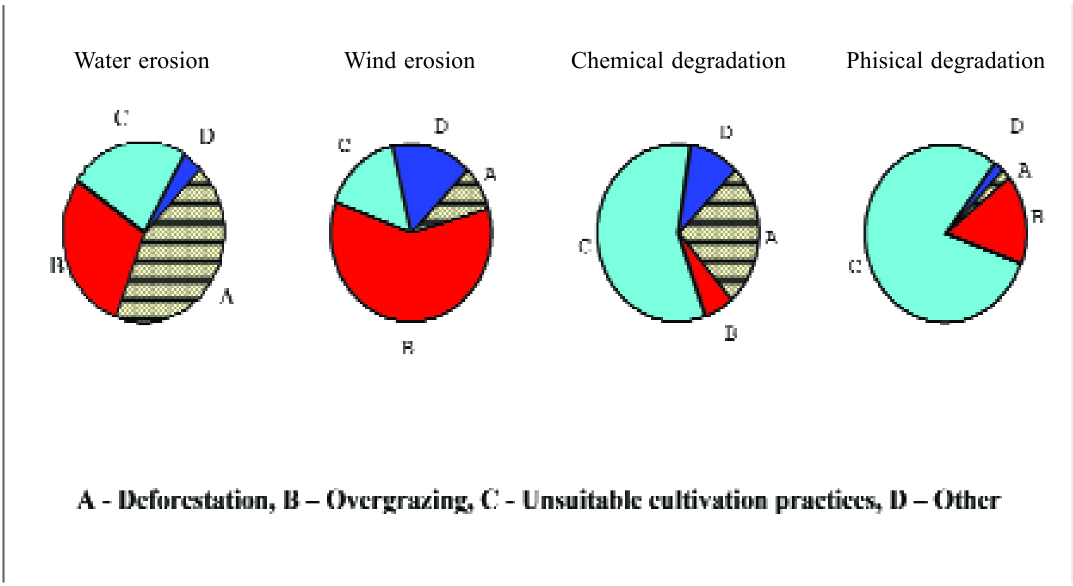

Figure 5 - Land use in different regions of the world

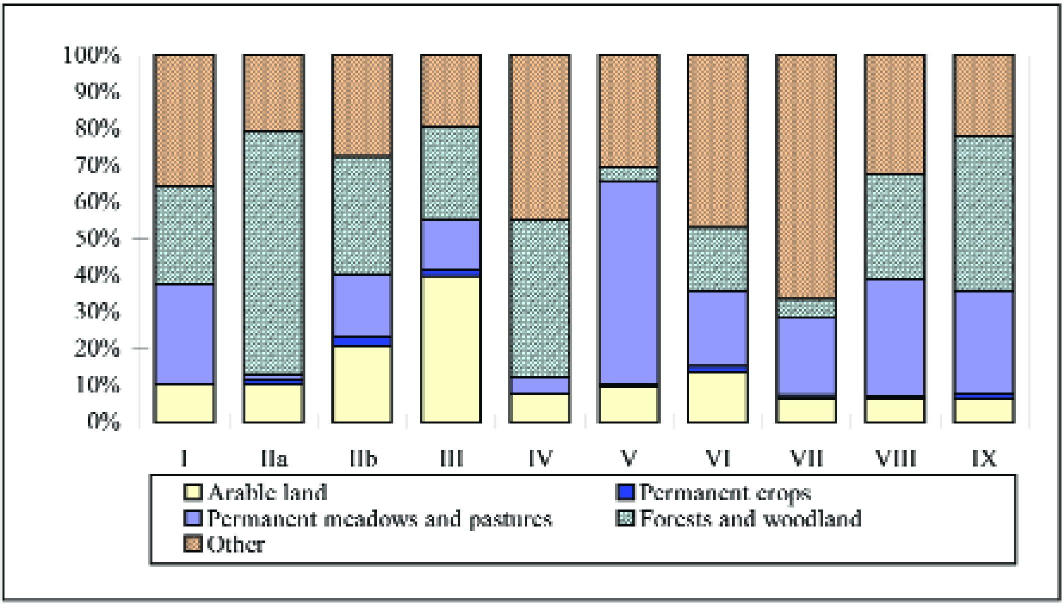

Figure 6 - Surface (billions of hectares) and structure of the Agricultural Used Area (AUA in %) in different regions of the world

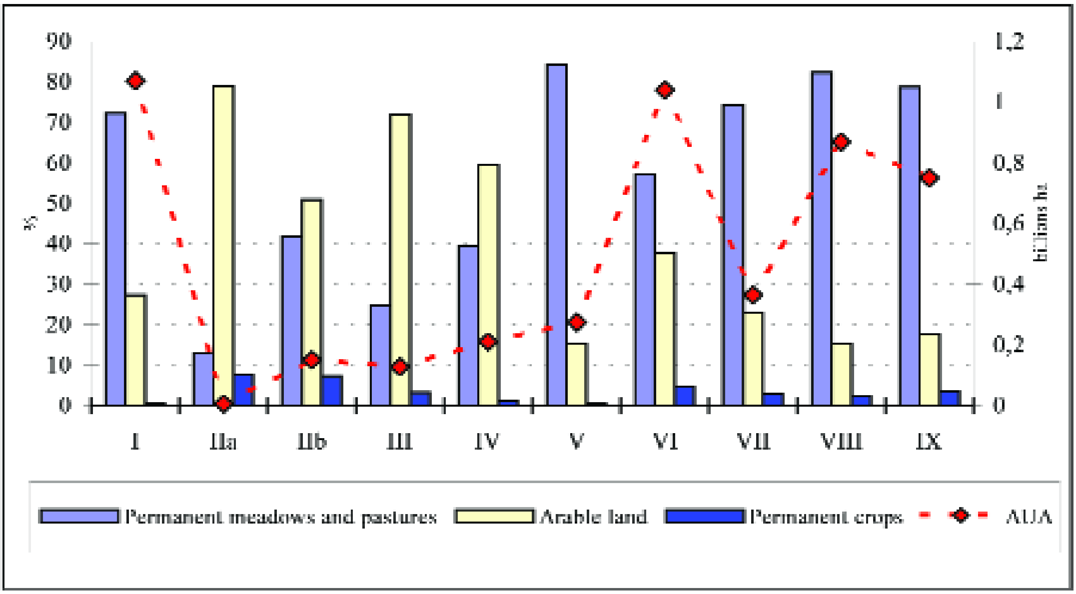

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Figure 7 – Correlation between mechanisation levels and costs per hectare of the machines (Sm) and abour (Sl). With the increasing of wages it becomes necessary to use higher mechanisation levels able to assure higher work productivity [*Source*:[14]]

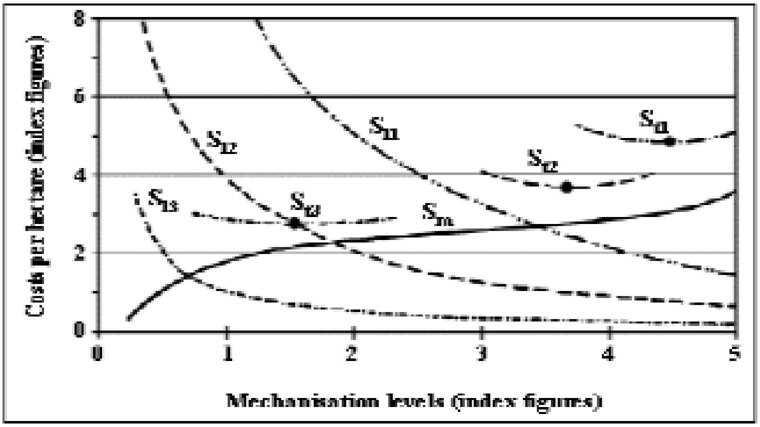

Figure 8 – Relation between soil factors and farming systems [*Source*: [4]]

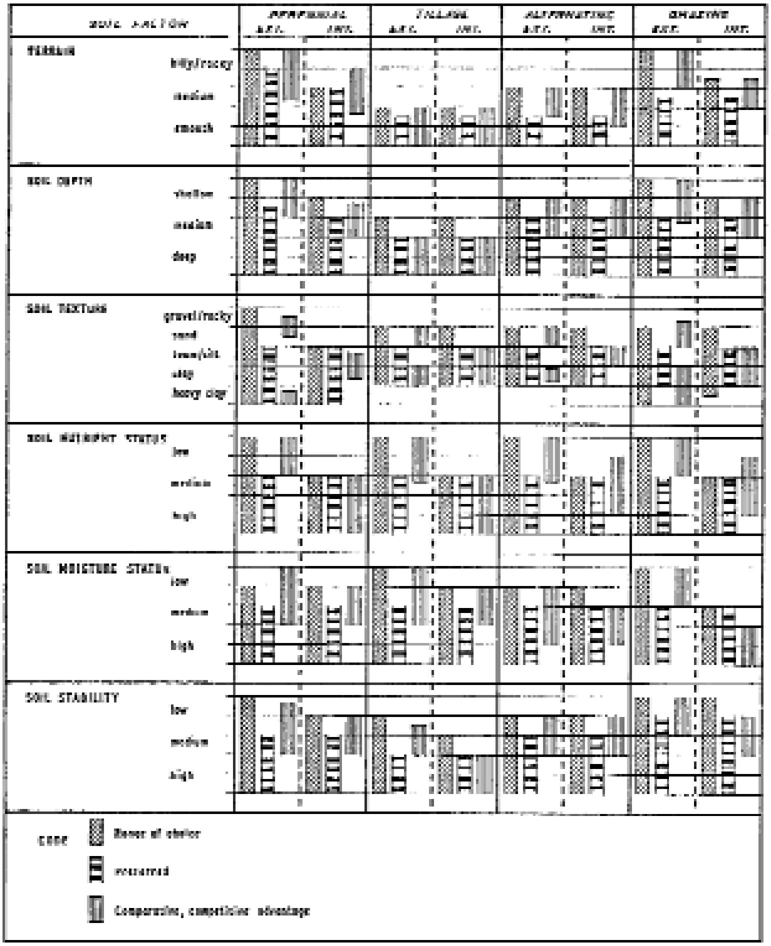

Figure 9 - Network of activities and institutions to be installed in each country/region in order to contribute to an appropriate choice and utilization of agricultural equipment

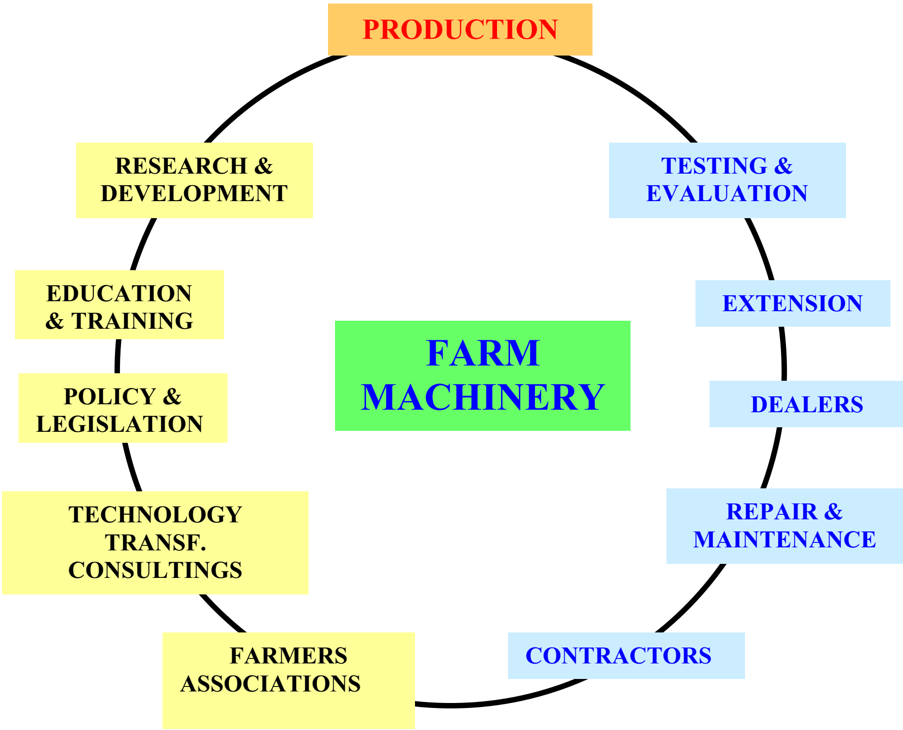

Figure 10 - Working animals in relation to Agricultural Used Area (AUA) and to Arable Land (AL)

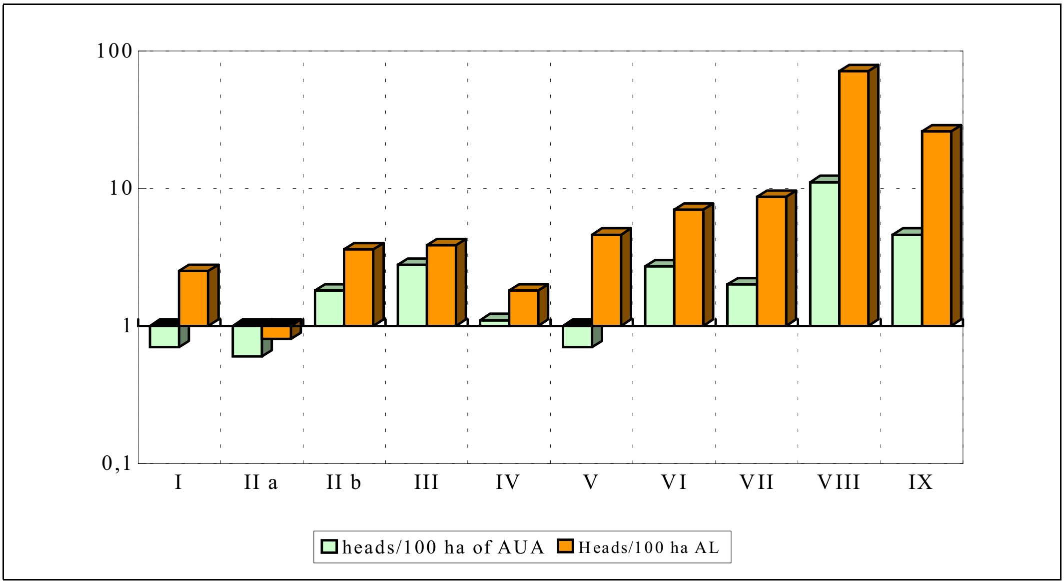

Figure 11 - Per capita production of cereals and milk and average yields of cereals by region

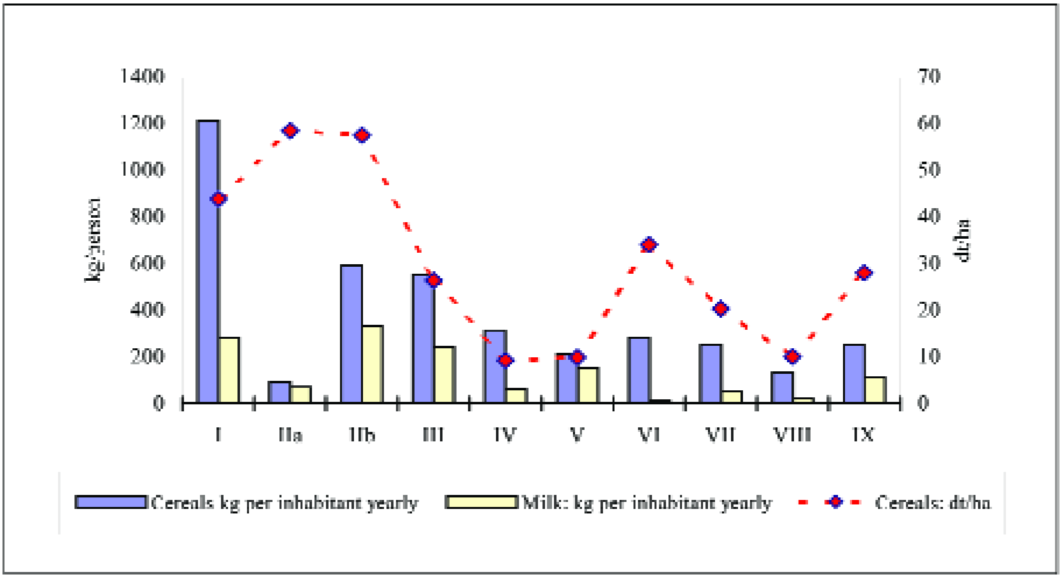

Table 1 - Resources of Agricultural Used Area (AUA) according to region [*Source*: Calculations based [8] data]

REGIONS	*HECTARES OF AUA PER INHABITANT*			**IRRIGATED AREA**		
	Total	Arable land	Perm. crops	PM&P	AUA, %	Arable Land %
I	2.920	0.798	0.014	2.108	2.5	9.0
II[a]	0.039	0.031	0.003	0.005	54.6	69.0
II[b]	0.390	0.198	0.029	0.163	9.6	18.9
III	0,656	0,472	0,022	0,162	4.0	5,6
IV	1.432	0.855	0.013	0.564	2.4	4.0
V	3.849	0.579	0.020	3.251	4.5	29.7
VI	0.330	0.124	0.016	0.190	13.5	35.8
VII	0.994	0.230	0.028	0.737	6.8	29.3
VIII	1.527	0.238	0.034	1.255	0.6	3.7
IX	1.490	0.266	0.052	1.172	2.4	13.7

II[a]) Japan; II[b]) Western Europe and Israel

Table 2 - Average size of farms [*Sources*: Calculations based on [10]; [11];[12] and [13] as well as Authors' estimations]

REGIONS	*HECTARES PER FARM*				% OF FARMS	
	Arable land	Perm. crops	Pastures	Total AUA	< 5 ha	> 5 ha
I1	85.5	1.0	116.5	203.0	3.0	97.0
II[a]	1.2	0.1	0.2	1.5	97.0	3.0
II[b]	9.8	1.1	6.1	17.1	53.1	46.9
III	9.1	0.7	2.4	12.2	49.5	50.5
IV	413.7	6.1	255.1	674.8	20.6	79.4
V	143.9	4.9	808.6	957.4	20.0	80.0
VI	1.2	0.2	0.4	1.8	97.9	2.1
VII	1.9	0.2	3.4	5.5	79.0	21.0
VIII	3.2	0.5	16.7	20.3	38.0	62.0
IX	17.1	5.0	67.5	89.6	39.0	61.0

Table 3 - Population [*Source*: Calculations based on [8]; [10] and [18]]

REGIONS	POPULATION 10^6 persons	ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION (EAP)						AVERAGE salary US $/month
		Total 10^6 persons	Industry %	Other %	Agriculture			
					%	per/100ha AUA	per/100ha AL+PC	
I	366.3	183.7	17.2	79.8	3.0	0.54	1.95	2100
II[a]	125.6	65.1	21.9	72.8	5.3	62.18	71.67	2600
II[b]	393.1	185.0	21.5	73.5	5.0	5.25	8.93	1500
III	194.3	97.8	25.4	51.6	23.0	14.34	18.52	300
IV	148.1	85.2	35.0	51.0	14.0	4.11	6.78	120
V	71.1	31.6	9.8	64.9	25.3	2.92	18.80	140
VI	3168.5	1620.4	15.6	22.8	61.6	95.48	224.00	90
VII	361.4	132.8	19.3	48.0	32.7	11.89	46.04	110
VIII	568.9	254.8	4.9	27.9	67.2	19.71	110.73	70
IX	503.6	213.2	15.1	64.1	20.8.	5.92	27.80	600

II[a]) Japan; II[b]) Western Europe and Israel

Table 4 - Tractors and combine harvesters by region [*Source:* Calculations based on [8]]

REGIONS	*TRACTORS*			**COMBINE - HARVESTERS**	
	number (10^3)	per 100 ha AUA	per 100 ha AL	number (10^3)	per 100 ha of cereals
I	6002.3	0.56	2.05	866.3	0.86
II[a]	2123.0	42.91	54.23	160.0	7.80
II[b]	6854.1	4.54	8.92	606.9	1,50
III	3482.1	2.73	3.80	298.3	0.73
IV	886.5	0.42	0.70	317.0	0.63
V	444.1	0.16	1.08	75.4	0.49
VI	2763.4	0.26	0,70	1250.4	0.48
VII	1585.8	0.43	1.88	50.2	0.11
VIII	161.6	0.02	0.12	5.1	0.01
IX	1587.5	0.21	1.19	159.6	0.35

II[a]) Japan; II[b]) Western Europe and Israel

Table 5 - Rate of equipment of farms in tractors (situation at 1996) [*Source:* Calculations based on [19] and [20]]

FARM SIZE	**TRACTORS**			
	unit/100 hectares AUA		unit/100 farms	
	Germany	Poland	Germany	Poland
1-5 hectares	27.35	10.79	67.88	27.22
5-10 hectares	22.14	10.51	159.33	74.92
10-20 hectares	15.67	8.77	228.11	118.99
20-50 hectares	9.09	6.41	288.85	174.29
> 50 hectares	2.69	1.66	396.40	548.90
Average	6.87	7.45	204.47	61.79

Table 6 - Mechanical power in agriculture [*Source*: Calculations based on [10; 21]]

REGIONS	**POWER** (kW per 100 ha AUA)				**AVERAGE POWER** (kW)		
	tractors	Walking tractors	Combine-harvesters	Total	Tractors	Walking tractors	Combine-harvesters
I	35.1	1.0	7.0	43.1	62.5	7.0	86.0
II [a]	918.4	121.5	39.5	1079.4	21.4	3.5	12.2
II [b]	205.7	14.7	31.6	252.0	45.3	8.8	78.5
III	106.6	1.0	18.1	125.7	39.0	4.0	77.5
IV	27.3	1.6	11.9	40.8	65.1	3.4	78.9
V	9.9	0.5	2.2	12.6	61.0	3.5	78.0
VI	8.0	14.0	3.6	25.6	30.4	8.9	29.7
VII	21.8	0.1	0.5	22.4	50.3	6.3	36.1
VIII	0.7	0.4	0.1	1.2	40.0	7.5	61.0
IX	11.6	1.5	1.8	14.9	54.9	7.3	85.4

II[a]) Japan; II[b]) Western Europe and Israel

Table 7 - Inputs of work hours per 100 ha of AL and annual use of selected machines [*Source*: Calculations based on [10] and Authors' estimations]

REGIONS	**WORK (**hours per annum per 100 ha of AL)			**AVERAGE ANNUAL USE** (hours)		
	Tractors	Walking tractors	Combines	Tractor	Walking tractor	Combines
I	2002	3	65	975	55	220
II [a]	3796	154	123	70	35	30
II [b]	3150	25	101	353	75	155
III	2345	3	61	617	75	188
IV	844	3	70	1200	40	280
V	1295	4	55	1200	40	300
VI	353	236	95	503	566	300
VII	2258	3	20	1201	394	340
VIII	142	19	1	1200	550	400
IX	1424	60	49	1200	520	410

II[a]) Japan; II[b]) Western Europe and Israel

Table 8 - Energy spent in agriculture and prices [*Source*: Calculations based on [10; 22; 23 and 24] and Authors' estimations]

REGIONS	INPUTS OF ENERGY IN AGRICULTURE			PRICE	
	% of the national consumption	TJ per		Diesel oil (US$ per kg)	Electric energy (US$ per kWh)
		100 ha AUA	1000 US$ GAO		
I	4.4	0.40	13.0	0.319	0.040
II [a]	1.0	2.86	2.6	0.840	0.150
II [b]	3.0	1.64	12.9	0.649	0.069
III	7.4	1.36	33.1	0.401	0.037
IV	6.3	0.73	49.2	0.400	0.050
V	7.0	0.25	47.0	0.400	0.050
VI	10.0	0.32	8.6	0.458	0.048
VII	28.6	0.51	19.4	0.531	0.075
VIII	*	0.02	3.4	0.500	0.075
IX	0.6	0.31	17.7	0.307	0.038

II[a]) Japan; II[b]) Western Europe and Israel

Table 9 - Agro-chemical inputs [*Source:* Calculations based on [25; 26; 27]

REGIONS	*FERTILIZERS* ***(kg/ha AUA)***				**PESTICIDES & HERBIC.** (kg/ha)
	N	P_2O_5	K_2O	NPK	
I	13.4	6.2	5.4	25.0	0.3
II [a]	99.9	120.1	85.3	305.3	9.7
II [b]	65.7	24.8	28.3	118.8	4.9
III	41.0	12.8	15.7	69.2	0.5
IV	4.7	1.5	1.7	7.9	N.A.
V	2.2	0.9	0.5	3.6	N.A.
VI	41.2	15.5	6.9	63.6	N.A.
VII	9.9	4.4	0.7	15.0	N.A.
VIII	0.8	0.4	0.3	1.5	N.A.
IX	6.1	4.3	4.1	14.5	N.A.

II[a]) Japan; II[b]) Western Europe and Israel

Table 10 - Main crops, a - Cultivated Area, 10^6 hectares; b - Yield, t/ha; c - Labour input, hours/ha [*Source*: Calculations based on [[8]; [14]; [23]; [25]; [29] and [30]]

CROP		REGIONS									
		I	II[a]	II[b]	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
Four cereals	a	59824	220	32399	31397	47238	14552	72139	40361	3635	9700
	b	2.515	3.48	5,30	2.71	0.94	0.91	2.91	1.78	1.52	2.19
	c	10	50	15	20	16	16	90	60	400	80
Rice	a	1473	1801	451	16	146	275	132214	1471	7247	5724
	b	6.70	6,22	6.02	3.31	2.81	2.46	3.80	6.02	1.60	3.19
	c	70	400	100	120	110	110	420	330	1200	400
Maize-grain	a	30579	0	4182	8013	880	413	41470	2610	23182	26102
	b	8.42	0	9.52	4,15	0.91	2.68	3.89	3.77	1.41	2.91
	c	13	0	18	25	20	20	160	90	520	120
Sorghum	a	3694	0	107	36	20	9	13025	986	22639	3926
	b	3.86	0	5.80	1.28	0.60	1.44	1.17	1.57	0.86	3.12
	c	10	0	15	20	16	16	90	60	400	80
Lentils	a	519	0	31	7	1	2	1713	1036	57	31
	b	1.26	0	0.77	0.64	0.75	1.13	0.76	0.89	0.70	0.86
	c	12	0	16	21	17	18	100	80	430	90
Rape seed	a	6998	1	3105	981	139	14	13543	19	153	80
	b	1.42	1,86	3.10	2.21	0.75	0.36	0.85	5.37	0.54	2.35
	c	8	45	11	14	10	10	60	30	400	60
Soybeans	a	29689	83	490	318	404	3	16620	129	872	22082
	b	2.62	1.75	3.21	1.73	0.69	1.33	1.35	1.78	0.95	2.47
	c	8	140	10	15	11	12	160	90	400	130
Beans	a	916	71	208	373	2	25	13962	308	3189	6637
	b	1.77	1.84	0.56	1.27	0.75	1.00	0.575	1.35	0.64	0.72
	c	8	140	10	15	11	12	160	90	400	130
Pulses	a	4612	72	2106	1470	1213	395	35527	4078	13388	7248
	b	1,54	1.85	2.94	1.87	0.82	1.05	0.60	0.89	0.49	0.74
	c	8	140	10	15	11	12	160	90	400	130
Sunflowers	a	1568	0	2255	4664	4166	308	3209	809	744	3507
	b	1.65	0	1.56	1.13	0.72	0.35	0.92	1.36	0.95	1.63
	c	21	0	29	39	35	35	115	89	530	104
Potatoes	a	766	104	1408	4564	3260	395	5086	786	501	1080
	b	35.86	32,69	34.35	14.51	9.60	10.50	15.77	19.47	8.39	14.16
	c	21	160	27	50	40	40	200	140	550	150
Cassava	a	0	0	0	0	0	0	3347	0	10452	2389
	b	0	0	0	0	0	0	13.37	0	8.22	11.69
	c	0	0	0	0	0	0	200	0	550	200
Sugar beet	a	602	69	2056	1994	806	37	518	821	0	52
	b	50.27	53.80	63.17	17.58	13.40	15.89	27.43	38.12	0	59.36
	c	25	190	30	50	40	40	200	180	0	150
Sugar cane	a	1114	23	0	0	0	0	8678	169	913	8539
	b	86.55	63.56	0	0	0	0	62.08	101.98	50.44	64.68
	c	100	750	0	0	0	0	900	800	1500	900
Vineyards	a	354	21	3490	988	70	311	325	1216	107	457
	b	17.81	11.95	7.11	5.24	4.29	4.66	12.12	7.21	12.21	11.29
	c	70	4200	60	120	100	110	600	200	5000	4000
Groundnuts	a	622	12	5	10	0	13	13531	138	8780	693
	b	2.93	2.45	5.8	1.00	0	1.69	1.50	2.31	0.81	1.96
	c										
Cotton (seeds)	a	4777	0	546	26	0	2656	17302	1559	3988	2353
	b	1.95	0	3.08	0.81	0	1.75	1.45	2.77	0.91	1.40
	c		0			0					

II[a]) Japan; II[b]) Western Europe and Israel

Table 11 - Animal production indicators [*Source*: Calculations based [8]]

SPECIFICATION	REGIONS									
	I	II[a]	II[b]	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
Total cattle, thous.	162183	4700	86366	38146	31700	15445	406988	33137	194479	345241
dairy cows, %	*10*	*28*	*26*	*51*	*44*	*44*	*13*	*44*	*16*	*15*
other cattle, %	*90*	*72*	*74*	*49*	*56*	*56*	*87*	*56*	*84*	*85*
Pigs, thous.	77419	9800	121807	60614	17305	1580	567375	530	20665	76519
Sheep, thous.	205425	16	120246	23369	17125	34218	247343	177671	146031	92667
Goats, thous.	8885	29	12501	4318	1632	3061	385870	69242	177723	36733
Chickens, mil	1993	306	1025	428	405	65	5464	1042	705	2045
Heads per 100 ha AUA										
Total cattle	15.2	95.0	57.2	29.9	15.0	5.6	38.9	9.1	12.6	46.0
dairy cows	*1.6*	*26.3*	*15.0*	*15.4*	*6.6*	*2.5*	*5.0*	*4.0*	*2.0*	*6.7*
other cattle	*13.6*	*68.7*	*42.2*	*14.5*	*8.4*	*3.1*	*33.9*	*5.1*	*10.6*	*39.3*
Pigs	7.2	198.1	80.7	47.6	8.2	0.6	54.3	0.1	1.3	10.2
Sheep	19.2	0.3	79.7	18.3	8.1	12.5	23.7	48.6	9.4	12.4
Goats	0.8	0.6	8.3	3.4	0.8	1.1	36.9	19.0	11.5	4.9
Chickens	186.3	6185.6	679.2	336.0	191.9	23.7	522.5	285.2	45.5	272.6

II[a]) Japan; II[b]) Western Europe and Israel

Table 12 - Yields of cereals and milk by region [*Source*: Calculations based on [8]]

REGIONS	*CEREALS PRODUCTION*		**MILK PRODUCTION**	
	Yields (kg/ha)	(kg/inhabitant)	Yields (kg/cow)	(kg/inhabitant)
I	4388	1209.6	6088	280.9
II [a]	5850	95.0	6612	68.1
II [b]	5743	589.7	5841	329.5
III	2973	575.2	2635	211.6
IV	927	317.4	2286	217.0
V	989	214.1	1557	149.3
VI	3410	281.2	802	11.5
VII	2029	254.0	1329	54.0
VIII	1000	131.3	352	19.4
IX	2802	254.2	1150	114.4

II[a]) Japan; II[b]) Western Europe and Israel

Table 13 - Prices of main agricultural products *Sources*: [20; 25; 26; 32] and estimations based on [31]]

REGIONS	PRICE (US$ 100 kg)					
	Wheat	Rice	Barley	Maize	Soybeans	Potatoes
I	31.40	85.16	23.72	22.78	45.59	25.57
II [a]	164.84	304.22	158.67	*	232.42	89.18
II [b]	17.43	49.14	16.33	20.04	26.97	29.12
III	10.62	*	8.70	4.63	*	4.93
IV	8.50	26.00	7.00	10.30	*	4.50
V	8.40	24.70	5.50	14.10	*	4.50
VI	26.10	18.80	19.70	9.20	27.40	1.10
VII	13.30	30.00	10.90	44.50	46.40	2.00
VIII	28.80	*	*	8.50	19.90	*
IX	10.00	31.20	10.20	8.70	17.20	1.00

II[a]) Japan; II[b]) Western Europe and Israel

Table 14 - Gross Agricultural Output (GAO) [*Source:* Calculations based on [[8]; [10], [20], [25] and [27]]

REGIONS	GNP (US$ per inhabitant)	Gross Agricultural Output (GAO)				
		% on GNP	US$ per			
			EAP in Agri-culture	100 hectares		Inhabitant
				AUA	AL+PC	
I	30000	3.0	56589	30624	110141	900
II [a]	24400	1.8	18031	1121136	1291330	439
II [b]	23500	2.0	23321	122415	210259	470
III	2700	10.0	3135	41194	54758	270
IV	3039	7.0	3617	14860	24510	213
V	1350	15.0	1801	5261	33845	203
VI	700	17.4	287	36904	86580	122
VII	2400	11.0	2197	26118	100994	264
VIII	300	35.0	136	6873	38615	105
IX	5200	5,0	2948	17454	81971	260

II[a]) Japan; II[b]) Western Europe and Israel