

Farming Spreads Worldwide

How did farming spread?

The plentiful natural resources in the **Fertile Crescent** was an important factor in the early development of farming in that region. People in more marginal or arid lands around the world remained hunter-gatherers for longer than those in more fertile areas. They may also have lived pastorally, controlling a herd of domesticated animals over a wide range of land but not settling into permanent towns and cities.

Other Regions Begin Farming

As innovations in farming continued, particularly irrigation, advanced settlements could support more people. Agrarian civilizations became large enough and advanced enough to spread throughout their region and into new lands. As farmers traveled, they brought with them their culture and knowledge. For example, migrants from places such as Turkey brought farming to Europe about 9,000 years ago, or around 7000 BCE. Farming did not develop independently in Europe, like it did in the **Middle East**, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Genetic studies show that modern Europeans descended from immigrant farmers, not from the ancient people who lived in Europe following the Ice Age.

People tended to migrate among areas with similar climates. The same plants and animals could be raised

in these areas, making it easier for civilizations to spread quickly. For example, crops and farming techniques in southern Europe, [Central Asia](#), and [North Africa](#) all originated in the Middle East.

The technological advances and sheer numbers of people from the first cities gave agricultural civilizations an advantage over [hunter-gatherer](#) societies. Settled agrarian communities with stable food supplies could grow and spread faster. Agricultural societies influenced other societies as they spread out through [migration](#) and conquest.

The move from [nomadic](#) hunter-gatherers to permanently settled members of agricultural civilizations was a major change in early people's way of life. It led to improved health, longer life, and the beginning of civilizations. Although this change happened gradually over thousands of years, the impact it had on ancient people, and continues to have today, was so important that scientists consider it a revolution.