Types of Farming Operations

There are many different types of agriculture being practiced all over the world. However, it is possible to classify the type of farms based on similar characteristics. This lesson provides you with some classifications of farms. Just as there are many ways to classify people; males and females, old & young, brunettes and blondes, there are many ways to classify farms. We are not looking at all classifications but you must remember these. You will be asked to apply these to case studies of farm systems.

- **commercial farming** and **subsistence farming**
- **extensive farming** and **intensive farming**
- **shifting cultivation**, **agribusiness**, and **nomadic herding**

**Commercial farming** involves the production of food for sale while **subsistence farming** involves the production of food to feed your family. The large wheat farms of the prairies would obviously be commercial while aunt Sally's vegetable garden in the back yard would be subsistence.

**Extensive agriculture** uses large tracts of inexpensive land in unpopulated areas whereas **intensive agriculture** normally uses smaller tracts of land in more densely populated areas. Cattle farming in western Canada would be extensive while dairy farming in the Goulds would be more intensive.

**Shifting cultivation** is another form of extensive agriculture. Planting crops in a region until fertility diminishes and then moving to a fresh area to plant means there must be lots of land available.

**Nomadic herding** is similar to shifting agriculture in that it involves moving from place to place with an extensive use of land but differs in that nomadic herding involves the raising of cattle, sheep or other herding animals.

**Agribusiness** is a form of commercial farming. It is run by large corporations that are self sufficient providing their own inputs and processing their own outputs.
Complete the following questions:

1. The obvious similarity between subsistence farming and Commercial farming is they both produce food from the land.
   What is the major difference between Commercial & Subsistence agriculture?
   What type of farming (commercial or Subsistence) would occur in poorer lesser developed regions of the world? You might find the map in Figure 9.13 on p. 157 to be useful.

2. The obvious similarity between intensive farming and extensive farming is they both produce food from the land.
   What are the major difference between intensive & extensive agriculture? Think, cost of land, amount of land used, value of output, amount of input.
   Which type of farming (intensive or extensive) would you expect to occur in New York State or South East Asia? Explain. You might find figure 18.5 on p. 304 helpful.
   Which type of farming (intensive or extensive) would you expect to occur in the Mid western United States? Explain. You might find figure 18.5 on p. 304 helpful.

3. Complete the attached reproducible worksheet 9.7.