

Oil seeds are usually planted late in the Kharif season and harvested during Rabi.

Because of their long growing seasons, sugarcane and cotton require much more water than any of the other crops. The very high temperatures during summer result in a high rate of evapotranspiration, and thus all Kharif crops demand more water than those grown in Rabi. Rice is especially water-demanding, because it must be grown in flooded fields. In this water-short country, it is natural, therefore, that where winter water is available the acreage devoted to Rabi crops is usually more than the Kharif acreage. Relative to evapotranspiration, however, the river waters are lower in winter than in summer (compare Tables 1.1.1 and 1.2); hence in the southern part of the plain (Former Sind) the Kharif acreage is much higher than the Rabi acreage.

Cropping Pattern and Productivity

There is a marked variation between agricultural regions in the proportions of land planted to different crops. In the most prosperous canal-irrigated Districts of the Former Punjab (Table 1.8), only about 44 percent of the total acreage is planted in food grains, and 35 percent is planted in cotton and fodder. Presumably much of the fodder in these relatively prosperous Districts is used for meat and milk production. Former Bahawalpur (Table 1.11) is the region of second highest production per acre. Here the proportion of food grains is less, and of cotton and fodder slightly more, than in the highly productive Districts of the Former Punjab. In general, the percentage of food grains increases and that of the cash crops - cotton and fodder⁽¹¹⁾ decreases as the productivity per acre diminishes. In areas of low productivity the farmer must struggle for a bare subsistence, and hence he concentrates on food crops for himself and his family; he can give emphasis to cash crops only in areas where the productivity per farm is sufficiently high to enable him to meet his subsistence needs on a fraction of his land. The highest percentage of food grains is found in the Districts with little or no canal irrigation in the Former Punjab (Tables 1.10.1 and 1.10.2). About two-thirds of the land in these Districts is planted in food grains, principally wheat, and less than 10 percent in cotton and fodder combined.

(11) Only a fraction of the fodder is sold directly, but the remainder is used, at least in part, to feed commercial meat, wool, milk, and ghee-producing livestock.