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Farming

On high mountains and in the far north of Europe, farming is impossible because it is too cold for crops to grow. But evergreen trees such as pines and firs can survive cold winters. That is why Europe's coldest places are covered with evergreen forests.



Wooden houses in Bergen, Norway

People use the wood from these forests to make many things – from houses and furniture to paper and cardboard packaging.

Further south, most of the land is suitable for farming. It produces a wide variety of crops including wheat, maize, sugar beet, potatoes and all sorts of fruit and vegetables.



Oranges are grown in warm countries like Spain and are good for our health as they are full of vitamin c




Where there is plenty of sunshine and hardly any frost (near the Mediterranean, for example), farmers can grow fruit such as oranges and lemons, grapes and olives. Olives contain oil which can be squeezed out of the fruit and used in preparing food. Grapes are squeezed to get the juice, which can be turned into wine. Europe is famous for its very good wines, which are sold all over the world.

Mediterranean farmers also grow lots of other fruit and vegetables. Tomatoes, for example, ripen well in the southern sunshine. But vegetables need plenty of water, so farmers in hot, dry regions will often have to irrigate their crops. That means giving them water from rivers or from under the ground.





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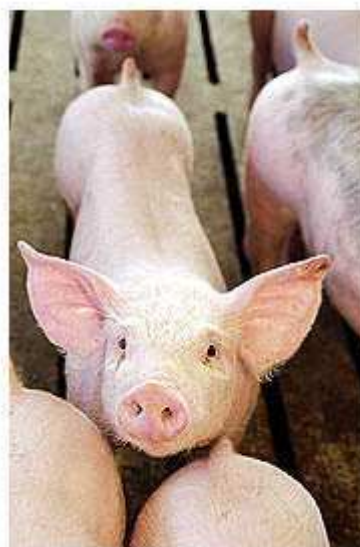
Farming



Sheep grazing on grasslands in Spain

Grass grows easily where there is enough rain, even if the soil is shallow or not very fertile. Many European farmers keep animals that eat grass – such as cows, sheep or goats. They provide milk, meat and other useful products like wool and leather.

Many farmers also keep pigs or chicken. These animals can be raised almost anywhere because they can be kept indoors and given specially prepared feed. Chicken provide not only meat but eggs too, and some farms produce thousands of eggs every day.



Pigs can be kept indoors



Farms in Europe range from very big to very small. Some have large fields – which makes it easy to harvest crops using big machines. Others, for example in hilly areas, may have small fields. Walls or hedgerows between fields help stop the wind and rain from carrying away soil, and they can be good for wildlife too.

Many city people like to spend weekends and holidays in the European countryside, enjoying the scenery, the peace and quiet and the fresh air. We all need to do what we can to look after the countryside and keep it beautiful.



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