

# Farming Techniques

During the *Shemittah*/Sabbatical Year, the fields and the vineyards were left uncultivated. Some scholars have suggested that the Israelites were practicing an early form of soil conservation; modern farmers often leave fields uncultivated or practice crop rotation in order to restore nutrients to the soil.

## History of English Farming

“According to early methods of cropping, which were destined to prevail for centuries, wheat, the chief article of food, was sown in one autumn, reaped the next August; the following spring, oats or barley were sown, and the year following the harvest was a period of fallow. This procedure was followed on each of the three fields so that in every year one of them was fallow.”

## Farming in South America

“Many tropical farming systems depend on fallow periods to restore soil fertility. During these periods, soil structure, chemistry and organic content improve and nutrients accumulate in woody biomass. At the same time, herbaceous weeds are eliminated, weed seed banks reduced, and pest cycles broken.”

## Great Plains Farming

“During the opening half of the nineteenth century, people who traveled in the Great Plains thought of it as a sterile desert that could not be cultivated except where irrigation was possible. They soon began to find that cattle thrived on the natural grasses of the Plains.

A variety of methods were devised to counter the effects of drought. The "Scientific Farming System" was developed by a South Dakota farmer Hardy Webster Campbell and published in 1902. Campbell's system set up a routine designed to retain the precipitation of two years for use during a single crop season by developing a reservoir of moisture in the subsoil and reducing surface evaporation. The farming system required deep plowing, a packed subsoil, frequent surface cultivation, and cropping on land that was kept fallow throughout the previous growing season. “

## Farming in Africa

“Farmers traditionally fallow their lands, that is, allow them to lie idle for one or more seasons in order to restore healthy fertility levels. In eastern Zambia, burgeoning population pressures have forced many farmers to neglect this practice, resulting in continuous cropping of the same land, production declines, and cultivation of marginal areas with poor soil quality.”

Material quoted from: The 1911 Edition Encyclopedia, Prairie Public Television, Charles Staver & the International Food Policy Research Institute

