

SS1 Agricultural Science – Week 1

Topic: Meaning and Importance of Agriculture

1. Meaning of Agriculture

What is Agriculture?

Agriculture is the science, art, and business of growing crops and rearing animals for human use. It involves:


- Preparing land for planting
- Planting and harvesting crops
- Rearing animals like chickens, cows, goats
- Storing and processing food
- Marketing agricultural products

What is Agricultural Science?

Agricultural Science is the study of all principles and practices involved in agriculture. It combines scientific knowledge with practical farming techniques to improve food production, manage natural resources, and raise animals effectively.

Agricultural Science includes:

- Crop Science – Understanding how to grow and improve crops like maize, cassava, rice
- Animal Science – Learning about breeding, feeding, and managing animals
- Soil Science – Studying the soil's structure, nutrients, and how to improve fertility
- Agricultural Economics – Studying costs, profits, and marketing of farm produce
- Agricultural Engineering – Using machines and technology (e.g. tractors, irrigation systems)

 **Example:** A cassava farmer who learns Agricultural Science can use improved planting methods, test the soil before planting, and apply the right fertilizers, leading to better yield and income.

2. Importance of Agriculture

Agriculture plays a critical role in our daily lives and the growth of a nation. Its benefits can be categorized into three levels:

✓ **A. Importance to the Individual**

1. Source of Food

Agriculture provides food such as rice, yam, tomatoes, eggs, milk, and meat. Without agriculture, there would be hunger and starvation.

2. Source of Income

People earn a living by selling crops and animals or working on farms. Even selling food at the market depends on agriculture.

3. Employment Opportunities

Jobs are created for farmers, truck drivers, sellers, food processors, extension workers, veterinarians, and farm technicians.

4. Improved Living Standard

With agricultural income, people can afford better housing, healthcare, clothing, and education.

5. Skill Development

Farming teaches valuable life skills such as time management, responsibility, record-keeping, and problem-solving.

🔍 **Example:** A secondary school graduate can learn how to rear broilers, sell them for profit in 6–8 weeks, and reinvest the money for expansion.

✓ **B. Importance to the Community**

1. Rural Employment

Farms provide jobs in rural areas, preventing rural-urban migration.

2. Social Development

Agricultural communities benefit from roads, electricity, and schools developed to support farming.

3. Cultural Identity


Many Nigerian cultures are closely linked to farming activities (e.g., New Yam Festivals, village planting rituals).

4. Food Availability

Communities that farm produce enough food to feed themselves and neighboring towns.

5. Community Growth

Through cooperative societies and group farming, people in rural areas support each other and build wealth together.

 **Example:** A village in Benue State that grows yams and oranges not only feeds itself but also supplies cities like Makurdi and Abuja.

C. Importance to the Nation

1. Food Security

A strong agricultural sector ensures that a country has enough food to feed its population.

2. Foreign Exchange Earnings

Agricultural exports like cocoa, palm oil, groundnuts, sesame, and ginger generate foreign currency.

3. Raw Materials for Industries

Agriculture supplies inputs to industries, e.g.:

- Cocoa → chocolate factories
- Cotton → textile industries
- Oil palm → soap and cosmetics factories

4. Employment Generation

Millions of people work in agriculture or related industries (transport, marketing, packaging).

5. Economic Development

Agriculture contributes a major percentage to Nigeria's GDP. A productive farming sector reduces poverty and supports national development.

6. Balanced Trade

By exporting agricultural products, Nigeria can reduce dependence on oil and improve its trade balance.

💡 **Example:** The cocoa exported from Ondo and Cross River States is used in making chocolate and other products abroad, bringing in billions in revenue.

Conclusion

Agriculture is not just about food—it is life, employment, culture, and national progress. Agricultural Science helps us apply knowledge to:

- **Boost farm productivity**
- **Reduce hunger**
- **Earn a living**
- **Build a stronger economy**

By understanding agriculture, students can become future farmers, agripreneurs, food technologists, and nation builders.