

Week #4 Text: pages 143-152; 229-261

NOTE we skip Chapter 4, we come back and get it later.

Study Questions/Exercises/Tips:

1. This last part of Chapter 3 is well summarized with the terms in *italics*; if you understand them you're in pretty good shape. The figures are also useful for summary purposes. Please note that the color plates aren't related to this section of the text, they've just been sort of bundled together and ended up here.
2. Describe the geography of the three Agricultural Revolutions. Where did each take place?
3. Your book states "Agriculture threatens ecological balances when people begin to believe that they have freed themselves from dependence on land resources." (page 235) Would Ester Boserup agree or disagree with this statement? Explain.
4. What is *intensive* agriculture? What is the *opposite* of intensive agriculture? How do the words like *capital*, *energy*, or *labor* modify intensive (as in capital intensive or labor intensive) and it's opposite?
5. Figure 5.10 (pg 249) is a troublesome figure. It isn't clear if the legend shows absolute numbers or some kind of ratio or density value. I suspect it's the former, absolute numbers. This makes the figure not worth very much, why?
6. Table 5.2 (pg 253) is also interesting; there are some clear, and clearly important trends revealed in it. [However, on a minor note, why do you think only 2 of the columns sum to zero?]
7. Pages 256 - 260 discuss the "Farm Problem in North America" and US farm subsidies. Why do you think other "industries" aren't receiving the same subsidy treatment as agriculture?

Commentary on the fourth week readings:

This section is pretty straightforward. Often the problem is the material is so familiar that it's easy to be lulled into a sense of "Oh I've seen all this before." Look for new stuff; new terms, graphics and examples. We all require agriculture through our consumption but increasingly fewer of us need it for employment.

There are several fairly basic examples of "supply and demand curves" in this portion of readings. If you are not familiar with this sort of diagram carefully read the axis labels and try to follow the discussions. If your eyes glaze over or you're just not getting the diagrams come on in and see the assistant or me.