

Editorial note on mixed farming and its types.

Mohamed Fayed*

Ain Shams University, Faculty of Agriculture, Cairo, Egypt

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Editorial

Despite a trend toward specialised farming in agribusiness, research, and education, mixed farming is popular around the world. Obviously, mixing has both benefits and drawbacks. Farmers in mixed systems, for example, must divide their attention and resources across many tasks, resulting in lower economies of scale. The option of lowering risk, dispersing labour, and repurposing resources are all advantages. The importance of these benefits and drawbacks varies depending on the farmers' sociocultural choices as well as the biophysical variables (rainfall, radiation, soil type, and disease pressure). This chapter begins by describing various types of mixing. Second, it illustrates how combining different pieces necessitates a unique method in order for the whole blend to be successful. What matters is the entire yield, not the yield of the parts. Trees in and around a crop field diminish grain yields, but the combination of trees (for feed and lumber) and crops is valuable because each of the components generates useful farm goods (people and animals included).

Mixed farming: what is it?

Various types of mixed farming occur, depending on external and internal conditions. Weather patterns, market pricing, political stability, technical advancements, and other external variables are examples. Internal influences include local soil conditions, family structure, and agricultural innovation. Farmers can choose mixed enterprises when they seek to save money by exchanging resources on the farm - because they allow for more crop rotations and hence less reliance on pesticides, because they perceive mixed systems to be more natural, or because they allow for greater risk diversification.

In mixed systems, there is a lot of variance. Pastoralists also practise mixed farming because their livelihood is dependent on the management of various feed resources and animal kinds. A region can be made up of individual specialised farms and service systems that work together as a mixed system at a higher level. Other types of mixed farming include growing multiple crops on the same field, such as millet and cowpea or millet and sorghum, or growing multiple varieties of the same crop with various life cycles, which saves space and spreads risk more evenly.

Understanding the logic of mixed systems in general requires the study of a wide range of mixed systems at various levels. Ecology, economics, and complex system theory all contain tools and notions that can help us better appreciate mixed systems' mixed blessings. One important aspect to remember is that the mixing principle applies everywhere, including in society: household garbage such as glass, bottles, and paper are all recycled. Another aspect to consider is that when plants and animals are mixed, the varied roles of plants and animals are visible: a cereal crop generates grain and straw, but a legume

supplies grain, organic matter, feed, and nitrogen. A third argument is that looking for a high yield of a combination of components rather than a single component's (high) yield is more essential. Mixed farms are systems made up of several components that should work together to form a whole. To comprehend the system and the forces that drive and impact farmers' decisions, they must be studied as a whole rather than as individual sections. The "command ideotype" is the name given to this principle. It's possible that it's the most significant premise for increasing productivity in mixed systems, along with the recognition that crops and animals serve many purposes.

Mixed farming formats

Mixed farming systems can be categorised in a variety of ways, including land size, crop and animal types, geographical distribution, market orientation, and so on. Here, four different farming modes are divided into three major groups. The following are the categories:

- Mixing within crops and/or animal systems
- Diversified versus integrated systems
- On-farm versus between-farm mixing

The varied types of farming pertain to different degrees of land, labour, and input availability, ranging from plenty of land to a scarcity of land. Expansion agriculture (EXPAGR, lots of land), LEIA, HEIA, and new conservation agriculture are the modes described by Schiere and De Wit (1995) (NCA, a form of land use where shortages are overcome by more labour, more inputs and keen management).

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*Correspondence to:

Mohamed Fayed
Ain Shams University
Faculty of Agriculture
Cairo, Egypt
E-mail: dr_eng.fayed@yahoo.com