

The Agricultural Revolution

Main changes:

- Open field farming (strip or three field farming) gradually replaced by enclosure (Townshend).
- Selective breeding of stock (Bakewell).
- Gradual introduction of mechanisation (Tull, etc)

Causes:

- ❖ The need for greater supplies of food for growing population and growth of towns (Pop. Figures: 1750 – approx. 5 million; 1800 – approx. 10 million; 1850 – approx. 20 million)
- ❖ The old system inefficient – more profit could be made from new systems allowing better quality as well as quantity.
- ❖ French Wars – creating demand for home-grown produce at end of 18th century.

Results of enclosure

- ❖ Farming became more efficient and productive, as more land was cultivated - no fallow field, less common land, experimentation possible.
- ❖ The appearance of the countryside began to change - hedges, more roads, village centre became de-populated as some land-owners began to build new farm houses near new fields.
- ❖ Massive social change - the rich became richer as they quickly adapted to new systems, the poor became poorer as commoners had no-where to live, poorer farmers could not afford costs and many had to leave farming.
- ❖ Movement of population – commoners and poorer farmers moved on, in some cases to seek work in new industrial towns.
- ❖ There was a decline in many old customs and a loss of ancient skills.