

AGRICULTURAL MEXICO

By David de la Fuente, Jr., '25

Mexico Offers Unlimited Opportunity in the Field of Agriculture—Vast Areas of Rich Soil Are Yet to Feel the Touch of the Plow—The Wide Range of Climate Allows for a Variety of Crops Over a Long Season

OPPORTUNITY is found in agricultural pursuits in those countries less developed, where competition is not so great, where labor is not so high, and where there is room for development. Mexico is one of these countries which by virtue of its situation, close to the United States, large undeveloped areas, cheap labor, and production of agricultural products below the needs for

abundant and agriculture suffers sometimes on account of the surface being under water during the heavy rains. Large quantities of maize, cocoa, vanilla, coffee, and indigo are produced. The plain of Tabasco is watered by the Tabasco river and its two branches, the Sumasinta and the Grijalva. It is the northern portion of the Eastern region. In the southern portion is a smaller plain called

union of the Gila with the Colorado river on the west. The eastern coast is low and sandy, and the rivers in the south eastern part are comparatively dry with exception of the rainy season.

In the north eastern part of this region several large rivers are found. There is a steep ascent in altitude coming west, and usually the land is unsuitable to dry farming, although



FALL COVER CROP OF MORNING GLORY AND GRASS, WITH HIGH HEADED TREES AS PRACTICED AT HERMOSILLO, SONORA.

home consumption, makes it an ideal place for the settler.

Mexico is divided into three agricultural regions:

The Eastern Region

This includes the peninsula of Yucatan, the western part of the tableland of Guatemala, the plain of Tabasco and the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. The climate is healthful, and many of the products of the West Indies may be grown successfully.

The surface of the plain of Tabasco is level. The soil is alluvial and very fertile, and an abundance of heavy forest is present. The rainfall is

the plain of Tehuantepec, which has a very hot and dry climate, and although the soil is not particularly fertile, tropical crops are produced. The Chimalpa river crosses this plain, and descends from the Cerro Pelado, while on the other side of this Cerro, the Huasacualco river is found, and is joined by many small rivers, offering a large amount of water for agricultural purposes.

The Central and Northern Region

This region comprises practically all Mexico from the meridian of 95° north latitude to the mouth of the Rio del Norte on the east, and to the

by irrigation from many numerous medium sized rivers, large crops are produced, especially corn, wheat, beans, alfalfa, and fruits such as grapes, oranges, avocados, lemons, etc. The southern section is fertile and soils are abundantly used for crops and pastures. The northern part secures less rainfall, but many small rivers are found from which water is used for irrigation for this region, which comprises all northern Mexico.

The Lower California Region

This is a peninsula separated from
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SUGAR CANE FIVE MONTHS GROWTH, 25 MILES
NORTH OF LAS MOCHIS, SINALOA.
(Courtesy Mexico Arizona Land Co.)

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the mainland by the Gulf of California and bounded by the State of California on the north. The mountain ranges are a continuation of the Sierra Nevadas of California, and nearly all cultivatable land lies on the eastern side of the mountains. Here corn, many varieties of fruits, and manioc are cultivated.

Mexico is also divided into three climatic zones as follows:

The Hot Zone

This zone lies at an elevation up to 3000 feet. These lands are found along the coasts, where the mean temperature is about 84° F. There tropical jungles are found; and forests and plants that require heat and humidity thrive. To this region belong products grown in Mexico, such as cotton, rice, sugar, fruits, coffee, and tobacco.

The Temperate Zone

The temperate zone has an altitude from 3 to 5 thousand feet, and as expected, is further away from the coast. Here corn, wheat and other cereals are successfully grown; although there is much room for improvement as modern methods of agriculture are essential to secure larger yields.

The Cold Zone

The cold zone lies at an elevation from 5 to 8 thousand feet, and in-

cludes the great central plain on which Mexico City is situated. All the cereals are grown extensively, and it is the home of the vast plantations of maguey (Century plant), from which pulque the favorite drink of the Indians is prepared. Undoubtedly, in time all this immense acreage will be cropped to something more useful. Occasional droughts occur in this zone, with the resulting low yields, making imperative the importation of cereals to supply the nation's consumption.

Some of the principal crops grown in Mexico with the principal localities or states follow:

Corn is grown extensively in the states of Vera Cruz, Jalisco, Guanajuato, Puebla, Coahuila, and Oaxaca.

Wheat in Guanajuato, Puebla, and Mexico.

Barley in Hidalgo, Tlaxcala, Puebla.

Rice in Colima, Morelos, Vera Cruz and Tabasco.

Chick peas and beans in all states but more especially in Vera Cruz, Jalisco and Sinaloa.

Sugar cane in Vera Cruz, Puebla, and the West Coast.

Cotton in the Laguna district, which is located in the States of Coahuila and Durango with an area of 200,000 acres. This is a very prosperous region.

The climate and soil in the temperate regions of Mexico afford every advantage for the culture of fruits, but at present large quantities of of fruits are imported annually. Strawberries of the finest flavor are grown all year around in the neighborhood of Irapuato, State of Guanajuato, and at different localities in the valley of Mexico. The oranges of Jalisco, Hermosillo, Sonora, Morelos, and Nuevo Leon, and also of Zimapan, in the State of Hidalgo, are famous for their quality.

Mexico certainly offers splendid opportunities for the culture of the pineapple, the guayaba, the banana, the mameh, the mango, the zapote, etc., fruits of the tropics.

Coffee is grown in Chiapas, Vera Cruz, Oaxaca and Puebla where large plantations are found.

Livestock is at its beginning and much improvement could be made. The largest herds are found in the States of Chihuahua and Durango.

Mexico has been known for a long time for its mineral wealth; little attention has been paid to its agricultural possibilities, and its development and ultimate improvement of them. There are immense areas adapted to cultivation of cereals, fruits, and other farm crops, and with its great variety of climate the settler can find the soil, climate and scenery he desires.

Author's Note—I wish to acknowledge assistance from the following sources, which I used in obtaining data and information for this paper: "Mexican Year Book"; "Revista de Industrias"; "Plain Facts About Mexico", by G. J. Hagar.

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