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# INTRODUCTION

Behind kings in their glittering palaces, priests in their golden temples, and warriors and their walls of spears are the numberless masses who support them. Without weavers and tailors, kings have no royal robes; without masons, priests have no temples; without smiths, warriors have no arms; and without countless farmers, herdsmen, and merchants bringing goods to market, none of them get to eat. While unexciting on the surface, such matters can be the source of surprising adventure! Wars have been fought over things as mundane as alum supplies, and perilous journeys through strange foreign lands have been undertaken just to find a better shade of blue paint. Merchants and craftsmen may become heroes despite themselves by dint of getting things done, while concerns such as how goods are made, transported, and sold are vital to everyone - even to adventurers, who often want to possess hard-to-find gear, earn their fortune, and leave their mark on society. And for those who hope one day to rule, being able to answer such questions as "How many people can live on this land?" and "How much for the castle?" can mean the difference between glory and ignominy.

**GURPS Low-Tech Companion 3** looks at the everyday jobs and industries on which low-tech societies depend, from the fundamentals of subsistence (hunting and gathering, agriculture, and domestication), through making things (extracting resources, erecting buildings, and manufacturing both utilitarian and luxury goods), to how all this enables an individual to earn a living and a society to thrive (jobs, trade, and transport). Note that it's an appendix to *GURPS Low-Tech*. Many of the concepts discussed here draw on that work, although that supplement isn't *required* to use this one.

### **ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

Matt Riggsby holds degrees in anthropology and archaeology and, like the rest of his generation, works with computers. He has been the author or co-author of books on database design and development, as well as many articles for *Pyramid* magazine. He works for a company that produces TL8 medical devices, and lives in a TL6 house with his wife, son, and a pack of domesticated but semi-trained carnivores.

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### About GURPS

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Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition.* Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

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## AGRICULTURAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Like land used by hunter-gatherers (see *Hunting and Gathering*, p. 4-5), farmland may be rated as *Desolate, Very Poor, Poor, Typical, Good*, or *Excellent*. If farmers take over land from hunter-gatherers, or vice versa, the properties that make land decent for these two activities are sufficiently similar that the same quality grade may be used. However, quality changes over a different timeframe for farming.

Farmland's quality can decline over time, but increasingly sophisticated farming techniques slow soil degradation considerably. At TL0, anyone cultivating land must roll against Gardening once a year. At TL1+, he rolls against Farming, and has a bonus equal to TL. Any failure reduces his plot's quality by one step.

The Agricultural Productivity Table (p. 10) and Animal Productivity Table (p. 10) assume Typical land. For particularly highor low-quality areas, adjust yields as shown on the Quality and Productivity Table (below). Modifiers for animal produce also affect the "Animals/Acre" column of the Animal Productivity Table; e.g., Desolate land supports 0.5 sheep/acre or requires 2 acres/sheep.

### Quality and Productivity Table

Quality	Grains	Cattle	Sheep	Pigs	Poultry
Excellent	+25%	×4	×2	×2	×2
Good	+15%	×2	×1.75	×1.75	×1.75
Poor	-15%	×0.5	×0.75	×0.5	×0.5
Very Poor	-25%	×0.25	×0.5	×0.25	×0.25
Desolate	-80%	N/A	×0.25	N/A	×0.1

### Beekeeping

Humans didn't just domesticate mammals. A few insects were domesticated, too – the most important of which was the honeybee. Bees were domesticated at least as early as 2500 B.C. By TL2, beekeepers kept bees in artificial clay hives and, much as is done today, calmed the bees with smoke before harvesting.

Bees provide two important products: *honey* and *wax*. Honey was universally the most prized sweetener until the development of sugar. Beeswax had a huge range of applications: waterproofing, lighting, cosmetics, encaustic painting, etc. A single hive can produce up to 20 lbs. of honey and half as much wax; however, it must be destroyed to harvest it, and requires years to rebuild. An acre supports up to five hives.

## **Environmental Impact**

Agriculture can be its own worst enemy. Cultivation may pollute the soil or destroy it by overuse. And nutrient depletion is only part of the problem. For example, water used for irrigation carries minute quantities of salt, which is left behind in the soil. In the short term, that's not a problem; over centuries, though, it can render fields all but unworkable. By the Roman period, some places in Mesopotamia could no longer support wheat and would only grow sparse crops of barley.

Deforestation is an issue for any expanding or technologically advancing society: higher technology demands more wood for charcoal, while growing populations require more lumber for buildings, industrial equipment, furniture, and vehicles. Archaeological soil analysis indicates that the Mediterranean was heavily forested after the last Ice Age. Human occupation completely changed that environment, however, as people cut down trees to supply flourishing cities with metals (an active local metal industry can consume square miles of forest yearly), pottery, and shipbuilding. The decline of forests led to the land being covered with a variety of grasses and shrubs. Even low-tech firestick farming (p. 8) might have transformed forested areas permanently into grassland – after repeated burnings, grasses recover more quickly than trees and eventually dominate the landscape.

## **GRINDING AND MILLING**

The most important staple foods – such as grains and acorns – can be made easier to handle and cook by grinding them into a powder. Though heavy, grinding stones were sufficiently important that they were standard gear for small military units. Realistically, traveling adventurers are likely to carry them around, too. Grinding grain is hard work, costing 1 FP per hour. *Simple Hand Grinders* (TL0). The earliest grinding tools were, essentially, two rocks. Typical examples are the *mano* (flat-sided handheld stone) and *metate* (coarse stone plate against which grain is ground), and the *mortar* (stone bowl) and *pestle* (stone beater used to grind grain against the inside of the mortar). Simple grinder that can process 4-5 lbs. of flour per hour: \$50, 40 lbs. Small grinder for kitchen or laboratory use: \$10, 8 lbs.

## **BREWING AND DISTILLING**

The fermentation of fruit juice into alcohol occurs naturally. Indeed, animals are sometimes observed getting drunk from eating overripe fruit! Crushing fruit into juice and letting it ferment into wine is simply organizing the process. Fruit produces half its weight in juice – that is, one needs about 1 lb. of raw fruit per cup of juice, or 16 lbs. per gallon.

Fruit juices are by far the best historically accessible sources of fermentable sugars, but it's possible to ferment any sugar-rich solution to produce alcohol. Where bees are exploited, honey can be turned into *mead*, its alcohol content similar to that of beers and wines. Several cultures of horse-riding nomads – from Hungary to Mongolia – fermented mare's milk, which is unusually high in sugar, into *kumis*, a mildly alcoholic beverage (perhaps 2% alcohol).

Brewing grain into alcohol was a significant economic development. Instead of putting considerable labor into growing inessential fruit to turn into wine, any surplus in the grain harvest could be made into a fermented beverage such as beer, ale, or sake (for brevity, such drinks are collectively referred to as "beer" hereafter). Grain needs help to ferment, however – alcohol-producing microbes can't consume starches. When exposed to appropriate enzymes, though, starches are converted into sugars, which the microbes *can* work with.

### Pollution

Pollution and environmental hazards date to the dawn of civilization. With the high population densities and poor sanitation of the earliest permanent settlements, communicable diseases caused life expectancies to *decrease* from hunter-gatherer levels. Well into the Renaissance, cities were net consumers of people, with populations kept up by constant immigration from the countryside.

In addition to disease, indoor air quality was terrible. For most of history, indoor fires were set in a fireproof hearth, but there was no way of channeling the smoke out of the house. The roof had a hole where it eventually escaped, but chimneys weren't invented until TL2 and didn't become widespread until TL5.

As industries burned more wood and charcoal, there was also a recognizable impact on *outdoor* air quality. As early as TL2, some societies required that potters place their kilns outside city walls to reduce smoke. By the end of the Middle Ages, several cities suffered from visible smog.

Industrial processes even produced toxic waste. Anyone who smelted silver from ore was invariably exposed to lead, and numerous activities associated with fine metalwork involved contact with lead and mercury. Pigments often contained poisonous chemicals as well. Long-term work with alchemy, painting, dyeing, jewelry, or smelting lead-bearing ores could lead to symptoms such as reduced DX or IQ from several varieties of neurological damage, lowered HT or FP, or seizures with symptoms similar to epilepsy. Historically, many societies showed limited awareness of the problems of industrial toxicity – but most noticed only relatively severe cases in workers who had suffered particularly heavy, long-term exposure.

In most of the Old World, barley was allowed to sprout, which naturally produced starch-breaking enzymes. In the simplest processes, *malt* (sprouted grain) was left to ferment, yielding a thick, cloudy, mildly alcoholic brew (at most 3% alcohol). More complex recipes involved filtering an extract from the malt and adding yeast from a previous brewing to the sterilized extract.

In some of the New World, enzymes were introduced by chewing (saliva contains the same starch-converting enzyme found in malt). This process was simple but labor-intensive. In other parts of the New World, sprouted maize provided the same catalyst as malted barley, leading to maize beer. In Japan, a mold that produced appropriate enzymes was discovered. This was used to make rice wine, and kept between batches like a yeast starter.

Each gallon of beer requires 1-3 lbs. of raw grain; the more grain used, the stronger and better-tasting the beer. Low-quality beer – such as a peasant might make for his own consumption – requires 1 lb. per gallon and may be manufactured in batches of up to four gallons at a time. Total active time for malting the grain, preparing the mash, and setting it aside for fermentation is about a day, although it's spread out over several weeks. Taking greater care with the water and grain, and adding other ingredi-

ents (herbs are often included for flavor or preservative qualities), can increase working time to 2-3 days or more. Using larger vessels, practical for the professional brewer, allows batch sizes of 50-60 gallons.

Starting in TL3, beer and wine can be distilled to produce whiskey and brandy. Basic distilling requires about half of the undistilled liquid's weight in wood, an alembic, and a few hours of careful attention – or the undistilled liquid's full weight in fuel and a whole day for double distillation. Few alembics can hold more than a gallon, so batch sizes are very small, but batches of 5-6 gallons were possible by late TL4. Double-distilled liquor has 1/3 of the original volume.

Alcoholic beverages are often consumed as soon as they produce as much alcohol as possible – after a week or two of brewing for beer, within a month for wine. Longer aging in well-sealed containers can improve flavor, but poor seals or the presence of unwanted microbes can quickly turn the drink to vinegar. Higher alcohol concentrations allow longer storage times but require more fruit or grain, making them more expensive. One notable development was the introduction of *hops*. In addition to giving beer a bitter taste, hops preserve it for several weeks, enabling the possibility of long-distance beer trade. Hopped beers are first attested to in early TL2 (around 400 B.C. in Mesopotamia), but don't come to predominate until the 15th century A.D.

Roll against Professional Skill (Brewer) to ferment basic alcoholic beverages. Handle differences in fermentable stock (barley, grape juice, honey, maize, etc.) with *Familiarity* (p. B169). Distilling alcohol requires Chemistry at TL2-3, Professional Skill (Distiller) at TL4. The latter skill also covers fermenting appropriate materials into alcoholic solutions suitable for distilling.

## CHAPTER NINE OCCUPATIONS

These are primarily jobs for NPCs, but adventurers might take them during downtime, or start out working regular jobs before more interesting events overtake them. See *Jobs* (pp. B516-517) for rules and terminology. Monthly pay is appropriate to TL4. At lower TLs, multiply by the appropriate factor (derived from the average incomes on p. B517):

TL	0	1	2	3
Income Multiplier	×0.78	×0.81	×0.84	×0.88

### Big Man (TL0)

Although this occupation is typical of TL0 tribes, political "fixers" who make a living by trading favors can be found in higher-tech societies, using the same skills.

Prerequisites: Finance-12; Merchant-12; Politics-12.

Job Roll: Worst prerequisite skill.

*Monthly Pay:* \$1,600, adjusted for margin of success or failure.

Wealth Level: Comfortable. Supports Status 1.

### Brewer (TL0)

Brewing beer and wine has been a popular job since the rise of agriculture, if not slightly earlier.

Prerequisite: Professional Skill (Brewer)-12.

Job Roll: Professional Skill (Brewer).

*Monthly Pay:* \$820, adjusted for margin of success or failure.

Wealth Level: Average. Supports Status 0.

### Fisherman (TL0)

This is appropriate for a subsistence fisherman or someone who fishes primarily for sale to others.

Prerequisite: Fishing-12.

Job Roll: Fishing.

*Monthly Pay:* \$410, adjusted for margin of success or failure.

Wealth Level: Struggling. Supports Status -1.

### Gatherer (TL0)

Largely a TL0 job, a few can still make a living on the fringes of high-tech societies by gathering and selling wild resources such as mushrooms, herbs, and small game.

*Prerequisites:* Area Knowledge-12; Survival (appropriate environment)-12.

Job Roll: Worse prerequisite skill.

*Monthly Pay:* \$400, adjusted for margin of success or failure. *Wealth Level:* Struggling. Supports Status -1.

### Hunter (TL0)

This is another TL0 job that can survive on the fringes into later eras.

*Prerequisites:* Tracking-12; Traps *or* any ranged weapon skill at 12.

Job Roll: Worse prerequisite skill.

*Monthly Pay:* \$400, adjusted for margin of success or failure using *double* the margin.

Wealth Level: Struggling. Supports Status -1.

### Tribal Chief (TL0)

This represents a high tribal chief. A sub-chief would have Status 1, Comfortable wealth, and a monthly income of \$1,600.

*Prerequisites:* Any *three* of Administration-12, Diplomacy-12, Leadership-12, or Politics-12; Status 2.

Job Roll: Worst prerequisite skill.

*Monthly Pay:* \$3,800, adjusted for margin of success or failure.

Wealth Level: Wealthy. Supports Status 2.



### Animal Driver (TL1)

A wagon-driver has Teamster. A member of a caravan using pack animals rather than vehicles has Packing.

*Prerequisites:* Animal Handling (Equines)-12; Packing-12 or Teamster-12.

Job Roll: Worse prerequisite skill.

*Monthly Pay:* \$500, adjusted for margin of success or failure. *Wealth Level:* Struggling. Supports Status -1.

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