



Animal & Plant Domestication

What does it take for an animal to be domesticated?

- Flexible Diet
- Reasonably fast growth rate
- Ability to breed in captivity
- Pleasant disposition
- Calm nature
- Social



Bezoar Goat

What does it take for plants to be domesticated?

- Must taste good
- Seeds must stay in sheath until harvested (wild plants tend to “shatter” or leave the sheath early)
- Must grow in dry climates
- Produce a large number of edible seeds
- Produce large seeds



Teosinte, Ancestor of corn

Why Farm?

- As populations grew, it became more difficult to hunt and gather enough food
- Climate change after the last ice age promoted several new species of plants that were suitable for cultivation
- Traveling with young and elderly was difficult
- Steady supply of food source



Early Domestication

- Early humans probably started out as herders, herding animals to new pastures
- Along the way they noticed which plants the animals ate and collected these seeds
- These seeds were planted to provide feed for the animal
- Individual plants were chosen based on their desirable traits (phenotype), such as large number of seeds

Domestication Timeline

10000 BC	9800 BC	8500 BC	7000 BC	6800 BC	5000 BC
Dog	Wheat Chick peas Beans Sheep Goats	Barley	Cattle	Rice	Horses