

Autumn is traditionally harvest time when the farmers would cut their crops to prepare them for storage or to sell. When I was a kid we lived on a dairy farm and this was always a busy time of year as we cut harvested our crops and prepared the farm for winter.

Farmers use many pieces of large and small equipment to take care of their farm. Before winter they make sure everything is working like it should and they repair anything that needs it.

A lot of farmers plow their fields in the fall so it will give them a headstart for the spring. September is also the time that farmers plant winter wheat. It grows until it gets cold and then it goes dormant, which means it stops growing, until spring when it starts growing again.

Most farm animals love corn, but it has to be picked at just the right time so the farmers can have a supply all winter long. Most corn today is picked with a picker-sheller or a combine, both machines shell the corn off the cob and then the farmer dumps it in a gas batch dryer which dries it to a certain hardness, otherwise it will get moldy in storage. Some farmers still just pick the whole ear with a regular corn picker and store it in a corn crib, if they are going to just pick it, they leave it in the field longer so it will dry. They test the moisture by shelling the corn off the cob and putting a handful into a moisture tester.

1. Why do farmers harvest in the Autumn season?

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2. What do farmers traditionally plant in September?

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3. What does "dormant" mean?

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4. What is the purpose for a gas batch dryer?

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