

Agricultural and Rural Development in the Twentieth Century  
Yearbook for the History of Global Development

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We are seeking chapter submissions for the next volume of the [Yearbook for the History of Global Development](#) series, published by DeGruyter with series editors Iris Borowy and Corinna Unger.

For most of human history, agriculture, including the management of food, land, plants, and animals, was central to society and lived experience. Beginning in the twentieth century, the transformation of agrarian societies began to be understood as “development,” or the application of new political and technoscientific systems in pursuit of social and economic progress and modernity, as understood by historical actors. From colonial extraction of raw materials to nationalist agrarian reform, Cold War geopolitics to a neoliberal food regime, ideas of agricultural and rural development reshaped the meaning of agrarian societies.

Recently, historians have enriched the scholarship in four regards. First, by scrutinizing how actors in the Global South reinforced, opposed, or reinterpreted discourses and practices from the Global North, scholars have drawn attention to more complicated North-South dynamics and South-South cooperation. Secondly, they highlighted the diversity of connected but conflicting visions of development ranging from a “high modernist” ambition of engineering nature to “low modernist” projects of community building, from technocratic futurism to romantic traditionalism, from capitalist export expansion to socialist self-sufficiency. Thirdly, they stressed continuity and rupture in periodization, such as the influences of interwar New Deal and fascism to postwar “Green Revolution” as well as the legacy of the Cold War in the age of globalization. Finally, scholars brought in methods from geography, anthropology, and political ecology, emphasizing how development paradigms have been challenged by the agency of nonhuman actors like plants, microbes, animals, air, and water.

Building on these new frontiers in North-South dynamics, interdisciplinary approaches, visions of development, and periodization, this volume contributes to the global history of agricultural and rural development by attending to how historical actors contested, contrasted, and pursued projects intended to transform agricultural practices and rural societies. We hope to offer new perspectives to the field with critical approaches, such as histories that centers on race,

class, and gender, histories that change how we think about “development,” and interdisciplinary approaches drawn from environmental history, history of science and technology, social history, political economy, and human-nonhuman relations.

We are interested in chapters that relate to, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- reconsidering actors and scale (inter/national, global/local, non-human)
- the production and contentions of knowledge and power
- food regimes
- plantations and monoculture
- plant and animal breeding
- pest, microbe, and disease control
- infrastructure, water, and soil
- land tenure and reform
- migration and settler colonialism
- bodies, nutrition, and biopolitics
- rural organization, mobilization, and resistance (food sovereignty, organic foods, etc)
- relationships between Global North and South, or South and South

We are seeking a wide range of geographical and chronological coverage within the 20th Century, and are interested in research that challenges existing paradigms, utilizes new sources, and brings interdisciplinary perspectives to the history of agricultural and rural development.

Chapters should be between 7000 and 9000 words, including notes and bibliography.

If you are interested in publishing, please submit an initial proposal with the following to [jyslin@uw.edu](mailto:jyslin@uw.edu) and [leo.chu@unsw.edu.au](mailto:leo.chu@unsw.edu.au) by **August 15, 2026**: a 500-700 word abstract of your proposed chapter, a brief two paragraph academic biography, and a one-page CV. In the proposal, please also provide context for your research, for example if this is part of a book project or dissertation you are working on.

If selected, we will ask that you submit your full chapter by March 1, 2027.