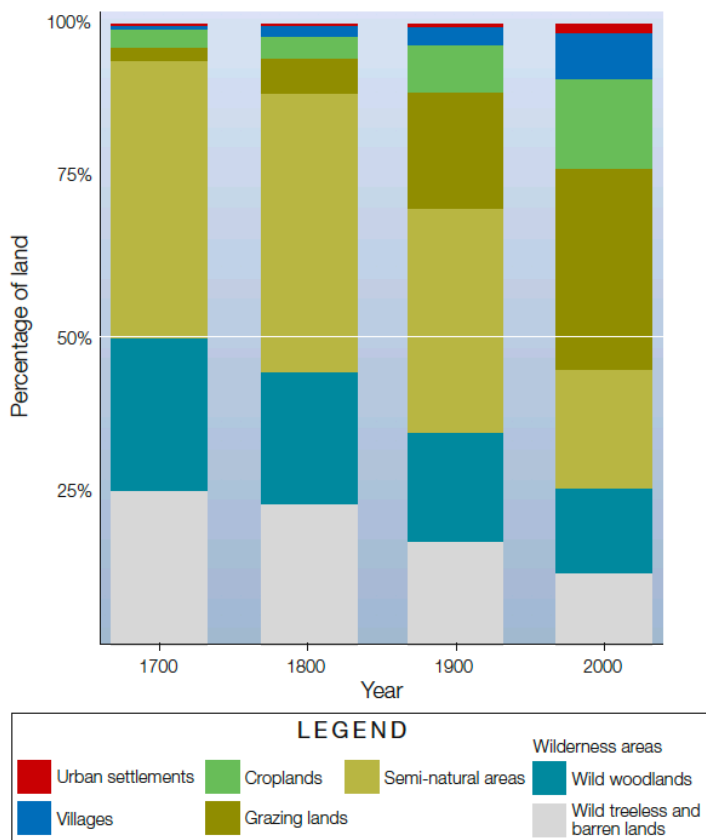


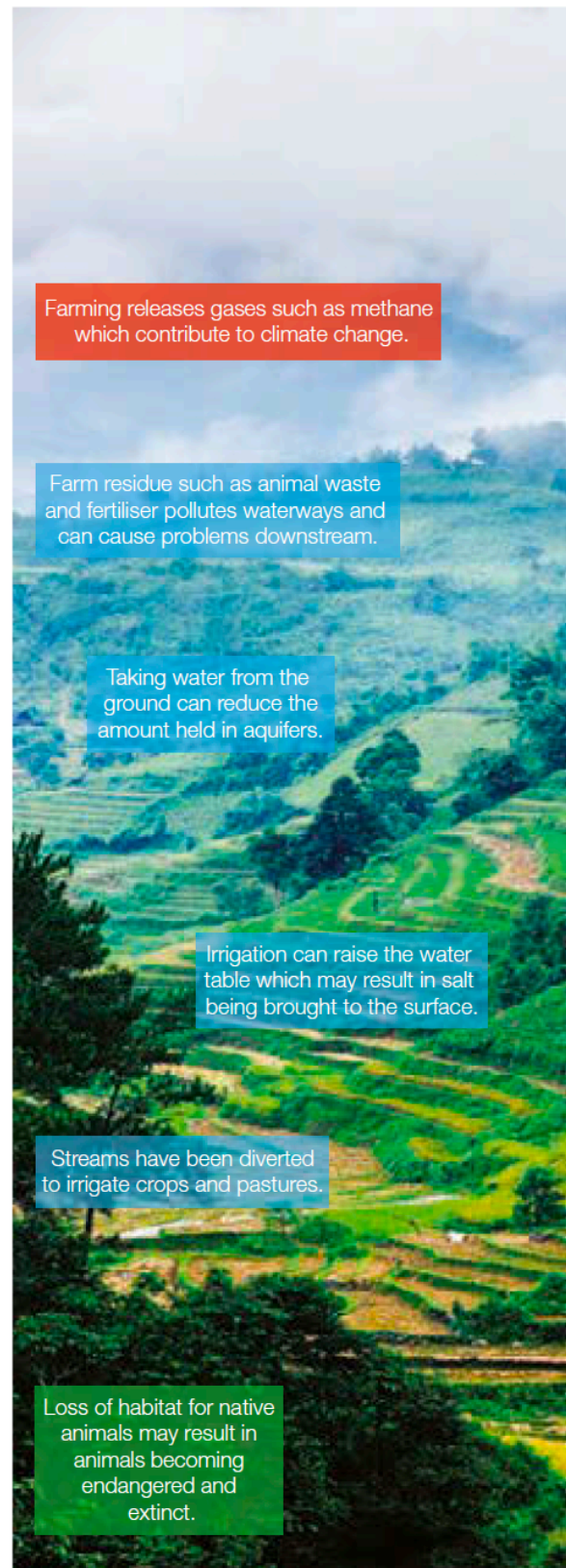
2.15 Alterations to biomes

The last 300 years have seen more extensive change to the Earth's biomes than in any other period in the Earth's history. Over half of the world's land area that is considered habitable has now been converted into farmland or housing to provide food, fibre, shelter and fuel to the world's people – and this area is expanding.

All around the world the natural biomes of forests, grasslands, tundra and even deserts are being converted into farms. In some places, large corporations are converting the land, but in most places it is the work of small-scale farmers, each motivated by the need to provide food for their own families. Source 1 shows the extent of biome change around the world since 1700.



Source 1 Changing land use patterns worldwide between 1700 and 2000



Source 2 Some of the changes made to a landscape in China that is being used for farming



Check your learning 2.15

Remember and understand

- 1 How much of the world's habitable land area has been converted into farms?
- 2 Name three potentially negative impacts that farming can have on the environment.
- 3 List two changes made on the Chinese farm in Source 2 that involve altering irrigation practices.

Apply and analyse

- 4 Examine Source 1.
 - a Describe the change to the amount of wilderness areas from 1700 to 2000.
 - b Use the world biomes map (Source 4 on page 43) to classify the wilderness areas remaining today.
 - c Which type of land use has increased the most? Why do you think this is the case?
 - d The labels for Source 2 are in four different colours. Suggest a title for each colour.

Evaluate and create

Do some further research on the Internet to complete these tasks.

- 5 Examine the image of a Chinese farming landscape as shown in Source 2. Describe the landscape as you think it would have been before people arrived in this valley.
- 6 The labels on this image focus on the ways in which people have changed the landscape. What are the underlying causes of these changes?
- 7 Compare the changes made on the farm in Source 2 with the technology used in Source 3 on page 67. What differences in productivity do you think the two farms might experience?