

## Agriculture originated in the Middle East's Fertile Crescent. Who were the world's first farmers?

The first signs of agriculture and a sedentary lifestyle are found in the so-called 'Fertile Crescent', a region in the Near East where people began to settle down and domesticate animals and plants about 11,000 years ago. The question of the origin of agriculture and sedentism has occupied researchers for over 100 years: did farming spread from the Near East through cultural diffusion or through migration?

Genetic analyses of prehistoric skeletons so far supported the idea that Europe's first farmers were descended from hunter-gatherer populations in Anatolia. While that may well be the case, this new study shows that the Neolithic genetic origins cannot clearly be attributed to a single region.

Follow the latest news and policy debates on sustainable agriculture, biomedicine, and other 'disruptive' innovations. Subscribe to our newsletter.

[SIGN UP](#)

Nina Marchi, one of the study's first authors from the Institute of Ecology and Evolution at the University of Bern and SIB says: "We now find that the first farmers of Anatolia and Europe emerged from a population admixed between hunter-gatherers from Europe and the Near East."

According to the authors, the mixing process started around 14,000 years ago, which was followed by a period of extreme genetic differentiation lasting several thousand years.

This research was made possible by combining two techniques: the production of high-quality ancient genomes from prehistoric skeletons, coupled with demographic modeling on the resulting data.

[\*\*This is an excerpt. Read the original post here\*\*](#)