



Rare wines and ready cash

Agricultural trade in the Frontier
by Tony Watson

Both the Alpha Dawn and the Knight Hawks rules for the STAR FRONTIERS® game system touch on the subject of agriculture and trade within the Frontier Sector. Alpha Dawn describes certain worlds within that region as having agricultural economies, while Knight Hawks provides a section in its spacecraft design rules for outfitting agricultural ships. Despite this, the system for conducting interstellar trade gives cargo charts only for resource-producing and manufacturing worlds; agricultural planets and their goods are virtually ignored.

Given the assumption that the produce of agricultural worlds, especially the unique and rare items such as wines, spices, and drugs, will be viable commodities in the STAR FRONTIERS milieu, then a trade table for agricultural goods, similar to those appearing on p. 45 of the Knight Hawks Campaign Book, is needed.

The brief table on the Frontier Sector in the Alpha Dawn Expanded Rules lists eight worlds as agro-planets: Yast, Inner Reach, Rupert's Hole, Groth, Ken'zah Kit, Kidikit, New Pale, and Hakosoar. These planets are the primary sources for agricultural cargos, entitling the prospective trader to roll on the "Cargo Acquired at Agricultural Centers" table. Such cargos can be marketed at industrial and resource centers.

Players will note that these colonies represent each of the four Federation member races. Presumably the colonies offer a wide variety of agro-goods, many of them unique. Agricultural production methods in the Frontier need not follow the Terran pattern. Farming can take place underwater or in subterranean caverns. Animal husbandry can be practiced on flocks of balloon-like creatures on high-gravity worlds with a dense atmosphere.

Similarly, star color might affect the nature of crops and herds raised on planets. What sort of strange plants might flourish under the red-orange sun of Hakosoar's star, Scree Fron? For simplicity's sake, only one table of cargos is provided, but the referee is encouraged to modify the description of individual cargos to reflect the unique nature of a world, for both the sake of variety and the feeling of local color.

Cargo Acquired at Agricultural Centers

Die roll	Type of cargo	Price per unit	
		At Source	At destination
01-08	Grain	5,000 Cr	7,000 Cr
09-16	Vegetables	7,000 Cr	10,000 Cr
17-22	Fruit	10,000 Cr	15,000 Cr
23-24	Exotic fruit	30,000 Cr	60,000 Cr
25-31	Meat	25,000 Cr	35,000 Cr
32-36	Poultry	20,000 Cr	30,000 Cr
37-43	Fish	15,000 Cr	20,000 Cr
44-46	Cheese	15,000 Cr	25,000 Cr
47-52	Sugar	15,000 Cr	20,000 Cr
53-55	Coffee	25,000 Cr	40,000 Cr
56-62	Lumber	8,000 Cr	12,000 Cr
63-64	Decorative plants	20,000 Cr	40,000 Cr
65-70	Textiles	35,000 Cr	60,000 Cr
71-76	Liquor	50,000 Cr	90,000 Cr
77	Rare liquor	75,000 Cr	150,000 Cr
78-83	Wine	45,000 Cr	75,000 Cr
84	Rare wine	100,000 Cr	200,000 Cr
85-88	Spice	60,000 Cr	100,000 Cr
89	Rare spice	80,000 Cr	150,000 Cr
90-92	Herbs	50,000 Cr	75,000 Cr
93	Rare herbs	75,000 Cr	135,000 Cr
94-96	Medicinals	70,000 Cr	125,000 Cr
97	Rare medicinals	100,000 Cr	200,000 Cr
98-00	Furs	60,000 Cr	140,000 Cr

Notes on the chart

The types of cargos on the chart are intended to be generic, stressing general types of goods over specific items. Hence, "grain" might refer to wheat, rice, or corn, but could be construed to include any sort of mass-harvested staple, perhaps even algae harvested from the sea. The referee should use imagination in describing the cargo obtained. For example, a roll of 30 on the chart indicates a cargo of meat — but what sort of meat, from what sort of creature? A load of textiles could represent a sort of plant fiber analogous to cotton, or the "wool" of some strange star beast.

The rare and exotic categories were included to denote special cargos of exceptional quality, value, and rarity; they offer the opportunity to trade in high-value cargos, something that agricultural-produce charts tend to lack. The "rare liquor" and "rare spice" categories might include substances with medicinal, hallucinogenic, or age-prolonging properties. "Medicinals" represent organic materials used purely for health-care purposes or in pharmaceutical production, and might include items such as buds, flowers, pollens, and animal or plant extracts.

Some colonies offer a wide variety of unique agro-goods.

The prices used in the chart were set arbitrarily, using the existing Knight Hawks commodity tables as guidelines and extrapolating from modern-day pricing structures. The profit-to-cost ratios are in line with the resource and industrial cargo tables, but tend toward the lower end of the scale for most of the goods. Hence, most agricultural goods are pretty cheap, especially compared with other cargos. No one is going to get rich dealing exclusively in grain or vegetables. The upper end of the table is the exception: herbs, spices, liquors, and furs are luxuries and are priced as such.

Farming

The Knight Hawks rules provide guidelines for hydroponic farming aboard Ag ships. Given the information provided on the agricultural cargo table, a few

modifications are in order. The kinds of crops that can be farmed aboard Ag ships should be limited to things such as grain, vegetables, fruit, and coffee. Meat and lumber can be raised, but the time required to "harvest" the produce would have to be lengthened considerably.

Liquors, wines, herbs, and medicinals should be limited to planetary cultivation; one can safely assume that singular planetary conditions create the value of these goods, and these conditions are too difficult and expensive to replicate aboardship. Allowing characters to grow high-value crops on ships could also upset the economic balance of the campaign.

Rules for on-planet farming have been omitted from this article for several reasons. First, devising a system to portray such an enterprise with even moderate accuracy is beyond the scope of this piece. More importantly, the players shouldn't be encouraged to take on the roles of farmers — after all, they're supposed to be adventurers!

The prices, guidelines and commodities presented here are just suggestions. Referees should let their imaginations run free, changing things in order to derive the most in their role-playing sessions.

KALI: An American super-villainess with a background in crime and mysticism. She is wanted and has a long criminal record.

Identity: Shaena Grey Age: 20
Side: Evil Level: 1

Powers:

1. Heightened Expertise: Martial arts, +4 to hit
2. Special Weapon: Power-chuks, HTH +3 to hit, +1d6 damage, carries a Power Blast
3. Heightened Defense: -4 to be hit

Other Weaponry:

Katana, HTH +2 to hit, +1d6 damage
6 Shuriken, HTH +3 to hit, +1 damage, with a 13 inch throwing range.

Weight: 130 lbs.

Strength: 16

Endurance: 13

Agility: 13

Intelligence: 12

Charisma: 15

Dam. Mod.: +1

Accuracy: +1

Hit Points: 9

Heal: .9

Car. Cap.: 351

Basic HTH: 1d6

Power: 54

Movement: 42"

Det. Hidden: 10%

Det. Danger: 14%

Invent. Pts.: 1.2

Inventing: 36%



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