NEOLITHIC ERA
People crossed new thresholds of knowledge step-by-step. Each step forward was the result of a previous step taken.
DOMESTICATION OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS

The most important new thresholds of knowledge reached during the Neolithic Era were the domestication of plants and the domestication of animals. People realized they could remove animals and plants from the wild, modify their natural traits, and grow and breed them in captivity.
DOMESTICATION OF ANIMALS
DOMESTICATION OF THE DOG

The dog was the first animal to be domesticated. It originated from wild dog or wolf species. It was used for companionship, hunting, and protection. The hundreds of species of dogs that now exist were bred over the course of thousands of years, and these various species were bred for hunting, herding, protecting, sledding, and entertaining to name a few uses.

The domestication of dogs is a good example of how hundreds of varieties emerged from one original wild form.
What characteristics favored domestication?

1. Had to be herbivores. Why? Carnivores eat too high on the food chain (Conversion of food biomass to eater’s biomass is only 10%. Therefore, if a cow weighs 1,000 pounds it must eat 10,000 pounds of hay to survive. If a meat-eating lion weighs 1,000 pounds, you would have to feed it 10,000 pounds of meat, which in turn had required 100,000 pounds of hay to produce (10 x 10,000).

2. Had to be a herd species with a dominance hierarchy.

3. Herds had to be willing to tolerate overlapping territories. Species which are highly territorial such as antelope, vicuna, and zebras would not be eligible.

4. Had to be easy to breed in captivity. In some species such as cheetahs the male chases the female over long distances before she is ready to breed. Other species can have nasty dispositions such as rhinos, hippos, and bears.
GAUR- A BOVINE-LIKE OX, FEEDS ON BAMBOO AND GRASS
BANTENG OR ZEBU, INDIGENOUS TO SOUTHEAST ASIA
YAK – INDIGENOUS TO TIBET AND CENTRAL ASIA
YAK, A LONG-HAIRED TIBETAN MAMMAL
DOMESTICATION OF PLANTS

People began to understand the growing cycle of plants:

A seed
Seed sprouts
Plant grows
Plant produces blossoms
Blossoms turn to fruit
Fruit contains seeds
Seeds are planted the next year
Below:
The evolution of the corn cob.
The examples shown all come from the Tehuacán Valley of Mexico. Actual size.
Partial Reconstruction of Chatal Huyuk huts
Simple updraught kiln
from Banpo, China c. 4500 bc
heddle rod
string loops
shed-rod (flat piece of wood)
warp (fixed threads) beam
breast beam
sword beater
first shed
weft yarn
heddle supports or 'jacks'
spool
2 layers of threads: odd and even
second shed
odd thread
string loops
even thread
heddle rod (raised)
shed rod
heddle rod
shed-rod
shed rod (raised)

Cross-section of horizontal ground loom
Fertility Figurines
Stiff White Ladies
Women Likened to Various Animals