

Septembre 1998

TEXT

Although modern technology has profoundly transformed agriculture, the weather remains the dominant factor affecting year-to-year variations in food output. For most of the past quarter-century, substantial food reserves have been kept against the changes of climate. Those supplies are now depleted, however. Weather may replace pollution as the principal concern of people studying environmental conditions.

The most important weather factor affecting crops is the level of rainfall. Others are humidity, temperature, and lack of direct sunshine.

Usually it is a deficiency of rain that reduces output, although too much rain or poorly timed rain causes crop losses as well.

Unseasonably wet conditions at planting time may be followed by several weeks of drought in midsummer. This leads to total corn crop failures in some areas. Then in the fall, early frosts may cause damage and in some cases destroy both the corn and the soybean crops.

QUESTIONS:

a) Vocabulary: (10 points)

3. Find synonyms of the following words and phrases in the text:

even though

deeply

farming

production

twenty-five years

4. Find antonyms (opposites) of the following words and phrases in the text

least

too much

indirect

increases

results in

b) Reading comprehension and commentary: (10 points)

Answer the following questions

6. Choose the title you think is most appropriate for the text from the list below:

Modern Technology

Crops

The Weather Factor in Agriculture

The Pollution Factor in Agriculture

7. What has transformed the agriculture?

8. What is the principal factor affecting food output?

9. What two major concerns do people studying the environment have?

10. What are three other weather factors?

c) Grammar: (10 points)

Change the verb clause to a verb ending in *-ing* as in the example:

Example: - When he opened the letter, he knew it was from Carla

- *Opening the letter, he knew it was from Carla*

6. When he saw her, he realised he loved her.
7. When she found the purse, she started to cry with joy.
8. While he walked to the hospital, he thought about the new medicine.
9. While he ran across the street, he was hit by a motorcycle.
10. When she saw the man, she knew he was her brother.

d) Commentary: (10 points)

The weather is important for agriculture, but also for transport in general, and air transport in particular. Can you give examples showing how important the weather can be in this field?
