Beyond the Farm

Weigh the economic reach of Alabama's farms and forests

SS24.AS.21b "Evaluate the extent to which agriculture and natural resources remain a significant component of Alabama's modern economy."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two ways farms or forests support work beyond producing raw materials, and circle two details that limit how much of Alabama's economy they explain.

What Farms and Forests Still Do

1 At dawn, a truck carries chickens from an Alabama farm to a processing plant. Poultry is one of the state's major farm products, and processing turns birds into food sold far beyond Alabama. That chain supports farm workers, truck drivers, plant employees, and businesses that supply feed and equipment. Cattle, peanuts, and cotton also leave Alabama farms, though no single crop tells the whole story. When a shopper buys chicken raised and processed in Alabama, the sale reflects more than farm output: it also reflects transportation, manufacturing, and the work needed to get food to market.

2 Forest products tell a similar story. Much of Alabama is covered by forests, which supply wood for lumber, paper, and other products. Logging crews, truck drivers, and mill workers earn income from moving and processing that wood. Forests also attract hunters and other visitors who spend money in nearby towns. Yet trees take years to regrow, and storms can damage the supply. Managing forests for new growth helps keep wood and related jobs available in the future. A standing forest can thus support both industry and recreation, but its economic value depends partly on how people care for it.

3 These examples do not mean farming and forests run Alabama's entire economy. Health care, retail, and many kinds of manufacturing also employ people, and not all manufacturing uses local crops or wood. Changes in chicken prices or storm damage can hurt producers and workers, even while other businesses keep operating. Counting only farm sales would miss processing and transport, but counting every related job as a farm job would exaggerate agriculture's direct role. A sound judgment separates direct production from connected work: agriculture and natural resources remain important to Alabama, especially in some communities, without being the whole economy.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How does the poultry chain make agriculture economically important beyond farm sales? Name two kinds of work it supports.

2. Would forests matter economically only when trees are cut? Use evidence from the passage to explain.

3. A classmate claims that farms and forests run Alabama's entire economy. What evidence limits that claim?

4. Why would counting every processing and transport worker as a farm worker exaggerate agriculture's direct role, even though those jobs show its importance?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A county is considering replacing part of a working forest with warehouses that promise jobs. In five or six sentences, recommend whether to approve or pause the plan, weighing two forest-related economic benefits against the possible warehouse jobs and naming one local fact you would need before a final decision.

ANSWER KEY

Beyond the Farm

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.AS.21b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two ways farms or forests support work beyond producing raw materials, and circle two details that limit how much of Alabama's economy they explain. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How does the poultry chain make agriculture economically important beyond farm sales? Name two kinds of work it supports.	**Poultry supports work beyond farms, including truck driving and jobs at processing plants.**
2	Would forests matter economically only when trees are cut? Use evidence from the passage to explain.	**No. Standing forests attract hunters and other visitors who spend money in nearby towns.**
3	A classmate claims that farms and forests run Alabama's entire economy. What evidence limits that claim?	**Health care, retail, and manufacturing also employ people, and not all manufacturing uses local crops or wood.**
4	Why would counting every processing and transport worker as a farm worker exaggerate agriculture's direct role, even though those jobs show its importance?	**Processing and transport are connected to farm products, but their workers do not all work on farms. They show agriculture's wider economic reach, not its direct farm employment.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would pause the plan until the county has more information. The forest supplies wood that supports logging crews and mill workers. It also attracts visitors who spend money in nearby towns. Warehouses might provide jobs, so keeping every acre of forest may not be the best choice. Before deciding, I would ask how many local jobs the warehouses are expected to create compared with the jobs supported by that part of the forest.

Accept supported judgments that distinguish direct farm or forest production from connected work. For the open task, students may recommend approval or a pause if they weigh both forest benefits and possible warehouse jobs and identify a relevant local fact.