Farming for What?

Compare farm goals and their effects on a region

7.C.4.2.A "Describe the differences among subsistence, cash crop, and commercial agriculture, including their impact on the economic development of a region."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail that shows the goal or size of each type of farming. Circle one way each type could affect Riverbend's economy.

Three Farms in Riverbend

1. In the made-up Riverbend region, Mina's family grows cassava, beans, and greens on a small plot. They eat most of what they harvest and sell only a little extra at the village market. This is subsistence agriculture: the main goal is feeding the household, not earning money from sales. Families can rely less on store-bought food, even when cash is scarce. Yet these farms usually bring in little money for equipment, new businesses, or services, so they may not drive rapid economic growth in Riverbend.

2. Across the river, Jo grows cacao mainly to sell to a buyer who ships it to a chocolate maker. Cacao is a cash crop because farmers grow it chiefly for sale, not for their own meals. Jo's small farm brings in money that can support local shops and transport workers. However, when cacao prices fall, Jo and other growers have less to spend. A region that depends heavily on one cash crop can lose income quickly if the crop fails or buyers pay less.

3. Down the road, a company runs a large banana farm with paid workers, irrigation, and trucks. This is commercial agriculture: a business grows farm products mainly to sell, often on a large scale. Its sales can create jobs and bring tax money for public services, but machines and land purchases may leave fewer opportunities for some small farmers. Bananas are also a cash crop. The labels can overlap: cash crop describes a crop grown for sale, while commercial describes farming run as a business for sales.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do Mina's and Jo's goals for their harvests differ? How does that difference affect the money their farms bring into Riverbend?

2. How do Jo's farm and the banana farm show that cash crop and commercial agriculture can overlap without meaning exactly the same thing?

3. How could the banana farm help Riverbend's economy and also reduce opportunities for some small farmers?

4. If cacao prices fall, which farm is more likely to lose sales income, Jo's or Mina's? Explain using the purpose of each farm.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a mountain valley with small family plots, one large field, and one road to a distant market. In four sentences, give a role to subsistence, cash crop, and commercial agriculture, then explain one economic benefit and one risk of your plan.

ANSWER KEY

Farming for What?

GRADE 7 · 7.C.4.2.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one detail that shows the goal or size of each type of farming. Circle one way each type could affect Riverbend's economy. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do Mina's and Jo's goals for their harvests differ? How does that difference affect the money their farms bring into Riverbend?	**Mina grows food mainly for her family and brings in little cash. Jo grows cacao mainly to sell, bringing money to local shops and transport workers.**
2	How do Jo's farm and the banana farm show that cash crop and commercial agriculture can overlap without meaning exactly the same thing?	**Cacao and bananas are both grown for sale, so both are cash crops. The banana farm is a large business with paid workers; commercial describes how a farm operates, not a separate kind of crop.**
3	How could the banana farm help Riverbend's economy and also reduce opportunities for some small farmers?	**It can create jobs and bring tax money for services. Its machines and land purchases may leave fewer opportunities for small farmers.**
4	If cacao prices fall, which farm is more likely to lose sales income, Jo's or Mina's? Explain using the purpose of each farm.	**Jo's farm is more likely to lose sales income because Jo grows cacao mainly to sell. Mina grows food mainly for her family and sells only a little extra.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Families could grow beans for their own meals on small plots, while other farmers grow berries as a cash crop to sell. A company could use the large field to grow potatoes for sale and hire local workers. Crop sales and wages could bring money into valley shops while families still have food. If the only road closes, farmers could lose buyers and the valley could lose income.

Accept plans that correctly use all three terms and connect the proposed mix to an economic benefit and risk. A cash crop may also be grown by a commercial farm.