Oklahoma's Farm Economy

Trace the value of agribusiness and the limits of water supply.

OKH.C.8.2.A "Describe the value of agribusiness to the state economy, producing commodities, such as wheat and livestock, for the nation; examine water use issues impacting agribusiness."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two ways wheat or livestock brings income to Oklahoma, circle two water demands or risks, and number one sentence that shows a trade-off between production and water supply.

From Oklahoma Farms to National Markets

1. On an Oklahoma highway, a truck carrying wheat may pass a grain elevator, a flour mill, and a bakery before bread reaches a store in another state. Oklahoma farmers produce wheat for buyers across the United States. Harvesting, storing, transporting, and milling that grain pay workers and support local businesses. A bushel sold outside Oklahoma brings income into the state, while a mill can add value by turning grain into flour. Wheat prices and harvest sizes change from year to year, so the size of that income changes too. Agriculture's value includes work beyond the farm gate.

2. Livestock create another chain of jobs. Oklahoma ranchers raise cattle, and feedlots prepare some cattle for market. Meat processors, truck drivers, equipment dealers, and veterinarians also earn income from the industry. Beef shipped to other states connects Oklahoma producers to a national food supply, not just nearby customers. Cattle also need feed, which links ranches to farms that grow crops. These connections can spread a farm sale through several parts of the economy. Yet more production can mean more demand for land and water, so the number of animals alone does not measure the industry's costs.

3. Water makes those economic chains possible, but it is limited and unevenly available. Much Oklahoma wheat relies on rainfall, while some crops, especially in drier western areas, are irrigated. In the Panhandle, some farms pump groundwater from the Ogallala Aquifer; pumping faster than local recharge can lower water levels and raise pumping costs. Cattle and processing plants also use water. During drought, farmers, towns, and streams can face competing needs. A farm might use soil-moisture readings to irrigate only when needed, but efficient irrigation does not create new water. Decisions about expanding production must weigh jobs and sales against long-term water supplies.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How can a wheat sale support Oklahoma's economy after the grain leaves the farm? Name two activities from the passage.

2. How does Oklahoma's cattle industry connect the state economy to the nation? Include one related job or business.

3. Why could expanding irrigation in the Oklahoma Panhandle raise costs over time?

4. Why must a decision to expand agricultural production consider more than the jobs and sales it might create?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A county council is considering a new cattle feedlot and more irrigated feed crops in western Oklahoma. Write five or six sentences recommending whether and how to proceed; include two economic benefits, two distinct water concerns, and one specific safeguard.

ANSWER KEY

Oklahoma's Farm Economy

HIGH SCHOOL · OKH.C.8.2.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two ways wheat or livestock brings income to Oklahoma, circle two water demands or risks, and number one sentence that shows a trade-off between production and water supply. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How can a wheat sale support Oklahoma's economy after the grain leaves the farm? Name two activities from the passage.	**Storing and milling wheat pay workers and support businesses. Transporting it is another valid activity.**
2	How does Oklahoma's cattle industry connect the state economy to the nation? Include one related job or business.	**Oklahoma beef is shipped to other states, while related work, such as meat processing or trucking, earns income in Oklahoma.**
3	Why could expanding irrigation in the Oklahoma Panhandle raise costs over time?	**Pumping groundwater faster than it recharges can lower water levels and raise pumping costs.**
4	Why must a decision to expand agricultural production consider more than the jobs and sales it might create?	**Expansion can increase water demand. During drought, farms may compete with towns and streams for limited water.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would approve the feedlot only if the county sets a water-use limit. It could create jobs for livestock workers and veterinarians, and beef sales to other states could bring income into Oklahoma. More irrigated feed crops could draw down groundwater where pumping exceeds recharge. During drought, the feedlot's water needs could also compete with towns and streams. The county should require meters to track water use and enforce the limit.

Accept other passage-supported economic links and water concerns. For Part 3, look for a clear recommendation, two economic benefits, two distinct water concerns, and a safeguard that addresses water use.