**AP Human Geography**

**Unit 5: Agriculture and Rural Land Use**

**Wikispaces Assignments Key**

**Assignment 1: Poultry Industry in the USA**

What are the two categories of the poultry industry? Why did poultry production increase after World War II? Where is most of the poultry production in the United States?

Poultry production comprises two major categories, meat production and egg production. Most poultry produced in North America is grown under close control on highly specialized farms. The evolution from small flocks to large commercial units after World War II was facilitated by rapid advances in the knowledge of nutrition, breeding, housing, disease control, and processing of [poultry](http://www.answers.com/topic/poultry) and eggs, and by improvements in transportation and [refrigeration](http://www.answers.com/topic/refrigeration" \t "_top) which made possible distant marketing of fresh products. Most production is in the South and Eastern part of the US.

**Assignment 2: Organic Agriculture in the USA**

Why are consumers buying more organic foods?

Concern over toxic pesticide residues. A March 1999 study by Consumer Reports found that organic foods had little or no pesticide residues compared to conventional produce. A 1999 study by the Environmental Working Group found that millions of US children eating non-organic fruits and vegetables were ingesting dangerous amounts of a variety of pesticide neurotoxins and carcinogens.  
  
\* Concern over antibiotic drug residues. Organic farming prohibits the use of antibiotics in animal feed. Recent scientific research has confirmed the fact that antibiotics, routinely fed to factory farm animals to make them grow faster, are creating dangerous antibiotic-resistant pathogens which are infecting Americans who eat these animal products.  
  
\* Concern over food poisoning, deadly e-Coli 0157:H7, campylobacter, salmonella, listeria, and other food borne diseases. The Centers for Disease Control admit that there are at least 76 million cases of food poisoning every year in the US. While there are no documented cases of organic meat or poultry setting off food poisoning epidemics, filthy slaughterhouses, contaminated feed, and diseased animals are commonplace in industrial agriculture. According to government statistics, most non-organic beef cattle are contaminated with e-Coli 0157:H7; over 90% of chickens are tainted with campylobacter, and 30% of poultry are infected with salmonella.  
  
\* Concern over food irradiation, use of toxic sewage sludge spread on farmland, and genetic engineering. Organic certification prohibits irradiation, sewage sludge, and genetic engineering. A 1997 poll by CBS found 77% of Americans opposed to food irradiation, while a recent survey by the Angus Reid polling group found the majority of US consumers opposed to genetically engineered foods. Consumers are especially incensed that industry and the FDA refuse to require labeling of genetically engineered food. Numerous polls over the past 15 years have found that 80-95% of Americans want labels on gene-altered foods, mainly so that they can avoid buying them.  
  
\* Concern over the environment. Studies indicate that the industrialization and globalization of agriculture are a leading contributor to greenhouse gases and climate destabilization. Other research shows an increasing percentage of municipal water supplies are contaminated by pesticide residues, chemical fertilizers, and sewage runoff from factory farms and feedlots.

**Assignment 3: DDT**

What is DDT? What was it used for? Why has the US banned it use?

It is a pesticide. The use of DDT increased enormously on a worldwide basis after World War II, primarily because of its effectiveness against the mosquito that spreads malaria and lice that carry typhus. The World Health Organization estimates that during the period of its use approximately 25 million lives were saved. DDT seemed to be the ideal insecticideit is cheap and of relatively low toxicity to mammals (oral LD50 is 300 to 500 mg/kg). However, problems related to extensive use of DDT began to appear in the late 1940s. Many species of insects developed resistance to DDT, and DDT was also discovered to have a high toxicity toward fish.

**Assignment 4: Salinization**

What is it and what impact does it have on plantlife?

Salinization occurs in warm and dry locations where soluble salts precipitate from water and accumulate in the soil. Saline soils are common in desert and steppe climate. Salt may also accumulate in soils from sea spray. The rapid evaporation of salt-rich water irrigation has devastated thousands of acres of land. It is toxic to plants.

**Assignment 5: Pampas**

What is the Pampas of South America? Where is it found in South America? What type of agriculture is found there? Why is it becoming endangered?

It is wide, flat, grassy plains of temperate S South America, c.300,000 sq mi (777,000 sq km), particularly in Argentina and extending into Uruguay. Although the region gradually rises to the west, it appears mostly level. Precipitation decreases from east to west. Trees are found only along watercourses. Covered by grasses whose height varies with the amount of rainfall received, the soil of the pampas is very fertile and supports a thriving pastoral and farming economy. The Pampa, c.250,000 sq mi (647,500 sq km), of central and N Argentina embraces parts of the provinces of Buenos Aires, Santa Fe, Córdoba, and La Pampa. Cattle was first introduced to the region by the Portuguese in the 1550s. Throughout the colonial period under Spain, only a small part of the Pampa was used; economic activity was practically restricted to primitive stock raising for the exportation of hides, tallow, and jerked beef. Herds of cattle roamed freely over the Pampa, and the [gaucho](http://www.answers.com/topic/gaucho), the Argentine cowboy, was the region's dominant figure in the 18th and early 19th cent. A new economic era was initiated in the second half of the 19th cent., when a growing European market for agricultural products (along with new technology for the shipment of food products) brought immigrant farmers (mostly Italian, Spanish, French and German) to the Pampa. They spread westward with the expansion of the railroad that was built to link the increasing number of ranches with the coast. Settlement spread into the interior, and land was brought under the plow as unfriendly Native Americans were driven out of the region and the gaucho yielded to the farmer. In the 20th cent. agriculture remains the chief economic activity of the Pampa; livestock grazing and wheat growing are found in the drier W Pampa while corn and other grains along with dairying and truck crops are found in the more humid E Pampa. In the seaboard cities of Buenos Aires, La Plata, and Bahía Blanca and in the river ports of Rosarío and Santa Fe are the only considerable industries; meatpacking and food processing are important. The region has a dense transportation network focused on Buenos Aires. The Pampa contains most of Argentina's population.

The Pampas of South America are a [grassland biome](http://www.blueplanetbiomes.org/grasslands.htm). They are flat, fertile plains that covers an area of 300,000 sq. miles or 777,000 square kilometers, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Andes Mountains. It is found primarily in Argentina and extends into Uruguay. The word Pampas comes from the Guarani Indian word for level plain. The Argentinean Pampas are the home of the 'Gaucho', the original South American cowboy. The pampas is located just below Buenos Aires, between 34° and 30° south latitude, and 57° and 63° west latitude. A few of the plants in the pampas include cattails, water lillies, reeds. These plants usually prefer wetlands but they have adapted to the dryer Pampas grasslands. There are not very many trees because fires frequently occur in the pampas. The fires do not kill the grasses, which regenerate from their root crowns, but destroy the trees, which have shallow root systems. The humid Pampas ecosystem is one of the richest grazing areas in the world. Because of its temperate climate and rich, deep soil, most of the Pampas has been cultivated and turned into croplands. Unfortunately, domestic livestock and farming have severely affected the pampas. Fertilizers and overgrazing are a serious threat to the pampas. There are only a very few pristine remnants of the legendary "ocean of grass" that was the Pampas. It is considered to be one of the most endangered habitats on earth.

**Assignment 6: Value-Added Agriculture**

What is value-added agriculture?

Value added agricultural business can also be defined as any activity an agricultural producer performs outside of traditional commodity production to receive a higher return per unit of commodity sold. This includes activities such as agritourism and entertainment agriculture.

"Value added" means adding value to a raw product by taking it to, at least, the next stage of production. This can be as simple as retaining ownership of your calves and wintering them on wheat pasture or placing them in a feedlot. Value can be added through membership in a cooperative that processes your products, such as a cooperative cotton gin. Or, adding value may be as elaborate as going all the way to the consumer with a "case-ready" food product.

As an example of adding value to an agricultural commodity, consider wheat. Value can be added to wheat grain in many ways. One way is for farmers to produce wheat grain for use in feed or food products. Wheat straw, a waste product, can be harvested, processed and then turned into building materials. Another way to add value to wheat is to graze it with stocker cattle, which increases the yield of wheat by causing "tillering" of the plant and also generates income from the cattle operation. Wheat grain also can be converted into organic natural foods and sold at health food stores.

**Assignment 6: Agrarian Culture (aka agrarianism)**

What is it? Give an example of an agrarian society in the United States?

Agrarian culture is a way of life which encourages people to rely on each other and co-operate with nature to provide a livelihood for themselves and others.  
  
The farmer "has a sense of identity, a sense of historical and religious tradition, a feeling of belonging to a concrete family, place, and region, which are psychologically and culturally beneficial." The harmony of this life checks the encroachments of a fragmented, alienated modern society that has grown to inhuman scale.

Agrarianism concentrates on the fundamental goods of the earth, communities of more limited economic and political scale than in modern society, and on simple living--even when this shift involves questioning the "progressive" character of some recent social and economic developments. Thus agrarianism is not [industrial farming](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Industrial_farming), with its specialization on products and industrial scale.