Chapter 4: Primary Activities

Exercises — Exercises

Q1 Which one of the following is not a plantation crop? (a) Coffee (b) Sugarcane (c) Wheat (d) Rubber

(c) Wheat. Coffee, sugarcane and rubber are typical plantation crops grown on large tropical estates, whereas wheat is the principal crop of extensive commercial grain cultivation in semi-arid mid-latitude lands.

Q2 In which one of the following countries was co-operative farming the most successful experiment? (a) Russia (b) Denmark (c) India (d) The Netherlands

(b) Denmark. The co-operative movement has been so successful there that practically every farmer is a member of a co-operative society. Russia (the erstwhile Soviet Union) is associated with collective farming, the Kolkhoz model, instead.

Q3 Growing of flowers is called: (a) Truck farming (b) Factory farming (c) Mixed farming (d) Floriculture

(d) Floriculture. It is the cultivation of flowers, a high-value crop grown for urban markets under market gardening and horticulture; the Netherlands, for example, specialises in tulips. Truck farming is vegetable growing only.

Q4 Which one of the following types of cultivation was developed by European colonists? (a) Kolkoz (b) Viticulture (c) Mixed farming (d) Plantation

(d) Plantation. Europeans colonised many parts of the tropics and introduced plantation agriculture there, a profit-oriented, large-scale production system. Kolkhoz is the Soviet collective farming model.

Q5 In which one of the following regions is extensive commercial grain cultivation not practised? (a) American Canadian prairies (b) European Steppes (c) Pampas of Argentina (d) Amazon Basin

(d) Amazon Basin. Extensive commercial grain farming is found in the semi-arid interiors of the mid-latitudes such as the prairies, Eurasian steppes and Pampas. The Amazon Basin is a tropical region where gathering is practised.

Q6 In which of the following types of agriculture is the farming of citrus fruit very important? (a) Market gardening (b) Plantation agriculture (c) Mediterranean agriculture (d) Co-operative farming

(c) Mediterranean agriculture. This highly specialised commercial agriculture, found around the Mediterranean Sea and in similar climatic regions elsewhere, is an important supplier of citrus fruits, besides grapes, olives and figs.

Q7 Which one type of agriculture amongst the following is also called 'slash and burn agriculture'? (a) Extensive subsistence agriculture (b) Primitive subsistence agriculture (c) Extensive commercial grain cultivation (d) Mixed farming

(b) Primitive subsistence agriculture. Also called shifting cultivation, it involves clearing vegetation by fire, so the ashes add fertility to the soil. This is why it is called slash and burn agriculture (jhuming in India, milpa in Central America).

Q8 Which one of the following does not follow monoculture? (a) Dairy farming (b) Mixed farming (c) Plantation agriculture (d) Commercial grain farming

(b) Mixed farming. It gives equal emphasis to crop cultivation and animal husbandry and grows several crops, using rotation and intercropping. Plantations (single-crop specialisation) and commercial grain farming (mainly wheat) are specialised.

Q9 Future of shifting cultivation is bleak. Discuss. (Answer in about 30 words.)

Cultivated patches are tiny and tools primitive. Soil loses fertility within 3 to 5 years, so the jhum cycle keeps shortening as plots are returned to sooner. Low yields and shrinking forest make its future bleak.

Q10 Market gardening is practised near urban areas. Why? (Answer in about 30 words.)

Market gardening grows high-value vegetables, fruits and flowers solely for urban markets. Farms are small and need good transport links to cities, where high-income consumers live and perishable produce can reach buyers quickly and fresh.

Q11 Large scale dairy farming is the result of the development of transportation and refrigeration. Explain. (Answer in about 30 words.)

Dairy farming is practised near urban and industrial centres that offer markets for fresh milk. Better transportation, refrigeration, pasteurisation and other preservation methods lengthened storage life of dairy products, allowing production on a large scale for distant markets.

Q12 Differentiate between Nomadic Herding and Commercial Livestock Rearing. (Answer in not more than 150 words.)

Nomadic herding is a primitive subsistence activity. Herders depend on animals for food, clothing, shelter, tools and transport, and move with their livestock in search of pastures and water, either horizontally over long distances or vertically between plains and mountains (transhumance). Each community occupies a traditionally identified territory. It is found in North Africa to Central China, the Eurasian tundra, and small areas of south-west Africa and Madagascar, and the number of nomads is shrinking because of political boundaries and new settlement plans. Commercial livestock rearing is organised and capital intensive. It is associated with western cultures and carried on at permanent ranches, divided into fenced parcels so grazing is regulated and the number of animals matches carrying capacity. Only one type of animal, such as sheep, cattle, goats or horses, is reared, with emphasis on breeding, genetic improvement, disease control and health care. Meat, wool, hides and skin are processed, packed scientifically and exported. New Zealand, Australia, Argentina, Uruguay and the USA are leading regions.

Q13 Discuss the important characteristic features of plantation agriculture. Name a few important plantation crops from different countries. (Answer in not more than 150 words.)

Plantation agriculture was introduced by Europeans in tropical colonies as a profit-oriented, large-scale production system. Its main features are large estates, heavy capital investment, managerial and technical support, scientific methods of cultivation, single-crop specialisation, cheap labour, and a good transport system linking estates to factories and markets for export. Important crops include tea, coffee, cocoa, rubber, cotton, oil palm, sugarcane, bananas and pineapples. Examples by country: the French set up cocoa and coffee plantations in West Africa; the British developed tea gardens in India and Sri Lanka, rubber in Malaysia, and sugarcane and bananas in the West Indies; the Spanish and Americans invested in coconut and sugarcane in the Philippines; the Dutch once held a sugarcane monopoly in Indonesia; and some coffee fazendas in Brazil are still managed by Europeans. Today most plantations are owned by governments or nationals of the countries concerned.