

CCEA GCSE Agriculture and Land Use  
(Summer Series) 2015

## Chief Examiner's Report

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## Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of CCEA's General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in Agriculture and Land Use for this series.

CCEA hopes that the Chief Examiner's and/or Principal Moderator's report(s) will be viewed as a helpful and constructive medium to further support teachers and the learning process.

This booklet forms part of the suite of support materials for the specification. Further materials are available from the specification's microsite on our website at [www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk)



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# GCSE AGRICULTURE AND LAND USE

## Chief Examiner's Report

It is pleasing to report that the papers in the Summer 2015 series provided further evidence of good quality learning and teaching of the CCEA GCSE Agriculture and Land Use. The level of knowledge and thinking skills shown in answers, particularly the extended writing questions, was commendable throughout and highlights the enthusiasm for the specification.

Both papers were answered well by the majority of candidates and the marks increased from summer 2014 possibly due to the teachers and candidates having a better grounding of what to expect in the examinations.

In the extended writing questions every effort is made by examiners to provide appropriate stimulus material for each question and to use language and a layout which helps to make the question accessible. Unfortunately, many candidates do not always take the time to examine the details in the diagrams or key bullet points and therefore struggle to answer the more demanding questions.

However many candidates did complete the extended questions very well, several of them highlighted the key stem words in the question and/or planned their extended writing question in the space before attempting the extended writing question; this tactic clearly worked and should be encouraged in the future as many candidates scored in the top band in both questions. Other candidates started well in the extended questions but seemed to get stuck on a particular point and then either stopped or laboured on that one point, thus then running out of enthusiasm or ideas to complete the rest of the extended question.

The language used in the questions was deemed to be appropriate as most candidates attempted the questions and all candidates appeared to have enough time to complete the papers.

### Assessment Unit 1      Soils, Crops and Habitats

- Q1**      A well answered opening question with most candidates achieving full marks.
- Q2**      Many candidates gave partial definitions, which could not be credited as only one mark was available. Candidates were not given marks for repeating the same basic definitions. In Part (b) most candidates obtained two out of the three marks with many candidates still thinking that 'light' is needed for germination at the expense of 'oxygen'.
- Q3**      The majority of candidates answered this question well with a wide range of answers given for Parts (b) and (c).
- Q4**      The question was answered well apart from Part (b)(iii) in which most candidates attempted the question but struggled at any succinct answer.
- Q5**      Candidates should be encouraged to be specific with their answers, 'sales' would not get a mark, however 'tractor sales' would obtain the mark. The rest of the question was answered well however several candidates still struggle with reading scales and gave the answer '60500' instead of '65000'.
- Q6**      Candidates answered well showing good knowledge of growing crops, there was a wide range of crops chosen however most candidates talked about growing grass for silage. The answers were well set out with only a few candidates in the band one score.

- Q7** Generally answered well apart from Part (c) which allowed for discrimination of ability.
- Q8** This question proved difficult overall with some candidates not attempting it or misunderstanding the question, however many candidates did achieve high marks in it.
- Q9** Well answered question with candidates achieving high marks throughout.
- Q10** This question proved challenging and allowed for discrimination of ability, particularly Part (c) which was not answered well. Again several candidates struggled in reading the scale on the graph.

## Assessment Unit 2      Animals on the Land

- Q1** A well answered successful opening question in that candidates did/did not know the parts. Some candidates were unable to explain the functions very well.
- Q2** Generally well done and this proved to be a good opportunity for candidates to achieve a lot of marks. There was a good range of answers to Part (b).
- Q3** The majority of candidates answered this question well.
- Q4** Proved challenging to most candidates as Dry Matter Intake (DMI) is a hard concept, relatively few candidates got the correct DMI figure for the animals, yet some did gain marks here by deduction.
- Q5** The majority of candidates answered this question well with a range of answers being given.
- Q6** Part (a) was answered well and lead candidates nicely into Part (b) which was again answered very well by most candidates with only some candidates scoring in band one.
- Q7** Proved difficult overall but allowed for discrimination of candidates.
- Q8** The majority of candidates answered this question well with a range of answers being given.
- Q9** Part (a) was answered well and lead candidates into Part (b) which again was generally answered well as the bullet points were used as appropriate stimulus to answer the question.

## Assessment Unit 3      Contemporary Issues in Agriculture and Land Use

### Principal Moderator's Report

#### Controlled Assessment

This year saw the first submission of the controlled assessment element of the GCSE Agriculture and Land Use specification from centres. It has been well received by all participating centres and it is evident that many centres had prepared their students very well prior to submitting the controlled assessment tasks and this accounted for the large majority of the material submitted being within tolerance.

Teachers are to be commended for their accuracy and consistency in their marking. The vast majority of centres had totally understood the requirements of the new assessment component

and it was noticeable that those centres who had availed of the portfolio clinics, held earlier on in the year, had much less discrepancy in the marks awarded compared to other centres. There was good evidence of internal standardisation throughout the vast majority of centres. The team of moderators have reported back the following:

## Task 1

Of the available topics for the Practical Investigation (Task 1), the most popular across many centres was the investigation into how nutrient levels impact on plant productivity. This was followed by the investigation into the effectiveness of different techniques in the preservation of milk, with few candidates submitting the investigation into the effects of water quality on plant growth. Variations of the general title were evident, particularly from the investigation into plant nutrients. Some centres expanded the task to allow candidates the opportunity to gain maximum marks. There was some evidence of awarding marks on the lenient side, but on the whole, centre marking was very appropriate for all of the assessment criteria bands.

## Task 2

Of the available topics for the Research Project (Task 2), the most popular title submitted by candidates across many centres affects the type of any centres was the investigation into the benefits of extending the housing of cattle indoors, followed by the investigation into how the geography of the two different regions of Northern Ireland. Most centres applied the assessment criteria well to the content of the research projects. All three of the research project options were represented with a full range of marks being awarded. Again, centre marking was very good, although many candidates failed to provide any justification for their research methods or explanation of the procedures used. Several candidates did not display any data in tabular or graphical forms, which had the effect of limiting their total marks.

## General Administration

Many candidates submitted their controlled assessment tasks in the suggested formats outlined in the Specification Booklet. Others did not, and they proved more difficult to read and demonstrate the justification of marks awarded. The inclusion of a contents page was a useful addition to many candidates submitted work. The labelling of tables and graphs varied across centres. Some centres demonstrated clear labelling of tables and graphs and candidates referring to them within their written text.

## Contact details

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