Summer Examinations 2015

LEM300215N

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODULE TITLE</th>
<th>Rural Development Policy and Practices</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LEVEL</td>
<td>Six</td>
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<tr>
<td>TIME ALLOWED</td>
<td>Three hours</td>
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</tbody>
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Instructions to students:

- Enter your student number **not** your name on all answer booklets.
- Answer **all** the questions from **Section A** and **two** questions from **Section B**.
- Begin each answer in a separate book; label each book clearly with the number of the question you are answering.
- Section A carries 50% of the overall marks.
- Section B carries 50% of the overall marks.
- Appendix “Countryside Stewardship Proposed payment rates” is provided.
- One Entry Level Stewardship Options Map for the Moulton College estate is provided.
- Blank estate maps are provided (page 5 and page 6).
- Students are allowed to bring in one annotated field survey map for the chosen site.
- The use of a non-scientific calculator is permitted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Pages</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Questions</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section A

All students MUST attempt this question.

1. Background

In 2011, the Moulton College Farms Directorate drafted an Entry Level Stewardship plan (Appendix 1). This plan aimed to facilitate clean soil and water, promote wildlife conservation and safeguard the future of farmland birds.

With the plan due to run out in 2016, the College Farms Directorate Committee are considering their next cause of action and whether to implement Defra’s new voluntary environmental land management scheme, ‘Countryside Stewardship’, which nationally will inject £900 million to assist rural businesses in helping them improve the countryside environment from CAP pillar two funding sources. The main priorities for Countryside Stewardship are enhancing biodiversity and improving water quality, alongside improving flood management, the historic environment, landscape character, genetic conservation, educational access and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Defra (2014) have confirmed that Countryside Stewardship will have three main elements – a higher-tier (akin to HLS), a mid-tier (which will replace ELS) and a lower tier of capital grants. These will give access to funding and / or capital grants for an agreed range of environmental management ‘options’ with associated payment rates (Appendix 2). To distribute payments, Defra insist applications should reflect Countryside Stewardship priorities and demonstrate that they provide value for money. To score applications, Defra will use the priorities highlighted in the national targeting framework and the balance of land management options applicants have chosen on land parcels.

Task

The Farms Directorate Committee have tasked you with providing a critical comment on which, if any, of the new Countryside Stewardship elements the farm should consider from 2016. Moreover, they require advice on the most appropriate options that could be selected that will not only offer the best opportunities to achieve benefits for biodiversity, water quality and flood management together – but also score well against Defra benchmarks. They would also like to know where to site these options and would like you to mark them on a farm map (Figure 1) using the knowledge accumulated from your farm environment survey and the original ELS plan. They are keen for any such options to work harmoniously with the primary aims of the agri-business. You must also fully justify the rationale behind your proposals in writing, producing a modified options map and estimated points calculation with comment. Structure your report accordingly:

1. Title page;
2. Contents page;
3. Introduction to the CAP and Countryside Stewardship;
4. A Countryside Stewardship plan for the Moulton College Estate from 2016 (including suggested options and capital items, and an annotated Figure 1 with approximate costings);
5. Discussion and critical comment;
6. References.

Reference


(50 marks)

End of Section A
Section B follows overleaf
Section B

Answer two out of four questions.

2. The new CAP reform for 2014-2020 remains a hotly debated issue. For example, farming organisations are increasingly concerned that Defra will seek to impose on English farmers a sole delivery method for “Greening” under pillar 1 of the reformed CAP, thereby closing off options available to farmers in other parts of the UK and across the EU. There is also much debate also about a single pillar 2 rural development scheme. Using these and other pertinent issues, critically review the proposed structure and pillar 1 and 2 delivery mechanisms of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) 2014-2020. Relate your discussion to socio-economic, political and environmental factors.

(25 marks)

3. What is the interaction between agricultural productivity and nature conservation and how does this vary between agricultural systems and as a function of differing spatial scales at which land is devoted mostly to food production?

(25 marks)

4. In a recent communication, Yorke (2011) posed the question ‘Was the agri-environment movement drafted by practical farmers or civil servants constrained by EU targets?’. Using relevant case-studies and referring to current policy, critically appraise this question.


5. Drawing on the current rural development framework, how can competing demands on land for production of food and energy best be balanced to ensure the provision of adequate yields and prices?

(25 marks)

End of Section B
End of Paper
Figure 1:
Figure 2: