Unit 5 Cheat Sheet: Agriculture and Rural Land Use

AP® Human Geography · Unit 5 Review · Topics 5.1 to 5.12

> **The big idea:** Unit 5 asks who grows what, where, and why: climate, distance to market, technology, money, and culture all shape how people use rural land. It is about 12 to 17 percent of the multiple-choice section. FRQs favor farming types and their effects, usually paired with a map, a data table, or von Thünen's model.
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> **How to use it:** Fill in the blank version from memory first, then check it here. Star anything you missed. Those are your review targets.

KEY TERMS

Ways to classify farming (Topic 5.1)

Intensive agriculture	Lots of labor or capital per acre where land is scarce (near cities).
Extensive agriculture	Light inputs spread over lots of land where land is cheap (ranching).
Subsistence agriculture	Grown mainly to feed the farmer's own family, with little left to sell.
Commercial agriculture	Grown to sell for profit, usually on large, mechanized farms in the core.

Production regions (Topic 5.6)

Wet rice farming	Intensive subsistence: hand labor on small paddies (crowded monsoon Asia).
Shifting cultivation	Extensive subsistence: slash-and-burn, farm until the soil wears out, move on.
Pastoral nomadism	Extensive subsistence: herders follow grass and water in dry lands (Sahel).
Plantation agriculture	Intensive commercial: one export crop in the tropics, often colonial in origin.
Mixed crop and livestock	Intensive commercial: feed crops (corn, soybeans) plus animals (Corn Belt).
Market gardening (truck farming)	Most intensive commercial: fruits and vegetables (southeastern U.S.).
Mediterranean agriculture	Commercial: grapes, olives, citrus; hot, dry summers and mild, wet winters.

Settlements and surveys (Topic 5.2)

Clustered settlement	Homes in a village with fields around it (much of Europe, India, and China).
Dispersed settlement	Isolated farmsteads spread out, each on its own farm (U.S. Midwest).
Linear settlement	Homes strung along a road, river, canal, or coastline (St. Lawrence River).
Metes and bounds	Lines follow creeks, trees, and rocks, so parcels are irregular (eastern U.S.).
Township and range	Grid of 6-mile-square townships, each with 36 square-mile sections (Midwest).
Long lots	Long, narrow strips back from a river, each with river frontage (Québec).

Origins and revolutions (Topics 5.3 to 5.5)

First Agricultural Revolution	The Neolithic Revolution: domestication, about 10,000 BCE, led to villages.
Columbian Exchange	After 1492: maize and potatoes left the Americas; wheat and horses arrived.
Second Agricultural Revolution	1600s to 1800s: crop rotation and machines freed workers for factories.
Green Revolution	1940s to 1970s, from Mexico to Asia: high-yield seeds, fertilizer, irrigation.

Agribusiness and markets (Topics 5.7 to 5.9)

Economies of scale	Bigger farms produce each bushel for less, so they replace many small farms.
Agribusiness	Farming as big business: corporations in every step from seed to supermarket.
Vertical integration	One company controls several stages (poultry: breeding, feed, processing).
Commodity chain	Steps from farm to consumer: inputs, growing, processing, shipping, selling.
Bid-rent theory	Near the market, land costs most; each von Thünen ring goes to its top bidder.
Export dependence	Relying on a few export crops, so a price drop hurts the whole economy.

Consequences and challenges (Topics 5.10 to 5.12)

Land cover change	Forests cleared or wetlands drained for farmland (Amazon cattle pasture).
Desertification	Overgrazing and overcultivation turn semiarid land desert-like (the Sahel).
Soil salinization	Irrigation water evaporates in hot, dry places and leaves salt (Indus Valley).
Conservation efforts	Fixes: no-till farming, crop rotation, cover crops, contour plowing, terraces.
Food insecurity	No reliable access to enough safe, nutritious food (poverty, conflict).
Food desert	A low-income or remote area where affordable fresh food is hard to buy.
GMOs	Engineered to resist pests or drought (Bt cotton); seed control debated.
Food choice movements	Organic farming, fair trade, CSA, local food, urban farms, value-added crops.
Women in agriculture	Roles vary by farm type; gaps in land, loans, and training lower yields.

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THE VON THÜNEN MODEL: WHAT GROWS WHERE, AND WHY

RING	LAND USE	WHY IT IS THERE	BID-RENT CURVE
Ring 1	Market gardening and dairy	Perishable: milk and produce spoil fast	Starts highest, falls most steeply
Ring 2	Forest	Wood for fuel and building is heavy	Starts lower, falls less steeply
Ring 3	Grains and field crops	Durable and light for their value	Flatter still
Ring 4	Ranching and livestock	Cheap land; animals walk to market	Lowest, flattest, reaches farthest
Add a river	Every ring stretches along it	Boat hauling is cheaper	Curves flatten, reach farther

DON'T CONFUSE THESE

Subsistence vs. sustainable	Subsistence is farming to feed your own family; sustainable is farming in a way that can last.
Intensive vs. commercial	Intensity is inputs per acre, not purpose or farm size. Wet rice is subsistence but intensive; ranching is commercial but extensive.
Ring 2 vs. ring 3	Von Thünen's ring 2 is forest and ring 3 is grain: wood for fuel and building was heavy to haul.
Survey method vs. settlement pattern	A survey method is how land is divided (township and range). A settlement pattern is where the homes are (dispersed).
Green Revolution vs. "green"	"Green" does not mean eco-friendly. It raised yields with new seeds, chemicals, and irrigation, and it brought environmental costs.
One hearth vs. many hearths	Farming began independently in several hearths (Fertile Crescent: wheat; Mesoamerica: maize; Andes: potatoes), not in one place that spread everywhere.
Monocropping vs. monoculture	Monocropping is the same crop on one field year after year. Monoculture is a farm or region specializing in one crop or animal.

EXAMPLES TO KNOW COLD

Green Revolution: South Asia vs. Africa	Harvests soared and famines were avoided in South Asia, but costly inputs favored richer farmers. Sub-Saharan Africa gained less: sorghum, millet, and cassava were not the focus.
New Zealand dairy in American supermarkets	Von Thünen assumed one market city, a flat plain, and horse-and-cart hauling; refrigeration and container ships let perishables travel far. Locally, land near cities still grows fresh food.
Kenyan flowers in European supermarkets	Periphery land grows luxury crops for core consumers, often land that could grow local food. Core companies usually capture most of the value (processing, branding, selling).
Gulf of Mexico dead zone	Fertilizer runoff feeds algae blooms at the mouth of the Mississippi River; when the algae die and decay, oxygen runs out. Shows pollution from farming.
Ogallala Aquifer	Center-pivot sprinklers stamp green circles on the Great Plains but can drain the aquifer faster than rain refills it. Shows water depletion.

FRQ: HOW UNIT 5 SHOWS UP

PROMPT SAYS	WHAT TO DO
Identify	Name it. No explanation needed.
Define	Give the meaning of the term.
Describe	Give its key features or details.
Explain	Say how or why, and connect the cause to the result ("because," "which leads to").
Compare	Give a similarity or a difference between two things.
Explain the degree to which	Pick low, moderate, or high, then explain why.

Likely Unit 5 FRQ angles

- Identify a change in a data table, then describe it.
- Describe one characteristic of commercial agriculture.
- Describe one environmental effect of a cash crop boom.
- Explain how a trade agreement or a spreading food preference changes land use in an exporting country.
- Explain where von Thünen puts a land use, and how a river or refrigeration changes that.
- Explain the degree to which global demand for one crop benefits the region that grows it.

> **FRQ rules:** Name the farming type, link it to climate or distance to market, then explain one effect at a named scale. Use the table when there is one. Write in complete sentences; if a part asks for one example, only your first is scored.

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