



Name _____ Period _____

Changes in Agriculture

Answer the following in complete sentences.

During the 18th century, major improvements occurred in agricultural production. Many of these changes took place with leadership from England. Modern scientific farming methods brought about new tools and farming machines, new methods, improved crops, and superior livestock.

Other changes in England allowed the agricultural revolution to flourish. Better roads, new canals, and wider trade connections allowed farm produce to find needed markets all across the globe. During the 18th century, the English sold their agricultural products as far away as Asia. Few European nations provided any real competition.

1. How did lack of competition make England more profitable?

A major land-use change was the enclosure movement. During the Middle Ages, many lands were held in common and farmed by a community of peasants. In the 18th century, the landowners—mostly old aristocratic families and newly wealthy merchants—began ordering fence building, closing off lands to the peasants. Eventually Parliament took the lead in this trend, passing laws requiring the enclosing of rural properties. The intended result was to increase the size of farms and make them more productive. An unforeseen result of the enclosure movement was the shortage of food for the peasants, who no longer could work their own farms.

2. What was the cause of the enclosure movement?

3. What was the effect of the enclosure movement?

4. Was Parliament's enclosure legislation looking out for the best interest of the country? Why or why not do you think that?

Some greater improvements came in the 18th century. An agriculturist named Jethro Tull (1674-1741) invented a new seed-drilling machine, which planted seeds in wider rows. Through this technique, production was greatly increased. Other innovators, such as Charles “Turnip” Townshend (1674-1738), supported the planting of turnips and clover to improve the soil in fields. This was the beginning of a new technique called “crop rotation”. Soil improvements led to improvements in the livestock industry. Cattle had better feed available and could be sustained longer into the winter months. New breeding techniques improved the quality of beef. Between 1710 and 1795 the average head of English cattle doubled in weight.



I'm Charles Townshend, I was secretary of state under King George I, but what I really enjoy is talking about farming. What major innovation did I bring to agriculture? _____



Jethro Tull's the name and farming is my game. I invented the seed drill. What was it used for? _____

- 5. With these improvements in food production, what impact would that have on the price of food? Explain!

The result of this agricultural boom period was a 43% increase in farm production in England during the 1700s. Such changes eventually spread to the Netherlands with similar results. But in most other regions of Europe methods did not change, and 80% of farmers produced only at the subsistence level, meaning they produced no surpluses (extra).

- 6. What is subsistence farming?

- 7. Use the entire article to explain why England could produce beyond subsistence level and give at least two reasons or examples of this. Write in a full paragraph.
