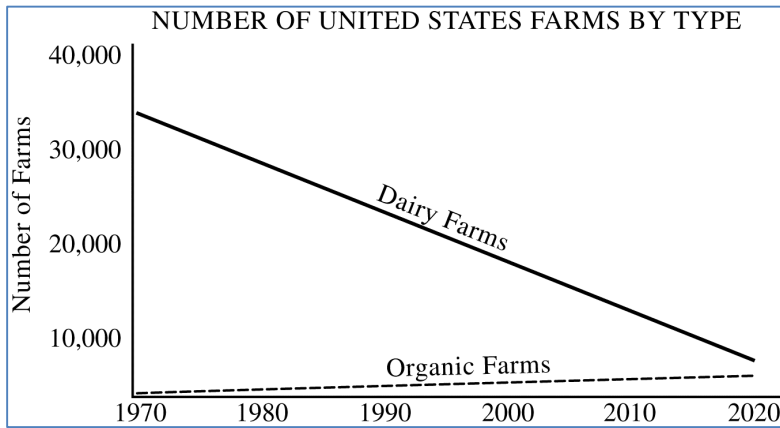


Agriculture Practice FRQs



1. Agriculture in the United States has changed significantly in the past few decades. With respect to the past, present, and projected trends in agriculture shown in the diagram above, answer the following:

A. First identify and then explain TWO factors contributing to the steady decline in the number of dairy farms since 1970.

B. First identify and then explain TWO factors contributing to the increase in the number of organic farms since 1970.

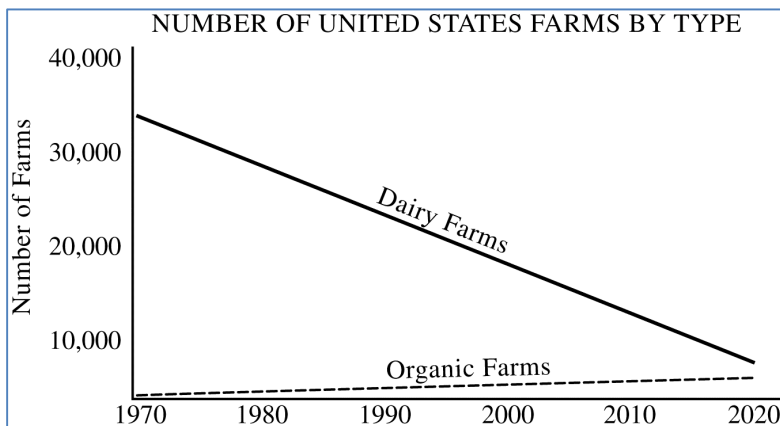
2. The restructuring of agriculture in the late twentieth century has had important implications for rural land use and the distribution of poultry (chicken and turkey) production in the United States.

A. List TWO factors that have increased the demand for poultry.

B. Briefly describe TWO characteristics of the present economic organization of poultry production in the United States.

C. Describe TWO features of the present geographic distribution of poultry production in the United States.

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Agriculture Practice FRQs: Scoring Guide

I. Agriculture in the United States has changed significantly in the past few decades. With respect to the past, present, and projected trends in agriculture shown in the diagram above, answer the following:

Part A (4 points)

First identify and then explain TWO factors contributing to the steady decline in the number of dairy farms since 1970.

Factors (1 point per factor; max 2 points)	Explanations (1 point per explanation; max 2 points)
Increased production of milk	Cows produce higher yields, meaning fewer cows are needed to meet the demand for milk; therefore there are fewer farms.
Increased mechanization	Mechanization/technological changes in the milking process have enabled farmers to increase the size of their dairy herds . This efficiency has made small farms unprofitable.
Development of agribusiness, economies of scale, factory farms, industrialization of agriculture; changes from labor-intensive to less labor-intensive forms of agriculture	The number of farms, including dairy farms, in the United States is decreasing, owing to one or more of these factors [elaboration required] .
Displacement by urbanization	Dairy farmers close to cities where dairy farms traditionally have been located (milk shed) have been displaced by urbanization, leading to a decline in the number of dairy farms overall.

Scoring Notes:

- Students must identify and then explain **TWO** factors—that is, link the decline in the number of farms (EFFECT) to a factor (CAUSE). Just saying “agribusiness” or “industrialization” is insufficient to earn 2 points.
- Do not award points for discussions of the **LOCATION** of dairy farms (a repetition of von Thünen’s ideas) that are not directly related to the decline in the **NUMBER** of farms.

Part B (4 points)

First identify and then explain TWO factors contributing to the increase in the number of organic farms since 1970.

Factors (1 point each; max 2 points)	Explanations (1 point each; max 2 points)
Increasing demand for organic products has made organic agriculture profitable and led to a growth in organic farming (both large-scale and small-scale).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consumers in the U.S. seek alternatives to the industrial products of modern agriculture because of (media-driven) concerns about the nutrition and healthiness of commercial agricultural products. Consumers have become wary of the insecticides, herbicides, fertilizers, and genetically modified organisms (GMOs) used in agriculture and to produce foodstuffs and have become concerned about related long-term health issues. Population of the U.S. is increasing in wealth and is better able to afford (and willing to pay) higher prices for organic products. Buying organic food is an example of conspicuous consumption to display cultural preferences (a green lifestyle). Some consumers switch to organic products because they are concerned about the humane treatment of animals. Households have declined in size and have more disposable income to spend on higher-quality (organic) food rather than lower-quality (nonorganic) food. Better advertising and marketing systems have made organic products more appealing to consumers, thereby increasing the demand for goods and profitability. The demand has increased, aided by the growth of chains of supermarkets dedicated to organic products, which has increased profitability and led to the growth of suppliers for these chains.
Shifts in organic agriculture have led to better care for the land (land stewardship, sustainability, environmental concerns).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As stewards of the land, farmers/consumers wish to sustain it in the same state they found it rather than exhaust it or otherwise degrade it by the application of agricultural chemicals. Some consumers switch to organic products because they wish to eat foods that have a less negative impact on the environment (wish to live in greater harmony with nature).
Small farms competing with large-scale farms (agribusiness) are forced to shift to more profitable agriculture .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The economies of scale achieved by large-farm operations have kept the retail price of food low. Because small-farm operations cannot achieve these economies, they have to either go out of business or shift to more intensive forms of agriculture or supply specialty food for niche markets that bring higher prices and greater profitability, e.g., producing higher-priced, higher-quality organic products.

Scoring Notes:

- For parts A and B, factor points and explanation points are independent; students can earn one without the other.
- For both parts, do not award full credit for a “double dip”—e.g., two explanations of demand for organic foods.

A. List TWO factors that have increased the demand for poultry. (One-word answers acceptable; 2 points)

- Population increase (national or global)
- Health benefits (e.g., low fat diets)
- Safety of poultry vs. other meats like beef & pork (e.g., "mad cow")
- Enhanced image of poultry (e.g., ease of preparation, appearance, marketing, advertising)
- Availability (e.g., growth of poultry-based franchises like Chick Fil-A, restaurant menus) *NB Supply based arguments not acceptable*
- Everydayness: shift in cultural tradition to the consumption of poultry more frequently (not just special occasions like Thanksgiving)
- Some groups have ethnic/religious/cultural taboos against beef and pork
- Falling prices (compared to other meats, or historically), *NB Supply based arguments not acceptable*

B. Briefly describe TWO characteristics of the present economic organization of poultry production in the U.S. (2 points)

- A corporation controls multiple elements of poultry production (feed production-delivery of feed & chicks-raising-processing-marketing) (i.e., vertical integration/commodity chains)
- Large scale operations (as seen in the number of birds per farm)
- Specialized farms (they raise poultry only)
- Application of manufacturing process (mass production style/factory-like) (e.g., use of chemicals to produce a healthier & faster growing product, inputs-outputs, assembly line process)

C. Describe TWO features of the present geographic distribution of poultry production in the U.S. (2 points)

- Regional concentration or clustered in a particular location. *NB Not acceptable: regional names only, explanations based on references to climate or grain growing*
- Proximity to markets or transportation corridors
- Regional concentration in economically depressed farming areas
- Regional concentration in areas with low wage rates
- Attraction of an immigrant work force
- Effects of concentration of poultry into small areas (e.g., environmental concerns, land use conflicts), *NB Ethical arguments not acceptable*