Oregon’s Agricultural Progress Food for Thought Questions

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Description
Throughout the stories of the *Fall 2009 Special Edition: Food in Oregon*, there are many common themes. Provided is a list of questions that encourage students to link these themes and concepts between articles. The questions could be used to spark discussions, debates, essays or presentations.

Questions

1. Describe a food industry in each of Oregon’s 36 counties, or by region.
   - North Coast: seafood, milk
   - South Coast: seafood, milk, cranberries
   - Rogue Valley: pears, olive oil, wine
   - Willamette Valley: green beans, berries, hazelnuts, wine
   - Columbia Gorge: cherries, apples, pears
   - Central Oregon: carrot seed
   - Klamath Basin: potatoes
   - Columbia Basin: wheat
   - Eastern Oregon: beef
   - Treasure Valley: onions

*The Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation provides a full-size poster that maps out where commodities are produced in Oregon.

2. Describe the process of breeding improved varieties of food crops, such as vegetables, grains, oysters or nuts. What characteristics do growers want? Give an example of successful breeding that has helped solve a problem.
   - Hazelnut breeding developed trees that are not susceptible to eastern filbert blight, a disease that was about to destroy the industry.
   - Oyster breeding has increased the yield.
   - Vegetable breeding has developed tomato varieties specifically for cool, wet climates, and a purple tomato with additional nutritional value.
   - Wheat breeders have developed disease-resistant varieties that do especially well in Oregon’s climate.

3. What does it mean that “food is the handshake between rural and urban communities, the thing that is most closely shared among all Oregonians”?
   - It is the relationship between producer and consumer. Each needs the other in multiple ways.
4. What does it take to put food on your table?
   • Good soil.
   • Enough water.
   • Disease-resistant food crops suitable to the climate.
   • Knowledge of how to grow and harvest crops, including plants and animals.
   • Land (or a boat) and equipment and the knowledge to care for them.
   • Safe handling of food and chemicals to avoid contamination.
   • Packing and distribution to markets.
   • Markets accessible to consumers.
   • An understanding of consumer preferences.
   • Knowledgeable eaters who choose what they eat.

5. What is food insecurity? What is being done in Oregon for people who don’t have enough to eat? What can YOU do to help?

Ideas can be found throughout the Food for Thought section.
   • Being food insecure means that a family does not have enough safe, nutritious food.
   • Master Gardener Jen Aron helped transform the lawn in front of Portland’s City Hall with a vegetable garden, and the vegetables are donated to Elm Court Loaves and Fishes Center.
   • OSU nutrition education specialists have designed an online education program that helps doctors and nurses detect food insecurity.
   • An OSU student and professor teamed up to create a food pantry on campus for low income college students.
   • Through the USDA food stamp program, nutrition education is being provided. This helps ensure that families have the knowledge to provide healthy meals on a budget.

6. How are research and scientific advances leading to sustainable agriculture and increased profits?
   • In vineyards, research has led to new grass management practices and higher quality grapes.
   • Integrated pest management practices are being used in filbert and fruit orchards.
   • Cattle ranchers are managing grazing lands carefully, ensuring a reliable feed source into the future and maintaining habitats.
   • Albacore tuna fishermen and women are utilizing sustainable fishing methods and marketing them through the Pacific Fish Trax system.
   • Vegetable breeders are creating varieties that are successful when raised organically because they can outpace pests, shade out weeds and resist disease.
   • Drip irrigation has led to improved sustainability and profits for onion growers in Treasure Valley.
7. How has human health research affected Oregon agriculture?
   • It has led to the production of the purple tomato and potato.
   • Olive oil consumption has increased, leading to an increase in production.
   • The discovery of mercury in seafood has had a negative effect on the seafood industry, but provided an opportunity for Pacific Albacore to stand out because of its lower levels.
   • The benefits of Omega-3 fatty acids have led to an increase in demand for seafood.
   • The benefits of antioxidants in berries have led to a boom in berry production.