

The impact of climate on the development of agriculture - 2018 Q4C

I have studied the impact of climate on the development of agriculture in the Mezzogiorno in South Italy, and the Paris Basin in France.

Mezzogiorno

Despite being important to the Mezzogiorno's economy, agriculture in the area is generally unproductive and subsistent. The climate of the Mezzogiorno provides a constant challenge for farmers in the area because water supply is a constant worry. The Azores High, which occurs in the summer months, causes constant high pressure in the region which means very low levels of precipitation. High temperatures lead to high evaporation levels of water in both rivers and soil. Due to this evaporation, the Mezzogiorno often suffers from drought and lower crop yields due to stunted growth.

To prevent crops from wilting and dying, irrigation schemes are necessary. More than one million hectares of land are irrigated in the Mezzogiorno for the growth of crops such as citrus fruits, grapes and olives. Despite the Italian government's investment in irrigation, the high evaporation levels and decrease in river volume during the summer means that irrigation in the region is unsustainable. Olives are grown in the Mezzogiorno because they are resistant to drought. Due to the high summer temperatures, most farming is carried out during the winter months. Winter in the Mezzogiorno has lower temperatures and more rainfall.

The Paris Basin

The agriculture sector in the Paris Basin contrasts greatly to the Mezzogiorno's agriculture sector. The climate of the Paris Basin has allowed for the development of specialised agriculture. For example cereal farming in Beauce. The region receives moderate rainfall in spring and summer. This promotes the growth of cereals such as wheat and barley. The warm summer temperatures experienced by the Paris Basin allows these crops to ripen.

In the western half of Paris Basin, the slightly wetter oceanic climate is ideal for growing grass, which makes it perfect for intensive dairy farming. The mild winter temperatures in the region, combined with regular rainfall throughout the year, allow for a long growing season. This grass growth then allows for high stocking rates.