

# Geography Sample Answer

## 2021 Long Question 9B

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is one of the oldest and most important EU policies. It was established in 1962. Their key aims were to increase farmer's incomes, stabilise food supplies and increase food production in the EU.

Ireland has been influenced greatly by the CAP. The EU provided a guaranteed market for Ireland. Ireland's agricultural produce grew greatly as Ireland developed more modern and scientific farming techniques with the help of CAP. The value of agricultural exports grew enormously in value from 0.4 billion euro in 1975 to over 6 billion euro in 2004. Dairying and tillage were the most profitable sectors in Ireland in the 70s and 80s. These sectors were dominated by farmers in the east and south of the country. Up until 1992, CAP favoured these farmers. However, reforms were introduced and incentives were offered to the smaller farmers of the Border, Midlands and Western Region. Milk quotas were introduced. The farmers of the West turned to beef and sheep farming.

In Ireland in 1973, 24% of the workforce worked in the farming sector. The EU began to offer attractive pensions to farmers over the age of 55 years. This was to encourage them to retire. Farm incomes increased as a result of more modern farming techniques being used. The farmers also gained from the Rural Environmental Protection Scheme. Irish farmers had been using highly intensive farming methods. This had a negative effect on the environment. Chemical fertilisers were being used which lead to pollution from the runoff. Large farms were used which saw the removal of hedgerow. Flora and fauna were negatively affected. The

REPS scheme encouraged sustainability in the sector. For the 2021-27 period, the European Commission is proposing an ambitious total budget of 365 million euro to the CAP. This accounts for a third of the whole budget, outlining the importance of the policy. It will be split into two pillars: direct support for farmers and rural development.