Counter Challenge Explanation   4.1.1

First, translate.

> *Rita: The purpose of farm subsidies was to give stable incomes to small farmers, but most of the money goes to a few big farmers. We should stop giving subsidies to farmers who make more than 100K.*

> *Thomas: That would be impossible. Farmers don't know how much money they're going to make until they do their taxes, but they need the subsidies for planting season before that.*

Thomas is such a shill for big agriculture. He really thinks there's *no way* to figure out whether a farmer is likely to make $100K+? Like we don't know if Monsanto is clearing $100K? Come on, Thomas.

First, let's figure out exactly what Rita and Thomas are disagreeing about. To identify the Controversy, let's take a Second Speaker Inference off of Thomas. We can infer from Thomas that we can't stop giving subsidies to big farmers. He thinks that's impossible to pull off. This leads us to our Controversy:

> **CONTROVERSY**   whether we can stop giving subsidies to big farmers

Now we see it's a Counter question, so we have to go after the Loophole in Thomas' conclusion. He claims it's impossible to figure out the subsidies ahead of time. How can we get around this impossibility? How could we figure out if a farmer is likely to make $100K in the coming year? We could use last year's financial records! They would give us a good prediction of what the farm is capable of in the coming year.

> **COUNTER**   What if we can just use last year's financial records to determine who gets the subsidies?

Nice, let's go after Thomas in the answer choices.

A)   *So it's hard for small farmers to get loans that they can repay with subsidies later. This is sad, but it has nothing to do with whether it's feasible to stop giving big farmer's subsidies. If anything, it strengthens Thomas' by pointing out the difficulty of giving the subsidy after tax season.* **A** *isn't a powerful attack on Thomas.*

B)   *So some farmers would reduce their planting if there were a $100K cutoff point for subsidies. That's possibly a downside for doing the subsidy plan, but that's not what we care about. We're trying to prove that it's possible to implement the cutoff point at all. A bad consequence for the plan doesn't make it any less possible.* **B** *isn't a powerful Counter against Thomas*

C)   *So farmer income changes every year because weather and the market aren't stable.* **C** *is strengthening Thomas' point, covering up for the Loophole in his argument. If income changes a bunch from year to year, that makes it harder to predict who will make $100K, which is the exact opposite of what we want in our Counter.* **C** *isn't a powerful approach.*

D) *So if we eliminate subsidies for big farmers, government finances would improve. This is a plus for eliminating subsidies for big farmers, but it doesn't make that plan any more feasible. If we still can't predict in advance, it doesn't matter how useful eliminating subsidies would be.* **D** *doesn't affect Thomas' conclusion.*

E) *So we can figure out subsidies based on the previous year's income. Awesome! This is exactly what we were looking for, a way that we can determine subsidies before they're needed. If* **E** *is true, eliminating the subsidies for large farmers is no longer impossible because we can look at last year's income before planting season starts. Thomas' conclusion is wrecked.* **E** *is the powerful attack we want.*

E is the correct answer. It takes out Thomas' conclusion.