

Questions 23-33 are based on the following passage.

Lunar Farming

Late last autumn, Giuseppe Ferrua **23** stood, on the hillside he farms overlooking Italy’s Serchio River valley, a landscape of low mountains dotted **24** with vineyards. Ferrua grows grapes and olives, and he does so according to the phases of the Moon. He didn’t always farm this way. When he began, he exercised modern, one-size-fits-all farming methods but says he soon became convinced that “plants are completely prone to elements in the cosmos, the rhythms of day and night.”

Following the lunar calendar, this type of farming is driven by the belief that the Moon influences levels of moisture in the soil, just as the Moon’s gravitational pull affects great bodies of water. Lunar farmers believe, **25** for example, that from the new Moon to quarter Moon phases, when the Moon is waxing, a soil’s moisture content increases, whereas drier periods occur during the waning phase. **26** Although moisture influences seed germination, a lunar guide on when to plant and weed can be advantageous to a grower.

23

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) stood;
- C) stood—
- D) stood

24

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) inside
- C) for
- D) on

25

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) however,
- C) by contrast,
- D) thereafter,

26

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) Given that
- C) So
- D) DELETE the underlined portion and begin the sentence with a capital letter.

27 Nature has been around forever. First-century Roman naturalist Pliny the Elder stated in his *Natural History* that the Moon “replenishes the Earth; when she approaches it, she fills all bodies, while, when she recedes, she empties them.” Chinese and Egyptian people performed agricultural tasks according to the lunar calendar for millennia, and, to this day, the vaunted *Old Farmer’s Almanac* includes regional lunar calendars and advice on **28** when to conduct farm chores. The **29** almanacs editor, Janice Stillman, says, “That information is of value to our readers who practice these traditional methods—and claim great success.”

27

Which choice most effectively sets up the paragraph?

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) People all over the world farm by the Moon.
- C) Farming by the Moon is not new.
- D) Talk of the Moon’s influence is far-reaching.

28

Which choice provides the most specific information on the type of advice a lunar calendar offers?

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) actions relevant to farming.
- C) points in time at which to undertake certain tasks.
- D) optimal times to plant, weed, prune, and harvest.

29

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) almanacs’s
- C) almanac’s
- D) almanacs’

Lunar farming has its **30** skeptics, who are not sure of the method's efficacy. Recalling advice he received on the best lunar time to plant potatoes, an English farmer says his first reaction was "Hoopla." Current mainstream agriculture does not factor the Moon into **31** their practices, so the concept might seem quaint or irrational. Additionally, lunar farming is based in astrology as opposed to astronomy, and no extensive scientific studies have yet been conducted that measure the Moon's overall influence on farming, **32** so supporters continue to wait for their practices to be verified scientifically.

Stillman says, "We are of the mind that you accept or believe by choice." Indeed, despite his doubts, the skeptical English farmer wound up planting his potatoes according to the lunar cycle and claims they were "the best I have tasted." Agricultural professor Jennifer Coffman has a similar response to Ferrua's bounty in Italy. **33** "Smell this rosemary," she says. "Smell how amazingly fragrant that is." At this stage, one could say that the evidence must be experienced to be believed.

30

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) skeptics, who have yet to be convinced.
- C) skeptics—those who doubt the method.
- D) skeptics.

31

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) those
- C) it's
- D) its

32

The writer wants to conclude the paragraph effectively while also reinforcing the point that skepticism toward lunar farming still exists. Which choice best accomplishes this goal?

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) and therefore no sound scientific data on the subject exist to date.
- C) yet many continue to practice lunar farming.
- D) leading many to conclude that the practice is based in folklore, not fact.

33

Which choice gives an additional supporting example that emphasizes the importance of the senses in judging the success of the lunar farming method?

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) She has taken photographs of the grapevines and landscape.
- C) She takes careful notes about Ferrua's farming methods, asking Ferrua to clarify how he prepares the soil.
- D) She dips bread into Ferrua's olive oil as he explains a soil preparation he does in the fall.