

Scholarship

2013 Assessment Report

Agricultural and Horticultural Science

COMMENTARY

In 2013, 47 candidates sat the examination with 8 achieving 'Scholarship' and 1 candidate achieving 'Scholarship with Outstanding Performance'. This was a significant increase in the number of candidates from 2012 when only 27 attempted the examination.

Virtually all candidates attempted all three questions.

Many of the candidate answers lacked the breadth and perception that 'scholarship level' answers demand. The way candidates structure their response provides the clarity (or lack of) of their discussion and ideas.

Phrases in the performance standard like *analyse, integration, synthesis, logical development, precision, and clarity of ideas* need to be evident in candidates' answers and therefore, candidates need to know what the phrases mean in the first instance.

More candidates are utilising the planning pages effectively and the value of a well-constructed plan cannot be over emphasised.

There was no significant difference in the marks gained by candidates across the three questions. This tends to indicate that most candidates allocated time evenly during the examination and completed all questions to the best of their ability.

Question 1- Market Access

All candidates seemed to have studied appropriate primary products to answer this question – this was pleasing as product selection had been discussed in previous reports. While many candidates could discuss how changes in market access had contributed to the trends in the graph, few effectively identified responses that had been initiated by these access changes. Narrow views of the primary production system (i.e. only the 'on-farm' component rather than the wider view of the 'system – see 2009 examination) constrained candidate's responses.

Question 2 – Nutrient Management and Sustainability

Many students tended to focus on a single production system/conflict and did not provide evidence of conflicts and perspectives from other products/systems. However, some excellent responses around specific situations were provided and showed evidence of a deep understanding of the issue. How the various conflicts and perspectives impact the sustainability of the primary production system was often not well discussed.

Question 3 – Contemporary Issues

The choice of, or matching of, the chosen issue and the primary product was a critical step in answering this question. Many candidates struggled to identify the main opportunities/threats/producer responses let alone provide some deeper analysis of them. Those that did successfully match issues to products were able to construct detailed, well-reasoned answers.

SCHOLARSHIP WITH OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:

- effectively discussed the question with a high level of perception and critical understanding of what was being asked
- showed evidence of careful planning
- provided responses that were articulate, coherent and contained elements of extrapolation.

SCHOLARSHIP

Candidates who were awarded Scholarship but not Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:

- had showed planning of their response for each question
- chose nationally significant primary products that are typically exported and that related well to the selected contemporary issue
- answered questions on, or drew reference to, two primary products
- provided a well-structured series of paragraphs
- used clear, correct statements and appropriate data
- demonstrated a depth of understanding of their chosen product(s) and the issues that were both relevant and current.

OTHER CANDIDATES

Candidates who were not awarded Scholarship or Scholarship with Outstanding Performance typically:

- provided brief, superficial statements without specific examples about the primary product or issue
- explained attributes using simple qualitative terms e.g. “large”, “sweet” etc. or explained quantity using simple qualitative terms e.g. “large amount”, without providing clarification or evidence of real knowledge
- stated data or information that was significantly incorrect
- gave rote-learnt answers that were out of date or irrelevant to the question
- wrote answers that indicated a poor awareness of actual social, political or economic implications
- could not differentiate between general information or facts and those that are ‘critical’ or highly significant within the context of the product/issue/question.