

QUIZ

WHAT IS YOUR "MEKQ"?¹

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Since few of the courses any of us took in school had an international dimension of any sort, most of what we have learned about other countries will have been outside the classroom walls. This is as true of the Middle East as any other part of the world.

The few questions which follow will allow anyone to estimate quickly whether he or she has acquired some basic knowledge of an important geographic area:

1. What is probably the single most important book ever published in America on the subject of Arabs?
2. What is the Middle East's largest daily newspaper?
3. What breed of horses did the ancient Greeks see as the ideal horse, the model of all horses, and as a god, the winged Pegasus? They carved its image onto the Parthenon walls.
4. What book has been a bestseller for almost 2,000 years, and is still read with pleasure all over the Arab world? Why?
5. Why may the buffalo gourd be as important to the future of agriculture as the soybean and the potato?
6. What do the initials ALAD mean, and what is the significance of the program?
7. What led to the "green revolution"?

8. What crop is the Middle East's most important food crop?
9. What is the chief source of meat and an important source of milk in the Middle East?
10. Is the following statement true or false?

"Every strawberry you ever ate, every variety of rose you ever saw, all started from one plant."

The answers which follow were all taken from 1971 and 1972 issues of Aramco World Magazine:²

1. History of the Arabs by Philip Hitti. Page 23, July-August, 1971.
2. Al-Ahram of Cairo. Page 4, September-October, 1972.
3. Arabian. Page 13, September-October, 1972.
4. Kalila wa Dimna. It conceals great practical wisdom in the easily digestible form of animal fables. Two jackals are the main characters. Page 18, July-August, 1972.
5. If it works out on the desert as hoped, it could double, even triple, the Middle East's protein supply. Inside the rind there's a cluster of small, flat seeds that are nearly 35 percent protein--more even than soybeans. The seeds, when crushed, produce a quality oil for human use, and the leftover pulp is an excellent cattle feed. Page 24, November-December, 1972.
6. Arid Lands Agricultural Development. The program (set up by Ford Foundation, in cooperation with Arab countries from Algeria to Saudi Arabia, as well as Turkey and Iran) is designed to spark an agricultural revolution within a decade by introducing new crops, improving techniques of sheep-raising, and modernizing land preparation. Page 24, November-December, 1972.

7. The threat of imminent world famine. Page 27, November-December, 1972.
8. Wheat. Page 31, November-December, 1972.
9. Sheep. Page 32, November-December, 1972.
10. True. Page 32, November-December, 1972.

How did you do? If you answered at least one question correctly, you will have done better than the few who can't answer any. If you got more than half right, your "MEKQ" probably is above average. Few there are, indeed, in the United States who score 100 percent on this quiz!

What if you were one of the few who didn't answer any of the questions correctly? Don't be discouraged. Just decide to find out more about this important area of the world. Your "Agriculture of Developing Countries" instructor will be happy to help.³

The preceding quiz is one of the motivational instruments which will be used next semester in a new, highly successful general education course at Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois. "Agriculture of Developing Countries" has been offered for three semesters on an experimental basis. The two-credit course will be included as a regular course offering in the Department of Agriculture section of the next undergraduate catalog. Each semester between 33 and 40 students, representing some 19 different departments, have elected the course. Two sections of the course have become necessary. Quite a few of the students who have enrolled for and/or completed the course have been active in convincing others of the value of the experience.

The catalog description is: Provides students with fundamental knowledge concerning the role of agriculture in developing countries. Included are such activities as analysis of agricultural problems, policies and processes; critical review of relevant literature; creative approaches to understanding; and research oriented to special interests of class members.⁴

Our world is one in which all will find it to their advantage to gain a better understanding of foreign peoples and cultures. "Agriculture of Developing Countries" is contributing to this goal.

REFERENCES

¹Middle East Knowledge Quotient.

²A magazine of the Arabian American Oil Company, a Corporation, 1345 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N. Y. 10019.

³The quiz was inspired by the John E. Gibson series published in the Family Weekly.

⁴The March 1971 issue of The Journal of the National Association of Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture, Page 30, includes the course outline and additional details.

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