



Almeria, Spain: an example of a large scale agricultural development

Key fact: Millions of tons of vegetables are exported to other European countries and other parts of the world each year.

<p>A huge number of greenhouses, made mainly of polythene and plastic, are found 30 km southwest of the city of Almería in southern Spain.</p> <p>It is estimated that there are 40,000 hectares of greenhouses producing over 2.7 million tonnes of produce each year. This creates over €1.2 billion in economic activity</p> <p>The whole area contains the largest concentration of greenhouses in the world.</p>	
<p>The plants are grown using hydroponics. They grow in grow-bags with a mix of water and nutrients. The water/nutrient solution is fed into the base of the plants via water pipes with small holes in called irrigation tubes.</p> <p>This is an industrial way of growing crops and can grow 2 entire crops a year.</p>	

ADVANTAGES

SOCIAL	ECONOMIC	ENVIRONMENTAL
<p>The area produces relatively cheap fresh fruit and vegetables for people all year round</p> <p>Creation of jobs (this overlaps with social – you could call this socio-economic)</p>	<p>There are also large amounts of cheap temporary labour available to help in the farming. Many migrants come from Eastern Europe and North Africa. The fruit and vegetables also need packing, and this creates extra jobs. Factories have been set up to recycle the plastic and this has meant more jobs.</p> <p>New scientific food-related companies have set up in the area, boosting the economy and creating jobs.</p>	<p>Drip irrigation and hydroponic water recycling reduces water use in this dry environment.</p> <p>The year-round warm temperatures help to cut energy costs</p>

DISADVANTAGES

SOCIAL	ECONOMIC	ENVIRONMENTAL
<p>The immigrant labour force is paid very low wages and they live in poor conditions.</p> <p>Some of the immigrants are from North Africa and work illegally in Spain, this causes clashes.</p>	<p>For the workers, low wages</p>	<p>Vast areas of land have been covered with plastic, affecting habitats and ecosystems</p> <p>Waste plastic is often burned and this is toxic and hazardous to human health. The greenhouses often use pesticides, but these cause some cancers.</p> <p>Large amounts of litter have been left in the area (plastic sheeting). Local riverbeds have been blocked up, there are fears that these could break and cause catastrophic flooding during intense rainstorms in this part of Spain.</p> <p>Despite efforts to limit water use, natural water sources are under stress</p>

Example question: Using a named example, evaluate the success of a large-scale agricultural development (6 marks)