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PART I: WRITTEN RECEPTION (60 points)

(ACCESS TO INFORMATION FROM WRITTEN TEXTS)

Read the article below and then answer questions 1–7.

FARMLAND RETURNS TO NATURE

I A surprising new trend is seen nowadays all over the world – farms are being abandoned and nature is taking over. Where crops once grew and sheep and cattle grazed, now trees and flowers are flourishing. Insects are returning, and even animals such as deer and wild cats are beginning to move in. For the first time in human history, the amount of farmed land is actually decreasing. Last year alone, an area twice the size of Greece went from farmland to wilderness. How can this dramatic change be explained?

II Among the factors driving the trend are the choices we make as consumers. Most notably, when buying meat and vegetables we generally opt for the least expensive. Through the intensive use of chemicals and modern technology, large industrial farms are able to supply much cheaper produce. Unable to compete with their prices, many owners of small farms have moved to cities in search of better-paid work. And it is not only small farms that are being abandoned. For example, some huge sheep farms in Australia are being forced out of business because of the sharp drop in the price of wool – the result of the worldwide preference for clothes made from synthetic materials.

III Ecologists and conservationists, of course, welcome the return of farmland to nature. "All farmland was home to wildlife before it was cleared for agricultural purposes," says ecologist Robert Lawson. "The 're-naturing' of land will enable many animal and plant species that are on the edge of extinction to spread and increase their numbers. It's also beneficial for us humans. For example, there's a significant improvement in air quality due to the increase in vegetation."

IV However, returning farmland to nature is not simple. "You can't just turn off the tractors and walk away," says Lawson. "Long-term farming often leaves the land in such terrible condition that wild plants can no longer grow there. Environmentalists have been trying out different ways to make these lands suitable for re-naturing. But the solution for one area is not necessarily good for any other, so we need to evaluate and monitor each project. Yes, it takes time, and yes, it's expensive, but it also provides employment for a lot of people."

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25 **V** In some countries, governments and conservation organizations are paying farmers to plant trees and wild flowers on the land they no longer farm. "Many of these areas have become tourist attractions, with people coming for the thrill of seeing wild animals in their natural habitat," says economist Gemma Richards. "Local farmers often provide visitors with a comfortable place to stay. They may no longer be doing traditional farming but they're still generating enough income to stay in
30 the countryside. Everybody wins."

QUESTIONS (60 points)

Answer questions **1–7** in English according to the article. In questions **1**, **4, 5** and **6**, circle the number of the correct answer. In the other questions, follow the instructions.

1. What do we learn from paragraph I about the abandoning of farmland?

i) What is happening as a result of it.

ii) What is causing it.

iii) Where it first began.

iv) Why it is happening so slowly.

(6 points)

2. What fact mentioned in lines 4–5 shows that the change is dramatic?

ANSWER: ..... .

(7 points)

3. In line 7 the writer refers to the choices consumers make. What TWO consumer choices are presented in paragraph II?

COMPLETE THE SENTENCES.

1) Consumers ..... .

2) Consumers ..... .

(2X7=14 points)

/המשך בעמוד 6

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4. What is explained in paragraph II?

i) Why use of chemicals helps plants grow.

ii) How farmland is being taken over by cities.

iii) Why industrial farms use modern technology.

iv) How people find better-paid jobs in the city.

(6 points)

5. What can we understand from paragraph III?

i) How pollution damages farmland.

ii) How air quality affects plant species.

iii) How farmland is cleared before re-naturing.

iv) How re-naturing can benefit animals. (7 points)

6. According to Lawson, why can't you "just turn off the tractors and walk away" (lines 19–20)?

Because (–).

i) it takes time for farmers to find another job

ii) the land needs to be prepared for re-naturing

iii) animals will still need to be looked after

iv) leaving the tractors will damage the land

(6 points)

7. Why does Richards say that "Everybody wins" (line 30)? Give TWO answers from paragraph V, according to the lines below.

COMPLETE THE ANSWERS.

1) Lines 26–27: Because tourists are able to .....
..... .

2) Lines 28–30: Because farmers can make money by .....
..... .

(2X7=14 points)

/המשך בעמוד 7

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PART II: WRITTEN PRODUCTION (40 points)

(WRITTEN PRESENTATION)

Write 120-140 words in English on the following topic.

8. Childhood is the most important time of a person's life. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Write a composition stating and explaining your opinion.

בהצלחה!

Use this page and the next (pages **7-8**) for writing a rough draft.

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Write your final version here. If necessary, you may use page 10 as well.

/המשך בעמוד 10

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