

VCE GEOGRAPHY MURRAY DARLING BASIN TOUR

Go to the website of the Murray-Darling Basin Commission

<http://www.mdbc.gov.au/>

Go to "Tour Basin river system."

Use the information provided to complete the following:

Dryland Regions

Dryland regions occupy _____ of the Basin. Three dryland regions within the basin are located at:

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

The Basin contains _____ farms, which represent _____ of all of Australia's farms. The main crop produced in the Basin is _____.

Irrigation

Identify 3 regions within the Basin where water is used for irrigation.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

The Basin contains _____ of Australia's irrigated land. The main crops produced through irrigation are _____, _____, _____ and _____. The value of these crops at the farm gate is _____, but this increases _____ after processing.

The Murray-Darling Basin produces _____ of Australia's cotton with most of this coming from locations along the _____ in northern NSW and Queensland.

Two main problems facing this irrigated region are:

(1) _____

(2) _____

Riverine

The riverine environments of the basin are important because they

An important part of this environment is the _____. There are _____ of these within the Murray-Darling Basin, ten of which are protected internationally under the RAMSAR treaty.

Another important use of this environment is _____, which contributes _____ to the economy. Examples of riverine environments include:

(1) _____

(2) _____

People

Aboriginal people used the Murray-Darling Basin for _____ years
The region supplied them with _____, _____ and _____

Europeans used the rivers as a _____ for _____.

The Murray-Darling Basin contains about _____ of Australia's population, located mostly in _____ areas. The population is _____ distributed throughout the Basin.

Go to http://www.mdbc.gov.au/eResource_book or search for eResources in the search facility

Chapter 3 Agriculture

Section 1: Introduction

Agriculture is the dominant economic activity in the Murray-Darling Basin. The Basin is Australia's most important agricultural region, accounting for just over _____ of the nation's gross value of agricultural production

The MDB dominates Australian _____ agriculture. The area of irrigated agriculture in the Basin is 1.9 million hectares which is _____ of the Australian total of 2.5 million hectares (in 2000/2001).

The Basin has been termed Australia 's agricultural heartland, its 'food basket', but it is much more than that, as its agricultural output makes a major contribution to the national economy. Agriculture provides:

(1) _____

(2) _____.

In the long term the Basin has the potential to make a major contribution to the expansion of Australia 's food exports, provided that this is undertaken in a way that is consistent with sustainable land management. However, the drought conditions which have occurred over the last decade (since about 1995) have affected, to varying degrees, almost all parts of the MDB and has resulted in reduced output and incomes of many agricultural enterprises (ABS 2001).

Section 3: Some major agricultural commodities

The vast area of the Basin encompasses a range of climatic conditions, making possible the production of a wide diversity of agricultural commodities, from sub-tropical to cool temperate. This section is essentially concerned with more than _____ different types of agricultural crops and livestock are produced in the MDB by dryland and irrigation farming (ABS 2001).

In the Murray-Darling Basin:

(1) _____ enterprises dominate the agriculture pursuits (see Figure 1 & 2) but with significant regional variations across the Basin. Sheep grazing is more dominant in _____ (Figure 2) but is also important across the southern MDB, whereas beef cattle and broad acre cropping is more important in the_____

(2) _____ is limited to the northeast and north-central Victoria and southern NSW in the Murray Catchment however small areas do exist in _____ and _____ catchments.

(3) The areas of _____, _____, _____, and _____ are relatively small and belie their economic significance

Complete the table using data from this section

Livestock	Distribution and Numbers	Value
Other Livestock		

Beef Cattle		
Dairy Cattle		
Sheep		

Section 4: Agricultural Crops

The total area devoted to agricultural crops in the MDB is_____. This is _____of the Australian crop area of _____ million hectares and 12 per cent of the total farm area in the MDB.

Major agricultural crops include cereals, coarse rains, rice, cotton, hay, legumes, oilseeds, peanuts, tree nuts, and the horticultural crops of fruit, grapes and vegetables.

The total gross value of production of agricultural crops in the Murray-Darling Basin in 2000-01 is _____ billion, which is nearly _____ per cent of the total gross value of agricultural production in the Basin. It is _____ per cent of the Australian gross value of agricultural crops of \$15.9 billion (ABS 2001). For Australia as a whole, the gross value of production of agricultural crops is _____ per cent of the total gross value of agricultural production.

Other crops grown in the MDB include:

Complete the table using data from this section

Crop	Distribution and Numbers	Value
Cereals		
Coarse Grains		
Rice		

Cotton		
Hay		

Section 5: Horticulture

The Murray-Darling Basin is a major producer of a large number of horticultural crops, particularly within the _____. The primary ones considered here are _____ and vegetables. These are the commodities most associated with irrigation in the MDB and the intensive irrigation schemes, especially the _____, _____, parts of the _____ Irrigation Area, and the _____ district.

A great variety of particular commodities is produced, with considerable variation from one location to another.

For example, there is a dominance of _____ in the Shepparton district, vines in _____, and vines, citrus and stone fruits in the _____

The total area devoted to horticultural production in the MDB is _____ hectares, of which is made up of _____ per cent being fruit crops, _____ per cent being grapes and _____ per cent are vegetables

Total horticultural production in the MDB is valued at \$_____ in 2001 and was _____ per cent of the total Australian revenue.

Complete the table using data from this section

Crop	Distribution and Numbers	Value
Fruit		
Grapes		

Vegetables		

Go To <http://www.mdbc.gov.au/news> and click *The Weekly Report* and *Latest Data*.

How much water is flowing through the Barmah Forest? _____ And how deep is it? _____

How much water is flowing through the Murray at Echuca (below Yarrawonga Weir)? _____ How deep is it? _____

Water is the Murray-Darling Basin's critical resource. The overall quantity is limited. The vagaries of Australia's climate and weather mean that its availability varies from year to year. It is a resource to be used and managed with care if its long-term sustainability is to be ensured (MDBMC 1995).