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Production of biofuels set to rise

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THE ARTICLE

The world's production of biofuels is set to rise rapidly over the next ten years. This is according to a new report by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. The report stated that increased global demand for biofuels will "boost international trade" over the next decade. This is because of rising concerns about global warming and the search for alternative energies. Governments around the world are desperate to reduce the amount of fossil fuels they use so they can meet their CO2 targets. The current record price of oil is fueling the scramble for biofuels. New biofuel production plants are springing up in developed countries all over the world. The race is on to produce clean and economically-friendly biofuels that will provide up to 20 per cent of the energy needs in the major world economies.

Biofuels are not without their critics. Many people believe they are a major cause of the current rise in food prices. Industry analysts disagree and say biofuels make up only five percent of these increases, and that supply and demand is more to blame. However, it seems that a sharp rise in biofuel production would greatly influence food prices. This is because more wheat, seeds, palm oil and sugar would go into making biofuels instead of feeding people and farm animals. There is a danger that food riots could spread across the world, even to rich countries. People would have cheaper fuel for their cars but more expensive food on store shelves. This would greatly increase the gap between the haves and have-nots. In October 2007, a United Nations spokesperson called biofuels a "crime against humanity".

WARM-UPS

1. ENERGY: Walk around the class and talk to other students about energy. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your partner(s) and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

production / biofuel / international trade / alternative energies / CO2 targets / oil price / critics / food prices / supply and demand / feeding people / haves and have nots

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. RISING PRICES: Look at these causes of rising food prices. With your partner(s), discuss what the world should do to stop the rises. Write your ideas in the table. Change partners and share your ideas. As a whole class, choose the best ideas.

rising oil prices	
population increase	
rise of middle classes	
biofuels	
global warming	
poor farming	

4. CHEAPER: What would you like to be cheaper? Rank the items below: 10 = "absolutely essential to be cheap;" 1 = "I don't care if prices go through the roof". Compare your answers with your partner(s).

_____ petrol

_____ transportation

_____ electricity and gas bills

_____ phone calls

_____ bread and rice

_____ air fares

_____ English lessons

_____ other _____

5. HEADLINE PREDICTION: With your partner(s), use the words in the "Chat" activity above to predict what the news article will be about. Once you have your story, change partners and share them. Who was closest to the real story?

6. FOSSIL FUELS: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the term 'fossil fuels'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. The production of biofuels will more than double over the next decade. T / F
- b. The demand for biofuels will help increase global trade. T / F
- c. Governments are extremely keen to replace fossil fuels with biofuels. T / F
- d. There is an international competition to produce a clean biofuel. T / F
- e. There are no critics of biofuels. T / F
- f. Analysts believe biofuels are a major cause of rising food prices. T / F
- g. It's possible that food riots might break out in developed countries. T / F
- h. A UN official said biofuels were a crime against humanity. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 1. set | a. push up |
| 2. rapidly | b. disadvantaged people |
| 3. boost | c. appearing |
| 4. fueling | d. quickly |
| 5. springing up | e. form |
| 6. critics | f. ready |
| 7. make up | g. difference |
| 8. influence | h. stimulating |
| 9. gap | i. affect |
| 10. have-nots | j. commentators |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. production of biofuels is set | a. of these increases |
| 2. boost | b. CO2 targets |
| 3. the search | c. their critics |
| 4. meet their | d. international trade |
| 5. production plants are springing | e. rise in biofuel production |
| 6. Biofuels are not without | f. to rise rapidly |
| 7. biofuels make up only five percent | g. for alternative energies |
| 8. a sharp | h. and have-nots |
| 9. There is a danger that food | i. up in developed countries |
| 10. the gap between the haves | j. riots could spread |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

The world's production of biofuels is _____ to rise rapidly over the next ten years. This is _____ to a new report by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. The report stated that increased global demand for biofuels will "boost international trade" over the next _____. This is because of rising _____ about global warming and the search for alternative energies. Governments around the world are _____ to reduce the amount of fossil fuels they use so they can meet their CO2 targets. The current record price of oil is fueling the _____ for biofuels. New biofuel production plants are springing up in developed countries all over the world. The _____ is on to produce clean and economically-_____ biofuels that will provide up to 20 per cent of the energy needs in the major world economies.

Biofuels are not _____ their critics. Many people believe they are a major cause of the _____ rise in food prices. Industry analysts disagree and say biofuels make up only five percent of these increases, and that _____ and demand is more to blame. However, it seems that a _____ rise in biofuel production would greatly influence food prices. This is because more wheat, seeds, palm oil and sugar would go into making biofuels instead of _____ people and farm animals. There is a danger that food _____ could spread across the world, even to rich countries. People would have cheaper fuel for their cars but more expensive food on store _____. This would greatly increase the gap between the haves and have-nots. In October 2007, a United Nations spokesperson called biofuels a "crime against _____".

desperate

decade

friendly

set

concerns

scramble

according

race

shelves

feeding

sharp

current

humanity

without

riots

supply

LISTENING: Listen and fill in the spaces.

The world's production of biofuels _____ over the next ten years. This is according to a new report by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. The report _____ global demand for biofuels will "boost international trade" _____. This is because of rising concerns about global warming _____ alternative energies. Governments around the world are desperate to reduce the amount of fossil fuels they use _____ their CO2 targets. The current record price of oil is _____ for biofuels. New biofuel production plants are springing up in developed countries all over the world. The _____ produce clean and economically-friendly biofuels that will provide up to 20 per cent _____ the major world economies.

Biofuels _____ critics. Many people believe they are a major cause _____ food prices. Industry analysts disagree and say biofuels make up only five percent of these increases, and that supply and demand _____. However, it seems that a sharp rise in biofuel production _____ food prices. This is because more wheat, seeds, palm oil and sugar would go into making biofuels instead of feeding people and farm animals. There is a danger _____ spread across the world, even to rich countries. People would have cheaper _____ but more expensive food on store shelves. This would greatly increase the gap between _____. In October 2007, a United Nations spokesperson called biofuels a "crime against humanity".

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'bio' and 'fuel'.

bio	fuel
------------	-------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• set• boost• search• meet• scramble• 20 per cent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• without• five percent• sharp• feeding• shelves• haves
--	--

STUDENT BIOFUELS SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about biofuels in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

BIOFUELS DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the term 'biofuel'?
- c) What are your thoughts on this article?
- d) What do you know about biofuels?
- e) Are you worried about the rise in food and oil prices?
- f) Do you think the rise in biofuels production is good or bad for the world?
- g) What does your country have to do to meet its CO2 targets?
- h) Do you think there are better alternatives to biofuels?
- i) How economically friendly do you think biofuels are?
- j) Do you think the world's major economies should reduce the energy they use?

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BIOFUELS DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What adjectives would you use to describe today's situation of rising prices?
- c) What do critics of biofuels say?
- d) How can supply and demand be to blame for rising food prices?
- e) What increases in food prices have you noticed?
- f) Do you think farmers should grow crops for fuel or food?
- g) Have there been food riots in your country? Would you protest in the streets?
- h) What do you think life is like for the have-nots?
- i) What questions would you like to ask the UN spokesperson?
- j) Did you like this discussion?

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LANGUAGE

The world's production of biofuels is set to rise (1) _____ over the next ten years. This is according to a new report by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. The report (2) _____ that increased global demand for biofuels will "boost international trade" over the (3) _____ decade. This is because of rising concerns about global warming and the search (4) _____ alternative energies. Governments around the world are desperate to reduce the amount of fossil fuels they use so they can meet their CO2 targets. The current record price of oil is (5) _____ the scramble for biofuels. New biofuel production plants are springing up in developed countries all over the world. The race is (6) _____ to produce clean and economically-friendly biofuels that will provide up to 20 per cent of the energy needs in the major world economies.

Biofuels are (7) _____ without their critics. Many people believe they are a major cause of the current rise in food prices. Industry analysts disagree and say biofuels make (8) _____ only five percent of these increases, and that supply and demand is more to blame. However, it seems that a sharp rise in biofuel production would greatly (9) _____ food prices. This is because more wheat, seeds, palm oil and sugar would go into making biofuels instead of (10) _____ people and farm animals. There is a danger that food riots could spread across the world, (11) _____ to rich countries. People would have cheaper fuel for their cars but more expensive food on store shelves. This would greatly increase the gap between the (12) _____ and have-nots. In October 2007, a United Nations spokesperson called biofuels a "crime against humanity".

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|-----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. | (a) rapidness | (b) rapidity | (c) rapid | (d) rapidly |
| 2. | (a) state | (b) statement | (c) stated | (d) stating |
| 3. | (a) current | (b) next | (c) last | (d) one |
| 4. | (a) for | (b) by | (c) with | (d) to |
| 5. | (a) fueled | (b) fuels | (c) fueling | (d) fuel |
| 6. | (a) won | (b) over | (c) in | (d) on |
| 7. | (a) none | (b) not | (c) no | (d) nope |
| 8. | (a) up | (b) over | (c) it | (d) to |
| 9. | (a) influencing | (b) influence | (c) influences | (d) influenced |
| 10. | (a) feeds | (b) food | (c) feeding | (d) fed |
| 11. | (a) even | (b) evenly | (c) evenness | (d) evening |
| 12. | (a) have | (b) has | (c) had | (d) haves |

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about biofuels and how they influence rising food prices. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. ALTERNATIVE ENERGIES: Make a poster about alternative energies. Include the ones that are used in your country. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. RIOTS: Write a magazine article about food riots. Include imaginary interviews with haves and have-nots. Include questions about food prices and oil prices.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to the head of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. Ask him/her three questions about biofuels and food production. Give him/her three pieces of advice on what (s)he should do to make sure there is enough food in the world. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

6. DIARY / JOURNAL: You are a farmer. You need to decide if you will produce crops for food or fuel. Write your diary entry about one day in your life. Include your thoughts on biofuels and rising food prices. Read your entry to your classmates in the next lesson.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. T c. T d. F e. F f. F g. T h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 1. set | a. ready |
| 2. rapidly | b. quickly |
| 3. boost | c. push up |
| 4. fueling | d. stimulating |
| 5. springing up | e. appearing |
| 6. critics | f. commentators |
| 7. make up | g. form |
| 8. influence | h. affect |
| 9. gap | i. difference |
| 10. have-nots | j. disadvantaged people |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. production of biofuels is set | a. to rise rapidly |
| 2. boost | b. international trade |
| 3. the search | c. for alternative energies |
| 4. meet their | d. CO2 targets |
| 5. production plants are springing | e. up in developed countries |
| 6. Biofuels are not without | f. their critics |
| 7. biofuels make up only five percent | g. of these increases |
| 8. a sharp | h. rise in biofuel production |
| 9. There is a danger that food | i. riots could spread |
| 10. the gap between the haves | j. and have-nots |

GAP FILL:

Production of biofuels set to rise

The world's production of biofuels is **set** to rise rapidly over the next ten years. This is **according** to a new report by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. The report stated that increased global demand for biofuels will "boost international trade" over the next **decade**. This is because of rising **concerns** about global warming and the search for alternative energies. Governments around the world are **desperate** to reduce the amount of fossil fuels they use so they can meet their CO2 targets. The current record price of oil is fueling the **scramble** for biofuels. New biofuel production plants are springing up in developed countries all over the world. The **race** is on to produce clean and economically-**friendly** biofuels that will provide up to 20 per cent of the energy needs in the major world economies.

Biofuels are not **without** their critics. Many people believe they are a major cause of the **current** rise in food prices. Industry analysts disagree and say biofuels make up only five percent of these increases, and that **supply** and demand is more to blame. However, it seems that a **sharp** rise in biofuel production would greatly influence food prices. This is because more wheat, seeds, palm oil and sugar would go into making biofuels instead of **feeding** people and farm animals. There is a danger that food **riots** could spread across the world, even to rich countries. People would have cheaper fuel for their cars but more expensive food on store **shelves**. This would greatly increase the gap between the haves and have-nots. In October 2007, a United Nations spokesperson called biofuels a "crime against **humanity**".

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d 2 - c 3 - b 4 - a 5 - c 6 - d 7 - b 8 - a 9 - b 10 - c 11 - a 12 - d