

Reading: European harvest

16th September 2014

Topics: farming, harvest, weather

Learning points:

- vocabulary
- lots of, much, many
- present perfect tense
- idiomatic expressions

Level 1

1 Did you hear about the harvest¹ in Europe this autumn? I saw a report on the television
2 news and read some information on the internet. Some farmers were happy with the
3 harvest. Wheat² and oil-seed rape³ were good this year. The grape⁴ harvest is very bad.
4 There are not many grapes and they are not sweet enough, so 2014 will be a bad wine
5 year.

not many
not enough
lots of
more than

6
7 The big problem is with the fruit and vegetable harvest. The harvest of apples, pears⁵
8 and plums⁶ is excellent, but the market price is too low. Farmers will leave lots of fruit
9 on the trees because the cost of picking them is more than their selling price.
10 Hundreds of tonnes of potatoes, cabbages, tomatoes and cucumbers⁷ will rot⁸.

will + verb

11
12 Why is this happening? Mainly⁹ because Russia is not buying any agricultural products
13 from EU countries. In 2013 the value of food exports to Russia was €6.5 billion.
14 Now European farmers are feeling the effect¹⁰ of the crisis in the Ukraine – but for
15 normal people, food is cheap.

am/is/are + ing

Level 2

16
17
18 The harvest in Europe has been making news headlines recently¹¹. The quality of the
19 harvest has been mixed, with a good grain¹² crop¹³, a fantastic fruit crop, but a very poor
20 grape harvest this year. The grapes are not sweet enough because there hasn't been
21 enough sun this summer, apparently¹⁴. However, the news is not the effect of the
22 weather on the crop, but the impact¹⁵ of Russian sanctions on the price of food.
23 Since Russia banned imports of agricultural produce from EU countries, the prices have
24 dropped by 50%, 70% or even 80%.

have + been + --ing

25
26 With such low prices, farmers cannot even afford to pay workers to pick or to transport
27 their produce. They are leaving fruit on the trees in the orchards¹⁶ and they are dumping
28 hundreds of tonnes of vegetables like cabbages and cucumbers to rot.

such, even

29 Last year the EU exported €6.5 billion of food to Russia. Now the effect of the sanctions
30 caused by the Ukraine crisis is affecting European farmers directly. For consumers, it
31 means food prices will stay low, but even this is not good news for inflation and the
32 European economy.

affect; effect

adverb: directly

¹ harvest = Ernte, ernten

² wheat = Weizen

³ oil-seed rape = Rapsöl

⁴ grape = Traube

⁵ pear = Birne

⁶ plum = Pflaume, Zwetschke

⁷ cucumber = Salatgurke

⁸ rot = verderben, verrotten

⁹ mainly = hauptsächlich

¹⁰ effect = Auswirkung

¹¹ recently = in letzte Zeit

¹² grain = Getreide

¹³ crop = Ernte, Ausbeute, Anbauertrag

¹⁴ apparently = anscheinend

¹⁵ impact = Auswirkung, Aufschlag

¹⁶ orchard = Obstgarten



Level 3

33 The European harvest has been making headlines recently, for the wrong reasons.
 34 Some farmers have had a bumper¹⁷ crop, particularly of fruit like plums, pears and
 35 apples. The grain harvest was also reasonably good this summer, but an exception has
 36 been the grape harvest which has suffered¹⁸ badly from a lack¹⁹ of sunshine, leaving too
 37 few grapes that are not sweet enough. Don't expect 2014 to be a vintage²⁰ year!
 38
 39 Unfortunately, the excellent crop has exacerbated²¹ the problems caused by the Russian
 40 ban on food imports from EU countries. There is a glut²² on the market and prices have
 41 plummeted²³, by as much as 50%, 70% or even 80%. Fruit can't be picked or
 42 transported, because the cost of doing so would be higher than the income earned from
 43 the produce.
 44
 45 So fruit and vegetables are simply being left to rot and farmers left to count their costs.
 46 In 2013, agricultural exports to Russia from EU countries were worth €6.5 billion, so
 47 farmers will certainly feel the pinch – they are being hit hard by the crisis in the Ukraine.
 48
 49 Although the low prices are good news for consumers, they are contributing²⁴ to the
 50 very low level of inflation in Europe, which in the long-term is detrimental²⁵ to the
 51 economic recovery. All in all, it's been a poor harvest for Europe.

adverbs

--ing connective

passive

present continuous
passive

idiomatic
expressions

¹⁷ bumper crop = Rekordernte

¹⁸ suffer = erleiden

¹⁹ lack of = Mangel

²⁰ vintage year = hervorragend Jahrgang

²¹ exacerbated = verschlimmern

²² glut = Überfluss, Schwemme

²³ plummet = stürzen

²⁴ contribute = Beitrag leisten

²⁵ detrimental = schädlich für etw