

Corrigé sujet BCPST 2026

I- Compréhension Ecrite

Why are farmers in France and Ireland worried about the EU-Mercosur agreement?

Premier principe : répondre à la question !

De trop nombreuses copies n'ont pas pris en compte la question posée. L'interrogatif « Why » devait vous mener à trouver les raisons de la colère des agriculteurs. Il ne s'agissait pas de lister le pour et le contre de l'accord du Mercosur.

Deuxième principe : synthétiser et utiliser ses propres mots

Ces deux compétences sont complémentaires, car en apportant une réponse synthétique, vous allez nécessairement réutiliser vos propres mots.

Ainsi, la réponse ne peut pas être une série de discours rapporté « he said that...and he said that... ». En utilisant ces marqueurs du discours rapporté, vous n'utilisez pas vos propres mots et vous ne synthétisez pas les propos des intervenants. Votre capacité à dire autrement les éléments témoignera de votre bonne compréhension du texte et des enjeux sous-jacents.

Pour synthétiser, vous devez trouver l'argument principal, l'idée principale qui est mise en avant et bien repérer qui énonce cela.

Troisième principe : organiser, hiérarchiser, relier

Ici il était tout naturel d'organiser les paragraphes en fonction des arguments. Les éléments que vous employez pour répondre à la question doivent être bien expliqués, de manière logique. Les connecteurs logiques ont donc une grande importance.

Quatrième principe : être clair(e), cohérent(e)

Imaginez un lecteur qui n'ait pas lu les textes, il devrait pouvoir comprendre ce dont il s'agit et comprendre quelle question vous a été posée. Pour plus de clarté il fallait par exemple expliquer un minimum ce qu'était le Mercosur. Ne brûlez pas des étapes très importantes à la compréhension. Si le bœuf argentin va être moins cher c'est parce que cet accord autorise l'importation de ce bœuf sans frais de douane (*tariff*). Vous ne pouvez pas vous contenter de dire que le bœuf argentin sera moins cher, il faut expliquer pourquoi.

Contresens

Attention à ne pas faire une surinterprétation du texte. Par exemple, les agriculteurs ne sont pas forcément inquiets de l'impact sanitaire de la viande en provenance des pays du Mercosur. S'ils parlent des différences de normes sanitaires, c'est surtout pour montrer qu'il y a des différences de traitement et que la concurrence est donc injuste.

Faites attention aux temps que vous employez. Lorsque les textes sont parus, l'accord du Mercosur n'avait pas été signé (il n'a été signé que le 17 janvier 2026). Donc vous deviez parler des effets négatifs envisagés (et non déjà vécus).

L'article d'opinion en français invitait les consommateurs à voter avec leur portefeuille. Cela ne veut pas dire qu'ils peuvent voter littéralement pour contrer le Mercosur.

Suggested answer :

*At the end of last year, French and Irish farmers **were up in arms over** the Mercosur **trade deal**. An informative article published in The Irish Times in January 2026 (doc. 2) and an opinion piece published in Courrier Picard in December 2025 (doc. 1) outline their concerns.*

*First, farmers are worried about the economic impact of the Mercosur **trade agreement**. Mercosur countries will be allowed to export many products to the EU with lower **tariffs**. As a result, these products will be cheaper than their European **counterparts** (doc.2). They will **compete with** locally produced goods, especially beef. Moreover, Brazil has about forty times as many cattle as Ireland, which is why Irish farmers **fear** they will be unable to compete with Brazilian beef (doc. 2).*

*The competition is all the more **unfair** because production standards are not equivalent. Beef producers in Latin America are allowed to use antibiotics and hormones that are banned in the EU. **Likewise**, traceability and transparency systems are less **stringent** there than in Europe (doc.2).*

***Although** this deal appears unfair to Irish and French farmers, they fear that other EU countries may **overlook** their concerns in pursuit of their own interests. Germany, for instance, supports the agreement because it hopes to increase its car exports (doc. 1). French and Irish farmers therefore recognize that consumers may ultimately be their **lifeline** (doc.1).*

***All in all**, Irish and French farmers are concerned about their already fragile incomes (doc.1), as they will have to face what they perceive as unfair competition and may increasingly have to **rely on** consumers' **purchasing choices**.*

<i>To be up in arms over</i>		<i>Likewise</i>	
<i>A trade deal</i>		<i>Stringent</i>	
<i>A trade agreement</i>		<i>Although</i>	
<i>Tariffs</i>		<i>To overlook</i>	
<i>Counterparts</i>		<i>A lifeline</i>	
<i>To compete with</i>		<i>All in all</i>	
<i>To fear</i>		<i>To rely on</i>	
<i>unfair</i>		<i>Purchasing choices</i>	

Extraits du rapport : Les copies ayant correctement identifié l'article du Courrier picard comme un article d'opinion, contrastant avec l'article plus informatif de l'Irish Times, ont été valorisées.

Il convient de prêter attention aux dates complètes : les candidats n'ayant pas observé les dates de publication des deux articles assez attentivement ont suggéré que ces deux articles avaient été publiés à un an d'intervalle, ce qui a pu gêner leur appréciation de la situation.

- Concurrence directe sur les prix
- Baisse des revenus des agriculteurs européens
- Différence d'échelle entre l'UE et le Mercosur
- Déséquilibre des échanges (produits agricoles dans un sens, produits industriels dans l'autre)
- Agriculture sacrifiée au profit d'autres secteurs Normes sanitaires (hormones et antibiotiques) => Concurrence jugée déloyale Traçabilité et transparence, réglementation et critères moins stricts
- Qualité des produits potentiellement moindre
- Possible impact sur la santé des consommateurs
- Manque de soutien politique

Le jury a parfois pu accorder des points de compréhension même quand la question n'était pas parfaitement ciblée, mais cela n'a pas toujours été possible. On pourra, par exemple, comparer :

- Irish beef offers transparency and traceability, and cows are well-treated => C'est positif ; ce ne sont donc pas des raisons de s'inquiéter => Cela ne répond pas à la question.

South-American beef lacks transparency and traceability, and animal welfare is questionable => Les agriculteurs européens s'en inquiètent => Cela contribue à répondre à la question.

At the end of last year, French and Irish farmers were up in arms over the Mercosur deal. A January 2026 Irish Times informative article (Doc. 2) and an opinion piece from Courrier Picard published in December 2025 (Doc. 1) lay out their concerns.

French and Irish farmers fear the agreement will hurt their economic situation. By reducing trade barriers, it would allow more South American agricultural products, especially beef, to enter the EU market (Doc. 2). Farmers worry that cheaper imports will increase price competition and reduce their profits (Docs. 1 & 2). They also stress the huge difference in scale between European farms and producers in Mercosur countries, particularly Brazil (Doc. 2). In addition, they feel that agriculture is being sacrificed to secure advantages for European industrial sectors such as the automobile and chemical industries, creating an unbalanced exchange of goods (Docs. 1 & 2).

Farmers also denounce what they see as unfair competition. According to them, Mercosur producers do not have to comply with the same rules regarding traceability, transparency and the use of hormones or antibiotics banned in Europe (Doc. 2). As a result, European farmers believe they are competing under unequal conditions (Doc. 2).

Finally, they fear that lower production standards could affect product quality and potentially consumer health (Doc. 2). Both texts also suggest that farmers feel insufficiently supported by political leaders despite their protests and repeated warnings (Docs. 1 & 2). (216 words)

II- Expression Ecrite

a) Do you think consumers should be responsible for protecting local agriculture through the products they buy? Why or why not?

Il est inacceptable de mal orthographier les mots qui sont présents dans la question.

RESPONSIBLE FOR était donné dans la question.

Afin de bien répondre à la question, il faut d'abord bien la comprendre et identifier les mots clefs.

WHO ? « consumers »

WHAT ? Protecting local agriculture

HOW ? through the products they buy

Ce qui était hors sujet : montrer que les consommateurs pouvaient aller manifester ou voter. Ici on vous parle des achats.

Il ne faut pas répéter les arguments et reprendre les exemples des textes. Cet exercice vise à mettre en avant vos connaissances personnelles. Chaque argument doit être justifié. Si vous estimez que les consommateurs sont en effet responsables, alors il faut le justifier et le prouver.

Vos arguments doivent être nuancés, vous devez montrer les limites. Ici elle était toute trouvée : les consommateurs sont certes responsables mais dans la limite de ce qui leur est proposé ! Cela vous permet de prendre en compte un autre acteur : le gouvernement.

Suggested answer :

*In many sectors – whether for environmental or public health reasons – governments in Europe and the United States tend to **emphasise** the importance of individual choices. With local agriculture being threatened by **unregulated markets**, is it **fair** to consider consumers solely responsible?*

***Admittedly**, consumers do have some power and can influence markets. Advocates of a laissez-faire economy would argue that markets respond to the laws of **supply and demand**. When demand falls, some products may be **taken off the shelves**. Some successful consumer campaigns have even **prompted brands** to change their practices (**cage-free eggs** have become increasingly common). Consumers can bring about gradual change, and the growth of **short food supply chains** in the United States and the United Kingdom since the Covid-19 pandemic is a case in point.*

*However, consumers are often **constrained** by **tight** budgets. The **cost-of-living crisis** in the United Kingdom and the affordability crisis in the United States are evidence of persistent inflation, which leaves many **households** with **little room for choice**. Governments, **by contrast**, have far greater **leverage** and can support local farmers through appropriate policies. In the UK, for instance, even after the country's **withdrawal** from the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), public **funding** has continued to help farmers **improve** productivity and remain competitive.*

*In conclusion, governments along with all the actors in the food supply chain, **wield** far greater influence when it comes to protecting local farmers. Yet placing the **burden** on consumers remains the easiest and least politically risky option. (246 words)*

<i>To emphasise</i>		<i>The cost-of-living crisis</i>	
<i>Unregulated markets</i>		<i>Households</i>	
<i>Fair</i>		<i>Little room for</i>	
<i>Admittedly</i>		<i>By contrast</i>	
<i>Supply and demand</i>		<i>Leverage</i>	
<i>To take off the shelves</i>		<i>Withdrawal</i>	
<i>To prompt</i>		<i>Funding</i>	
<i>A brand</i>		<i>To improve</i>	
<i>Cage-free eggs</i>		<i>To wield</i>	
<i>Short food supply chains</i>		<i>Burden</i>	
<i>To be constrained</i>			
<i>tight</i>			

Extrait du rapport :

Some will argue that consumers can “vote with their wallets” by choosing which products they buy. Consumers can indeed play an important role in protecting local agriculture, but they cannot be the only ones responsible.

On the one hand, consumer choices clearly influence the market. In many countries, demand for local or organic food has increased significantly in recent years. In the United Kingdom, for instance, the success of farmers' markets and campaigns encouraging people to buy British produce has helped raise awareness of local farming. Such initiatives show that purchasing decisions can affect producers' opportunities and encourage more sustainable food systems.

However, it is unrealistic to expect consumers to carry this responsibility alone. Many households face financial constraints and naturally choose cheaper products, especially during periods of inflation. Imported goods are often more affordable, even when their production standards are lower. In addition, consumers do not always have clear information about where products come from or how they are produced.

Protecting local agriculture should therefore also involve governments and retailers. States can adopt protectionist measures such as higher tariffs on imported goods – though those might entail retaliation from abroad, stricter sanitary regulations or subsidies for local farmers. Supermarkets could also promote local food more actively by clearly labelling regional products or reserving dedicated sections for local producers.

In conclusion, consumer choices matter, but protecting agriculture requires collective action involving citizens, businesses and public authorities. (235 words)

b) Is balancing economic growth with the protection of rural livelihoods possible?

La plus grande difficulté était de bien comprendre les termes du sujet, notamment « rural livelihoods ».

Livelihoods : moyens d'existence

Ensuite, il faut essayer de voir d'où peut provenir la tension (qui mène ensuite à la problématique). Bien souvent economic growth s'accompagne de constructions d'infrastructures de modernisation etc. qui peuvent mettre en péril les moyens de subsistance des populations rurales.

Extrait du rapport :

Economic growth is often seen as essential for prosperity, but it can sometimes come at the expense of rural communities. Although balancing economic growth with the protection of rural livelihoods is difficult, it is not impossible.

Economic growth often relies on free trade, industrial concentration and increased competition. While this can lower prices and stimulate innovation, it may also weaken rural economies. Farmers often struggle to compete with large international producers, and small local businesses can disappear as economic activity becomes concentrated in large cities. As a result, many rural areas face unemployment, declining public services and rural exodus, especially among younger generations.

However, economic growth and rural protection do not necessarily oppose each other. Rural regions can adapt by promoting high-quality local products, sustainable tourism and environmentally friendly agriculture. Labels such as organic certification or protected geographical indications help producers remain competitive while preserving local traditions and know-how. Improved digital infrastructure and remote working could also attract new populations.

Nevertheless, this balance requires political support. Governments and the European Union must invest in transport, schools and healthcare while ensuring fair competition through regulations and subsidies. In Scotland, better digital infrastructure has helped remote communities stay connected to wider markets. Supermarkets and companies can also support local producers more actively.

In conclusion, economic growth can coexist with the protection of rural livelihoods, but only if policies reduce territorial inequalities rather than sacrifice rural communities for economic efficiency alone. (238 words)