1 Knowledge of the nitrogen cycle can be used to make decisions about management of farmland. A farmer uses her grass meadow to raise sheep. In a separate field she grows cabbages.

(a) Fig. 1.1 shows part of the nitrogen cycle. The four boxes on the bottom line of the diagram refer to substances in the soil.

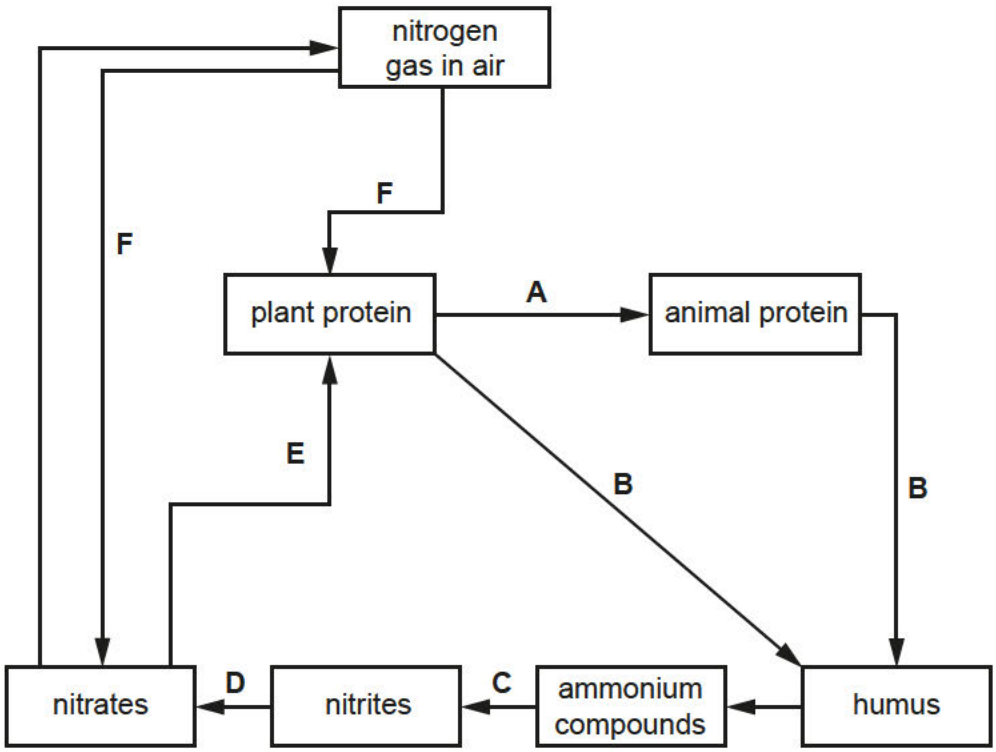


Fig. 1.1

(i) Briefly describe the steps that must occur for plant protein to be converted to animal protein in the farmer's sheep, as shown by arrow **A** on Fig. 1.1.

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(ii) List the processes which contribute to **B** in the meadow where sheep are raised.

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(iii) Name the bacteria that carry out processes **C** and **D, and** explain the significance of these bacteria for the growth of plants.

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(iv) Use the letters on Fig. 1.1 to explain why the soil nitrate concentration will decrease in the cabbage field if it is used to grow repeated crops of cabbages year after year.

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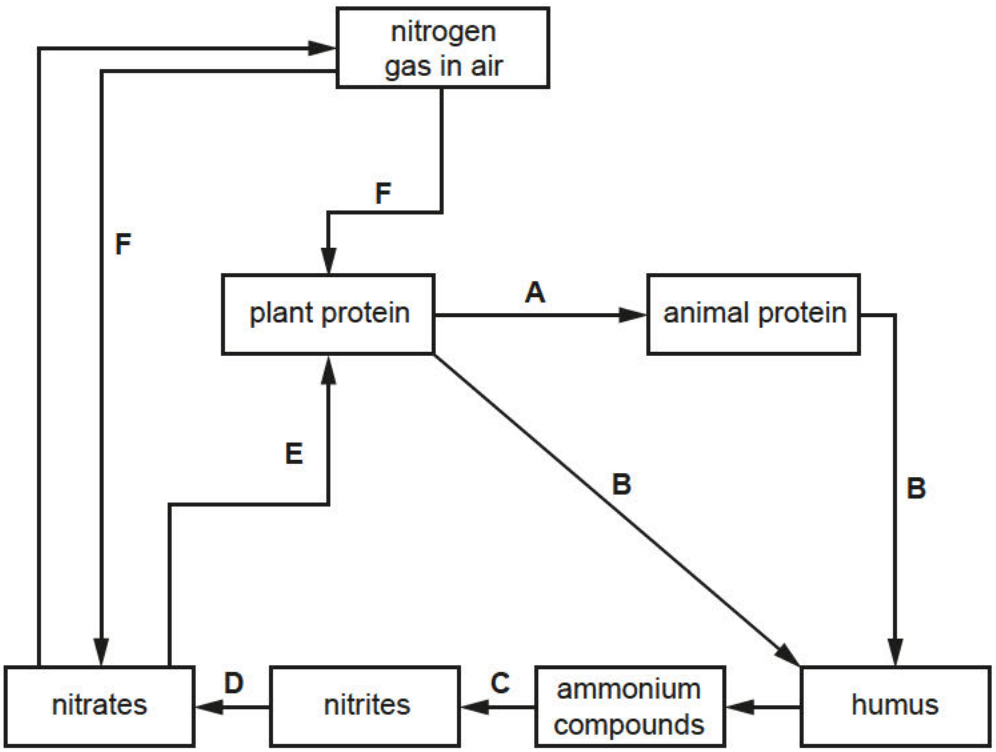


Fig. 1.1

(v) The farmer does not wish to use inorganic fertiliser to replace the nitrate in the soil of the cabbage field. She wishes to make use of process **F**.

Suggest a crop she could plant that would allow process **F** to occur **and** explain how this would add nitrate to the soil.

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(b) The sheep on this farm belong to a rare breed called Greyface Dartmoor. The Rare Breeds Survival Trust (RBST) gives advice on looking after these sheep and keep records to monitor the breeding of these sheep, in order to maintain a healthy population.

Why is the continued existence of rare breeds of farm animals desirable?

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(c) North Ronaldsay sheep are listed as 'endangered' by the Rare Breeds Survival Trust. These sheep were raised on a small Scottish Island where they were kept along the seashore for most of the year. The sheep developed an unusual metabolism that allowed them to survive by eating seaweed. They are, however, susceptible to copper poisoning when fed on grass.

(i) State the **two** essential steps that must have occurred for a breed to develop a distinctive metabolism, such as the ability to eat mainly seaweed.

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(ii) Suggest what particular problems make the North Ronaldsay breed one of the most endangered sheep breeds in the United Kingdom.

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[Total: 20]

2 Total plant growth within an ecosystem depends on the light intensity, temperature and the supply of water and inorganic minerals to the ecosystem.

Table 3.1 shows the net primary production by plants in four different ecosystems.

Table 3.1

ecosystem	net primary production ($kJ\,m^{-2}\,year^{-1}$)
temperate grassland	9240
temperate woodland	11340
tropical grassland	13440
tropical rainforest	36160

(a) Discuss possible reasons for the differences in net primary production in these ecosystems.

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(b) To calculate the net primary production figures in Table 3.1 in $kJ\,m^{-2}\,year^{-1}$, it is necessary to measure the energy content of the primary producers.

Outline how the energy content, in kJ, of a primary producer such as grass can be measured in the laboratory.

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(c) The efficiency with which consumers convert the food they eat into their own biomass is generally low.

Table 3.2 compares the energy egested, absorbed and respired in four types of animal.

Table 3.2

animal	percentage of energy consumed that is:			
	egested	absorbed	respired	converted to biomass
grasshopper, a herbivorous insect	63	37	24	13
perch, a carnivorous fish	17	83	61	
cow, a herbivorous mammal	60	40	39	
bobcat, a carnivorous mammal	17	83	77	6

(i) **Complete Table 3.2** to show the percentage of energy consumed that is converted into biomass in the perch and the cow.

You may use the space below for your working.

(ii) Describe **and** explain, using the data from Table 3.2, how the trophic level of a **mammal** affects the percentage of its food energy that it is able to convert to biomass.

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(iii) Using the data from Table 3.2 and your knowledge of energy flow through food chains, suggest which of these four animals could be farmed to provide the maximum amount of food energy in $kJ\,m^{-2}\,year^{-1}$ for humans.

Explain the reasons for your choice.

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[Total: 14]

3 Describe the differences between the following biological terms:

(a) a pioneer community and a climax community

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(b) decomposition and denitrification

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(c) conservation and preservation

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(d) nitrogen fixation and nitrification.

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[Total: 8]

4 Rhubarb, *Rheum x hybridum*, is a plant that is grown for its edible stems. In Spring, the stems and leaves grow from fleshy roots which survive the Winter underground.

Growers have developed many new varieties of rhubarb by growing plants from seed, choosing the best young plants and then asexually reproducing them.

Seeds are produced by sexual reproduction and the rhubarb plants that grow from seed show variation in characteristics such as stem colour, dormancy period and the concentration of oxalic acid in their leaves.

(a) Outline the events that lead to genetic variation in gametes **and** in the plants grown from seed.

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(b) Traditionally, rhubarb plants have been produced by vegetative propagation. The best young rhubarb plants are allowed to grow for three seasons until their underground root systems are large enough. They are then dug up in Winter, the roots are cut into pieces and the pieces are replanted. Each piece is then able to grow into a new rhubarb plant that is identical to the parent.

(i) State the biotechnological term for this type of vegetative propagation.

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(ii) A gardener wished to multiply his rhubarb plants using the traditional method, but he discovered that his plants were infected by a virus.

Name the modern technique which allows commercial growers to produce large numbers of genetically identical plants that are also virus-free.

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(iii) Rhubarb plants must spend seven to nine weeks at a temperature below 3 °C in order to break their winter dormancy and allow them to start growing stems and leaves again.

The length of the cold period that is required depends on the variety of rhubarb.

In the variety 'Timperley Early', the length of the cold period is shorter, so the plants grow and produce a crop earlier in the year than the variety 'Victoria'.

Suggest **two** ways in which the varieties may differ from one another **biochemically** to account for the difference in the length of the cold period required by each.

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(c) Rhubarb leaves contain oxalic acid, a relatively strong acid which is soluble in water and alcohol. High concentrations of oxalic acid makes rhubarb leaves poisonous to humans and other animals.

(i) The amount of oxalic acid in the leaves varies according to the variety of rhubarb, the age of the plant and environmental factors.

Suggest and plan an experiment to compare how the variety of rhubarb affects the amount of oxalic acid in rhubarb leaves.

Include in your plan:

- the variables that you could control
- an outline of the experimental procedure you would use
- any measurements that you would make.



In your answer you should make clear which are the independent, dependent and controlled variables.

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(ii) As rhubarb leaves are poisonous, they are cut off when the stems are harvested and may be left to decompose on the compost heap.

Outline the role of **decomposers** in the decomposition of leaves.

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(d) An early harvest of rhubarb stems can be obtained by placing an upturned bin over the root when it comes out of dormancy, so the emerging shoots are kept in the dark. The shoots then grow more quickly to a height suitable for picking.

Use your knowledge of **plant growth regulators** (plant hormones) to suggest why shoots kept in the dark grow taller than those left in the light.

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[Total: 21]