

# Trading In Virtual Water

Read the information and study Table A and Table B to help you to complete the questions.



If something is 'virtual' it means that it does not actually exist in the form you may expect. Virtual water is water used in the production process of food or other commodities such as electricity. For example, in order to produce one kilogram of wheat it takes approximately

1,000 litres of water. This gives the wheat produced a virtual water content of 1,000 litres. A way in which water can be spatially redistributed is by measuring the amount of virtual water in products traded with other countries.

Countries with significant

amounts of water can produce products which require large amounts of water and export those products to countries which lack the water to produce those goods. This relieves pressure on the water resources of different countries. This is how 'virtual water trade' occurs.

TABLE A

Product	Quantity	Virtual Content Per Litre
glass of milk	250 ml	250
cup of coffee	125 ml	140
cup of tea	125 ml	20
slice of bread	30 g	40
slice of bread with cheese	30 g + 10 g	90
glass of orange juice	200 ml	170
hamburger	150 g	2400
beef	1 kg	15500
cheese	1 kg	4400
butter	1 kg	18000

TABLE B

Product	Quantity	Virtual Content Per Litre
car	1100 kg	400000
cotton t-shirt	75 g	810
jeans	1 pair 1 kg	10850

A. Use Table A above to work out how much virtual water is needed to make the following meals.

- A glass of milk with a slice of bread and cheese.
- A hamburger and glass of orange juice.
- A cup of coffee and two slices of toast.

  
  


B. How much virtual water is used to make the following everyday products that you own?

- How many cars do your family own? How many litres of virtual water was used to manufacture them?
- How many pairs of jeans do you own? How many litres of virtual water was used to make them?
- How many t-shirts do you own? How many litres of virtual water was used to make them?

  
  


C. Explain the term 'virtual water trade' in your own words.

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