

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Per \_\_\_\_\_ Score \_\_\_\_\_

## Science Article of the Week: Bugs

Directions:

**Step 1:** Read the article.

A

**Step 2:** Read the article again. This time, use the text codes to annotate (mark) the article. You must use 3 different codes at least once. Highlight with a highlighter the area you are coding. You must also make a comment next to each code.

**Step 3:** Answer the following questions about the article:

1. Why is the article important to you and your family?
2. List one observation or fact in the article.
3. List one of the author's inferences (assumption that may or may not be true) in the article.

Text Code	Explanations
✓	When you read something that makes you say, "Yeah, I knew that" or "I predicted that" or "I saw that coming."
X	When you run across something that contradicts what you know or expect.
?	When you have a question, need clarification, or are unsure.
!	When you discover something new, surprising, exciting, or fun that makes you say cool, whoa, yuck, no way, awesome.
★	When you read something that seems important, vital, key, memorable or powerful.
👁️	When the ready really makes you see or visualize something.
🔗	When you have a connection between the text and your life, the world or other things you read. "That reminds me of..."
ZZZ	This is a boring part. I'm falling asleep.

# Despite drought and bugs, "we're farmers and we'll continue to farm."

By Los Angeles Times, adapted by Newsela staff  
07.03.15

Word Count **606**

SYRACUSE, Utah — For many years, farmer Neal Briggs has looked east to the mighty Wasatch mountain range. Each spring, he saw snowy peaks in the Rocky mountains nearby. From these he knew how much water would fill nearby streams. They would then flow into his wheat fields. Briggs farms 300 acres near Salt Lake City.

Now, Briggs looks to the mountains and sees mostly bare rock. Utah is in a bad drought. The state is low on water. Down in his fields he sees another problem: insects. This year, Utah had its warmest and least-snowy winter since the late 1800s. The snowpack lower down on the mountains has melted. Most of the snow at higher altitudes will soon follow.

## Warm Winter Brings Bad Bug Problem

"This is one of those years farmers will tell their grandkids about," said Utah water expert Randall Julander. "About just how dry it was and how bad it was." Drought now grips almost half of the West, with no end in sight. Globally, 9 of the 10 warmest years recorded since 1880 have happened since 2000. Streams and lakes are running very low all over.

Briggs sees another challenge from Utah's warm winter: killer insects called aphids. These insects usually freeze in the winter. They survived this year and began attacking farmland in the spring. Briggs didn't even know the speck-like insects were attacking his fields. Then he spotted tens of thousands of predator ladybugs coming to eat the aphids.

"I thought, 'Maybe we'll get by,'" he recalled. "You know, let nature do what nature does."

A week later, he stood in his fields and nearly cried: Even the vast numbers of ladybugs couldn't kill off the aphids. In fact, they were spreading. They ate his crops, injecting a toxin that finally kills the plants.

## Farmers Need A Good Summer

Briggs is a father of six who farms with two of his sons. He has watched streams get lower each spring. Even so, he stays hopeful.

"Even if we have a bad year, we figure the next year will be a good one," he says. "Even if we have five bad years in a row, we're still looking for that next good year."

Driving through his town in Utah, he has seen homeowners, businesses and golf courses watering their lawns even when it rains. So there's enough blame to go around. So far, no one is suggesting that farmers are wasting Utah's water: "I hope it never comes to that."

Meanwhile, Utah keeps its eyes toward the sky. Randy Parker is the head of a Utah farmers group. He thinks this year will be worse than last year if they're not "blessed by Mother Nature." The right balance of rain and summer temperatures is needed in Utah.

## Texting About A Rainstorm

In May, a rainstorm raged for two days straight. It dumped 2 inches of rain on the land. They normally get 17 inches in an entire year. Briggs remembers running outside to check his backyard water measure and texting his son, Aaron, with each big rise.

"Yeah!" his son texted back. "Woo-hoo!"

Farming has always been a tough life. If it's not the drought one year, it's dropping prices for the crops they sell the next year. Briggs says he still prefers the lifestyle of the farm. He says his children have been his most rewarding crop.

Inside their kitchen, Briggs, his wife, Caroline, and Aaron talk about the future. They don't think there will be much water coming from the Wasatch range ever again. That's OK though.

"We're farmers and we'll continue to farm," Caroline said. "It's our life."