

CAAV EXAMINATIONS

WHAT CANDIDATES MIGHT DO TO PREPARE

**“I keep six honest serving-men
(They taught me all I knew);
Their names are What and Why and When
And How and Where and Who.”**

**(Rudyard Kipling, Six Honest Serving Men,
The Elephant’s Child)**

The CAAV’s examinations test candidates’ abilities to

- **observe**
- **describe**
- **analyse**

so they can report to clients

- **in writing and orally**
- **with clear practical advice**

so clients can take the best decisions in the circumstances

It is understood that prospective candidates inevitably have only limited personal and professional experience of subjects with which senior members have lived for a working career. They should be developing the knowledge, skills and judgement for their career:

- through professional experience
- by self education
- with the support of tutorials.

They should be willing to ask and to seek guidance. Do not be afraid to ask questions – do so earlier rather than later.

Listen to, observe and learn from the way in which qualified members deal with issues. Also take whatever opportunities there are for reading reports, letters and files.

Employers, proposers and tutors should also be aware of those areas where support can most usefully be given.

LEARN AND ASK

- Observe
- Inquire
- Stretch yourself
- Always ask the extra question

Can you explain and apply the answer?

Professional Development

- Learn from your work

- Seek help from your principal or other qualified members in the firm
- Go to tutorials
- Discuss gaps in experience with local association training/probationer officers
- Keep abreast of articles in the Farming Press

The breadth you achieve now will be a strength for the rest of your career.

Preparing for the Examinations

In preparing for the examination:

- Understand the syllabus.
- Look for opportunities to study with others taking the examination
- Do past papers
- Do mock examinations

They are a specific goal – focus on them

Past National Written Papers – Past papers with sample answers by successful candidates and the reports from the Written Examination Board are on the CAAV website. The last five years national written papers are available by post from the Secretariat for £10.

Past Practical Papers - Recent practical written questions will be available from the relevant Examination Group Secretary.

Tackling All Examination Questions

- Read each question carefully, analyse it and then answer in the format requested.
- The format will often be as a report, notes or a letter to a client or other adviser — it is only rarely to be in essay form or require an extended answer.
- The background information you need should be in the question. If you need to make an assumption, make this clear.
- The questions are designed to test, not to trap: careful analysis of the question should bring out the points that need to be made.
- Allocate appropriate time to each question, including a period to analyse it and outline a structure for your answer.
- Allow time to review your answers to ensure that you have written what you meant to write and that it is clear and legible.

The Agricultural Basics for the Practical

The following notes offer pointers to aid those preparing for the agricultural aspects of the Practical, with pointers for:

- the valuation of commodities
- growing crops.
- produce valuation
- livestock valuation
- machinery valuation
- tenancy matters, including improvements, fixtures, and dilapidations

Valuation of Commodities

- (a) Learn how to recognise different crops at early growing stage, when in flower and seed head.
- (b) Stop by fields and inspect crops (with the farmer's consent) or ask to take a sample home. Talk to farmers, valuers and agricultural representatives.
- (c) Ask agricultural feed suppliers/merchants to give you some grain or seed samples to identify and value per tonne.
- (d) Try to inspect different samples of feed, either on farm or at the feed mills.
- (e) Obtain values of well known spray packs, baler twine, livestock feed, nitrogen and compound fertiliser, etc.

Growing Crops

- (a) Learn normal cultivation routines for varying soil types and both before and after different crops and note equipment on the farm, e.g. power harrow drill combination.
- (b) CAAV costings will be provided but not seed and fertiliser rates and prices which ought to be learnt.
- (c) Assess whether field dunged or limed beforehand and whether parts suffer from bad drainage or rabbits, etc.
- (d) Note weed infestation in crops and pastures — especially couch grass in leys.
- (e) Assess whether the ley is short or long term (normally no clover in short term ley), its accessibility to farmstead, water supply, fencing, grazed/cut, etc.
- (f) Don't forget forage maize and stubble turnips.

Produce Valuation

- (a) Practice calculating quantities by measurement/weight.

- (b) Note when produce made/harvested.
- (c) Look up sales prices in Farmers Weekly, etc.
Note any local association discussion of values.
- (d) Note the end user — human consumption/feed merchants/oil for industry use.
- (e) Talk to farmers or other valuers re harvest trends.

Livestock Valuations

1. Attend livestock markets and farm dispersal sales.
 - Note livestock ages or reason for sale (stores/slaughter/breeding/milk)
 - Note weights and sale prices
 - Practice describing animals (and check catalogues for correctness).

Dairy Cows

- (a) Judge by Inspection
 - breed and conformity (shape and size)
 - udder fullness and regularity
 - feet and ease of walking
 - meatiness and weight.
- (b) Ask about
Precise age, number and stage of lactation, service data, past yields, herd average, breeding, herd health, home bred or imported into herd.

Other Cattle

- (a) Judge by Inspection
 - breed and conformity (shape and size)
 - meatiness and weight
 - approximate age
 - potential market (fat, grazing)
- (b) Need to Ask
Steers - precise age (cull scheme over 30 months)
Heifers - passport, red water incidence or other diseases.

Sheep

- breed and gender
- feel backbone for meatiness
- feel udder for soft teats (hard = mastitis)
- count side teeth for age, e.g. first lamb at 2 tooth, full mouth at 8 tooth;
- check soundness of feet

- note value of fleece
- is it in lamb or with lamb at foot?

Pigs

- breed and gender
- estimate age and weight
- categorise — weaner, pork, bacon, etc
- check body for damage.

2. Attend annual stocktaking on a farm with an appointed valuer and ask questions.

3. Read market reports on top, average and bottom values for different categories of livestock and the market trend.

Machinery Valuation

- (a) Make a list of normal farm machinery, e.g various sizes of
 - tractor
 - plough
 - trailer
 - combine
 - muck spreader
 - post bumper
 - Land Rover
 - mower
 - fencing stakes. etc.
- (b) Find out new prices (with discounts) from agricultural merchants/dealers and enquire about second hand market.
- (c) Attend machinery equipment sales advertised in local press. Go round and describe each lot in a notebook (check with catalogue).
- (d) Compare new and second hand prices and work out why they differ (e.g. lots, working parts or long life, etc).

Tenancy Matters

Tenant's Improvements

- (a) Note statutory bases under the 1986 and 1995 Acts for valuation and terms of any consent.
- (b) Keep eyes open on farms to assess condition of buildings and usefulness. Specialised buildings may be of limited use to an incomer.
- (c) Obtain costs for single buildings to guide you on new building costs to give you an appreciation of value.

- (d) Either apply a lifespan, e.g. 5 years left out of 20 years and discount the cost, or determine a rental value and capitalise it.
- (e) Consider whether building erected by the farm labour or contract, repairs to make good and any grant eligibility.
- (f) Consider intangible improvements for farm business tenancies.

Tenant's Fixtures

- (a) Note statutory basis for valuation (under 1986 Act only).
- (b) Have appreciation of:
 - how much work a man can do in a day
 - the hourly cost of a farmworker and tractor
 - the cost to hire a JCB or contractor per day.
- (c) Learn costs of fencing, feed barriers, bulk milk tank, generator, basic office equipment, diesel tank, slurry irrigation system, pole barn, security lighting, water trough, etc.
- (d) Note relevance to particular farm.

Dilapidations

- (a) Understand model repairing clauses (SI 1473 as amended). Note whether the landlord or tenant responsible for buildings; traditional/modern/redundant.
- (b) Observe types and condition of buildings on farms generally and remember buildings need to be functional, weatherproof, drained and in working order.
- (c) Have appreciation of cost of building materials. e.g. rainwater goods, doors, cost to repair section of walling, prepare and paint a steel stanchion or door and frame and ability to apply labour and material costings to cleaning out, fencing repairs, complete buildings and general price per room for redecorating the farmhouse etc.
- (d) Note that repair to asbestos sheet roof may require scaffolding which will add appreciably to the cost. (Roofs are normally landlords' items but not always).
- (e) Learn costs/acre to spray for weeds or wild oats, and cost for ditching or hedge trimming on a daily basis.