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https://www.100test.com/kao_ti2020/127/2021_2022_GMAT_E8_80_83_E8_AF_95_c89_127173.htm 75. The following appeared in a letter to the editor of a popular science and technology magazine.

“ It is a popular myth that consumers are really benefiting from advances in agricultural technology. Granted consumers are, on the average, spending a decreasing proportion of their income on food. But consider that the demand for food does not rise in proportion with real income. As real income rises, therefore, consumers can be expected to spend a decreasing proportion of their income on food. Yet agricultural technology is credited with having made our lives better. ” Discuss how well reasoned... etc. The conclusion of this letter is that consumers are not truly benefiting from advances in agricultural technology. The author concedes that, on the average, consumers are spending a decreasing proportion of their income on food. But the author contends that this would happen without advances in agricultural technology. The author reasons that demand for food does not rise in proportion with real income, so as real income rises, consumers will spend a decreasing portion of their income on food. This argument turns on a number of dubious assumptions. First of all, while asserting that real incomes are rising, the author provides no evidence to support this assertion. moreover, it might be false. Even if salaries and wages go up, this fact may not indicate that real income has increased proportionally. Real income takes into account any effect inflation might have on the relative

value of the dollar. It is possible that, when salaries and wages are adjusted for inflation, what appear to be increases in real income are actually decreases. In addition, the author assumes that increases in real income explain why, on the average, consumers are now spending a decreasing proportion of their income on food. But no evidence is provided to show that this explanation is correct. Moreover, the author fails to consider and rule out other factors that might account for proportional decreases in spending on food. Finally, the entire argument turns on the assumption that benefits to consumers from advances in agricultural technology are all economic ones specifically, ones reflected in food prices. The author ignores other likely benefits of agricultural technology that affect food prices only indirectly or not at all. Such likely benefits include increased quality of food as it reaches the market and greater availability of basic food items. Moreover, the author cannot adequately assess the benefits of agricultural technology solely on the basis of current food prices because those prices are a function of more than just the technology that brings the food to market. In conclusion, this letter has provided little support for the claim that consumers are not really benefiting from advances in agricultural technology. A stronger argument would account for the benefits of technology other than the current price of food, and would account for other factors that affect food prices. To better evaluate the argument, we would need more information about whether real incomes are actually rising and whether this alone explains why consumers now spend a proportionately smaller amount of income

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