Stage 5 Information and Software Technology

Teacher notes

Truth and the Internet

"It must be right… I found it on the Internet"

"It can't be right… I found it on the Internet"

➢ Discuss the above statement with the students.

➢ Students to write a statement about their thoughts.

➢ Debate the topic with the class if time permits.

➢ Students/teacher to read the articles on the *Velcro crop* and the *Swiss spaghetti harvest*. Students to complete worksheet.

Truth and the Internet

Read the following article and complete the questions.

California's Velcro Crop under Challenge (1993) by Ken Umbach

California's important *Velcro* crop, vital to the clothing, footwear, and sporting goods industries, has been severely stressed by drought, disease, and pests.

Background

Velcro®, an engineered crop, consists of two distinct strains: hooks and loops. As any user of *Velcro* knows, a strip of hooks clings to a strip of loops as the springy hook-shaped fibres latch through tiny but firm loops. Gentle pressure allows the hook strip to be pulled from the loop strip. The user may repeat the process time and again, making this product a convenient, versatile replacement for zippers, buttons, snaps, laces, and other forms of fastener in wide-ranging applications.
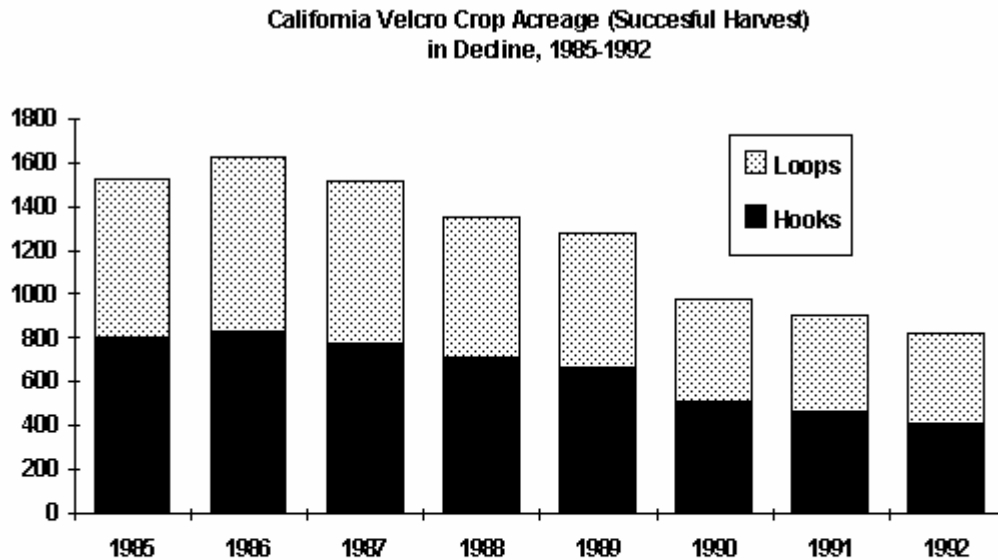
California's climate and soil conditions make the state an ideal venue for and successful producer of both strains of *Velcro*. For obvious reasons, of course, the hook strain must be grown in fields separated from those with the loop strain. This is often accommodated by widely spacing separate fields of the two strains among large expanses of cotton, alfalfa, or other crops.

For competitive and industrial confidentiality reasons, of course, the crop is not widely highlighted in crop reports. A little *Velcro* goes a long way, as both strains are densely packed on their respective mature plants, and the entire crop is dwarfed by other field crops, most notably cotton. Nonetheless, the crop is of high value and can be a substantial profit builder for the successful grower.

Source: http://home.inreach.com/kumbach/velcro.html

Questions

1. Look at the graph and ask if the statistics add *truth* and validity to the article.

California Velcro Crop Acreage (Succesful Harvest) in Decline, 1985-1992

	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
Hooks	795	824	766	700	655	500	455	400
Loops	734	802	750	650	625	480	450	425

California Velcro Crop Acreage (Successful Harvest)

2. Look at the URL:
    a) Does the URL indicate who created the site?
    b) Has the site been written by an organisation or a person?

The Swiss Spaghetti Harvest

A British news show, *Panorama*, broadcast a segment about a bumper spaghetti harvest in southern Switzerland. The success of the crop was attributed to an unusually mild winter. The audience heard Richard Dimbleby, the show's anchor, discussing the details of the spaghetti crop as they watched a rural Swiss family pulling pasta off spaghetti trees and placing it into baskets.

Spaghetti harvester

"The spaghetti harvest here in Switzerland is not, of course, carried out on anything like the tremendous scale of the Italian industry," Dimbleby informed the audience. "Many of you, I'm sure," he continued, "will have seen pictures of the vast spaghetti plantations in the Po valley. For the Swiss, however, it tends to be more of a family affair."

"Another reason why this may be a bumper year lies in the virtual disappearance of the spaghetti weevil, the tiny creature whose degradations have caused much concern in the past."

The narrator anticipated some questions viewers might have. For instance, why, if spaghetti grows on trees, does it always come in uniform lengths? The answer was that "this is the result of many years of patient endeavour by past breeders who succeeded in producing the perfect spaghetti."

Source: http://www.museumofhoaxes.com/spaghetti.html

What does the URL suggest to you about the web site?