
the bottom of the food chain..

Posted by Jaimekens - 2008/03/05 09:16

okay, who was it that mentioned that this would happen when we were trying to come up with ideas on how to conserve and make natural energy...

you were right.:dry:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/7276971.stm>

happy?!:)

Its serious. It has seriously changed our market. A man that I grew up is debating whether to give up his farm he has poured his blood sweat and tears into.. and its truely sad that this is the outcome. Is there going to be a .. net to protect these farmers as they go through this rough patch? What is the plan????

Fuel and grain is up.. and everything has gone kapoot.:unsure:

Ideas?:)

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Re:the bottom of the food chain..

Posted by scunnert - 2008/03/05 14:21

There's an ethanol plant in the town I live in. They use corn (maize). After processing the corn, the leftover mash is dried and used as cattle feed. Many days - especially when it's hot and humid, the town stinks like a moonshine still. When fuel is derived from food stuffs (corn being one of the least efficient - sugar cane is, apparently, much netter) the nutrient value is lost to the environment. Rather than being recycled it goes up in fumes.

The increasing reliance on bio-fuels can only intensify agri-corp control of farming and spread the practice of monoculture in crop selection. Neither of which is desirable and can only lead to increased prices for the consumer and the triumph of "frankenfood".

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Re:the bottom of the food chain..

Posted by Levenax - 2008/03/05 21:59

scunnert wrote:

There's an ethanol plant in the town I live in. They use corn (maize). After processing the corn, the leftover mash is dried and used as cattle feed. Many days - especially when it's hot and humid, the town stinks like a moonshine still.

I know the feeling. I once lived near Dumbarton where Ballantines operated one of the biggest whisky distilleries in the world. It was a huge red brick chemical factory that produced "white spirit" from maize to be used as blending material for cheap whisky, gin and vodka. The smell was horrible and in calm weather it often hung over the town for days on end. Farmers collected trailer loads of the spent grain to feed cattle but it was still wet and looked like coarse yellow porridge, it was known as draff. Apparently the beasts loved it. Bioethanol is a very wasteful fuel unless it can be produced from stuff that has no other use like the mashed up cane left over from sugar refining. Growing crops specifically to make fuel is stupid.

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Re:the bottom of the food chain..

Posted by scunnert - 2008/03/05 23:31

Aye - you've got the right of it.

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Re:the bottom of the food chain..

Some random thoughts:

I posted some time ago that we need a debate about what we want the countryside for and what we want it to look like.

What we see when we look at the 'natural' Scottish countryside is the result of tens of thousands of years of human actions tied to local geography and climates.

So if we want it to remain like it does now we need to ensure that the land use i.e. farming practices are roughly similar to those used over the last 50 years or so.

BUT farming in these islands is NOT economic in a 'globalised' supermarketed world system. Hence the taxpayers in the EU and the US subsidise their farmers to the tune of billions of dollars per year. Which while helping to feed some of the planet actually leads to 'dumping' and the destruction of local agriculture in poorer countries.

AND despite claims about our 'green/organic/sustainable' supermarket food actually flying food around the globe is neither sustainable (in the true meaning of the word) nor green.

So Scotland are you prepared to be truly organic/sustainable and alter your diet to what can be grown locally (at the most distant, Western Europe) and pay truly free market (unsubsidised prices) or will you allow your politicians to follow the cowardly short-term populist path and go for piecemeal tax-payer subsidy for farmers as they go to the wall?

My preference is that we acknowledge the debt we owe to farmers as custodians of the countryside and then draw up a contract between 'the people' and 'the stewards' that provides a decent living for them and provides for rights of access for the people.

However this wouldn't solve the problem of world trade rules on subsidies on food and ideals of free trade. The only answer is to specify where such foods can be sold, i.e NO DUMPING.

Like I said random thoughts.

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Re:the bottom of the food chain..

Posted by Bigman - 2008/03/07 11:27

About 8 years ago i did a wee bit of research into crops for food or crops for fuel.

What i found was pretty basic, at the moment our technology means that even if all the motor vehicles on the road had the most fuel efficient engines available today there is not enough acre-age space to grow bio-fuel crops to sustain the demand.

So basically its one or the other, crops for food or crops for fuel.

I knew 8 years ago with all the hype on fuel crops that food prices would go up, its basic supply and demand, if there is less of a commodity the price goes up, we all know this so it shouldn't come as any surprise that food prices are going through the roof just now.

Until we have an engine so fuel efficient that it gets hundreds of miles to the gallon/litre we should keep the crops for fuel to a minimum.

Anyway there are other REAL alternatives to the internal combustion engine that should be available soon at a realistic price.

A small conversion and you can get your car to run on gas, diesel cars run perfectly well on old cooking oil (with all the crap filtered out obviously) and bio-fuels should only be part of a waste from another industry, e.g. alcohols from sugar production and not solely grown to burn as fuel, we can't feed the population of the planet just now, it seems the 3rd world will have to just keep on starving as we set aside more and more space to grow a crop that will never go near a cooking pot.

A bit arrogant of us don't you think?

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Re:the bottom of the food chain..

Posted by Levenax - 2008/03/07 16:47

The so called developing world will starve if the population grows to 9 billion as predicted. The earth cannot sustain the people we currently have so when fossil fuels run out and fresh water is in even shorter supply than it is now tens of millions of deaths are inevitable. Giving a few quid to OXFAM won't stop Bangladesh and other low lying areas being flooded by the sea or sub Saharan Africa drying up and blowing away in the wind.

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Re:the bottom of the food chain..

Posted by Jaimekens - 2008/03/14 10:03

they wont have enough acreage?:dry:

last year.. i thought corn had become the next gold rush....unsure:

i remember reading how everyone was dumping their original crop plans to go for the gold and grow corn.. whether it was in their region or not...:blink:

Even mississippi had a hand in it.. even though their biggest boom is cotton. and cotton grows better in their region due to drier conditions.. the corn is very picky bout regular amounts of water.. then we had a huge drought.... and... everything just became ass backwards, if ya ask me...:blush:

thats what has me a bit worried.. youd think.. that when everyone was rushin to the corn.. others would want a stake in the other demands that got left in the dust.

it kinda feels like if things dont change.. we'll be back in the amishland real quick.:huh:

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