

Welcome to Sustainability Now



Traditional favourite – Dorset Apple Cake

Food hits the headlines: Inflation and the rising costs of food are having effects at home and across the globe. In the UK, the price of some basic foods is rising far faster than the official rate of inflation. According to the Office for National Statistics cereals, cheese, eggs, butter, bread, milk, chicken, apples and processed veg have all increased in price by more than 10 per cent over the past year. This jump in wholesale costs means catering firms are paying more for basic ingredients, with a huge effect on school dinners which are now on the point of breaking the £2 barrier.

But the worsening crisis has hit the developing world even harder. The World Food Programme is to begin to cut the provision of school meals to some of the world's poorest children; the cost for basic foods has risen so rapidly that a shortfall in financing for its food relief programmes had grown by \$255m (about £125m) to a total of \$755m in less than two months.

Could get worse? Stern has warned that his initial prediction of the effects of global warming may have *underestimated* the risks - climate change poses a bigger threat than first feared. New scientific findings show greenhouse gas emissions are causing more damage than was understood when the initial study was prepared in 2006. This is supported by last year's reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and new research which shows that the oceans and forests are soaking up less carbon dioxide than expected. The Institute for Public Policy Research has also reported that there could be an effect on levels of starvation and on food prices as agriculture struggles to cope with growing demand in increasingly arid conditions. Political leaders have been warned that by 2050 almost 1 billion people from Africa, central and southern Asia and South America could be forced to go on the move because of water shortages and crop failures.

This month's Sustainability Now headlines at a glance:

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As a network of influential individuals your feedback on *Sustainability Now* is very valuable. You can send comments to info@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk and view back issues at www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk/sustainability_now (and please let us know if you have colleagues who we should add to our e-distribution list).

South West C+ Carbon Positive Awards – and the winners are...

With almost 100 entries in their first year, the awards, developed by the South West Regional Development Agency and supported by SSW and Business in the Community, demonstrate best practice examples of sustainability in the region. Entries were received from businesses, organisations and communities from many sectors across the South West, championing greener ways of working. Winners were announced on 1 May at an awards ceremony at the Prince's Mayday Business Summit on Climate Change, held at the Met Office, Exeter.



Congratulations to award winners: Commercial Ltd and Wessex Water Services Ltd winning C+ Carbon Positive Footprints awards for organisations successfully cutting carbon emissions and internally managing their carbon footprints; Who Cares Ltd winning the C+ Consumer Choices award for organisations that have reviewed their products and services and are now offering consumers more low carbon choices; Kensa Engineering and Dyson Ltd winning C+ Cutting Edge awards for organisations developing innovative carbon cutting solutions; Knowle West Media Centre and United Bristol Healthcare NHS Trust, presented with C+ Communities awards for communities that are successfully reducing their carbon footprint; and The Limes Bed and Breakfast winning the C+ Micro award for exemplary low carbon micro businesses. Office supplies company, Commercial Ltd, was also presented with the award of C+ Pioneer 2008, for the business, organisation or community that is having the greatest impact on carbon reduction in the South West. All finalists have been recognised in an Awards booklet, offering their tips and encouragement; key learnings and inspiration to others for their own low carbon journeys. To download the booklet and for more information about the Awards, visit our website



SSW Chair Julian Dennis presents C+ Award to winners Dyson

www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk/projects/c+_carbon_positive_awards or contact us at info@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk for hard copies.

Future Footprints event – a foody round-up

Future Footprints (FF), the SSW coordinated sustainable tourism campaign 'to keep the South West special', held an event on Friday 25 April for decision-makers and policy officers to highlight top examples of how to maximise the positive economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism. The day focused on FF messages promoting local food and car-free days out/public transport. John Sheaves from Taste of the West set the 'foody' tone with a round up of the current state of local food in the region, and the obstacles and opportunities of sourcing locally. Dee Reynolds from the Mid Wales partnership shared some best practice and good ideas from 'across the bridge' and Dominic Acland provided proof that it can be done, and done well, with his work at Ocombe Farm. There is a groundswell of enthusiasm for local food in the SW, with many people likening what's on offer locally to the delights of the Tuscan table. It's time that we started giving our local food and drink the respect and celebration it deserves – and sharing it with everyone. A full round up of the event is available from the FF team, phone 0117 900 1753 or email info@futurefootprints.org.uk



Sustainability South West seeks part-time administrator

Based in Bristol, fixed term contract until 31 March 2009: Salary band £14,492 - £16,217 p.a. (pro rata 20 hours per week) plus contributory pension

Are you a good administrator who is interested in sustainability? Would you like to work in a creative organisation that wants to develop your skills? Sustainability South West seeks an Administration Assistant to assist with the delivery of day to day legal, administration and finance activities and internal and external communications.

Info and application pack from: Freiny Miles – freiny.miles@sustainabilitiesouthwest.org.uk or tel. 0117 900 1751

Closing date for Applications: Midnight, Monday 2 June 2008

Fair carbon shares movement comes of age

South West low carbon initiative *Fair Shares, Fair Choice* celebrated its 1st birthday with a boost. Nearly 200 local authorities and councillors in the region signed up to the principle of 'a fair and safe carbon share for all' in April, bringing the total number of supporters to 930! Who will be the 1,000 supporter? Visit www.fairsharesfairchoice.com for help measuring and reducing your carbon footprint and to add your name to the growing list of supporters.



Time to 'bee' careful?

The UK's bees are in trouble. Despite providing a significant percentage of pollination to food crops and fruit orchards (and of course honey), colonies of bees are facing a growing number of threats. The British Bee Keepers' Association estimates that in 2007 the UK lost 25-30% of its bee colonies and has lost nearly 50% of its colonies since 1958. This means that honey production could cease entirely in 10 years and crop pollination would be almost nonexistent. The main culprit is the Varroa mite, who has killed millions of bees, but colonies have also suffered from other pests and diseases, and worryingly some experts believe many amateur beekeepers aren't properly trained in how to recognise and deal with the most major diseases.



Other significant threats are imminent, including Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), a disease which has had a detrimental effect on hives in the US and has been reported in France, Germany and Italy. The Bumblebee Conservation Trust is also warning that wild bee populations, often seen as the pollination 'insurance policy' for the honeybee, are facing 'catastrophic declines' due to habitat loss. Defra and the Welsh Assembly Government have launched a joint consultation on a strategy to improve and protect the honeybee, but the British Beekeepers Association believes that more support is needed. It is petitioning the government to provide £8m funding to support research into CCD to help prevent an "economic and ecological disaster in the making" and to protect the country's bees before CCD arrives. Currently only £1.35m per annum is available to the National Bee Unit (part of Defra), which funds all its statutory activities and research. More information and petitions at <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/>

Seeds of sustainability

Sales of vegetable seeds have increased by 60% since last spring and many suppliers say they are now more popular than flower seeds, further evidence that an increasing number of people are being grabbed by the 'grow-your-own' bug. And home or allotment growing also makes good financial sense – a standard allotment can yield a ton of veg annually, which like for like can cost up to £1,700 in a supermarket. Has heightened interest in food miles and healthy diets been joined by increasing concerns over food price and security?



Sussed!

The Sust'Ometer:



Smooth operator: It's a double celebration for Wessex Water! The C+ Carbon Positive Award winners have become the first UK water company to be given the Queen's Award for Enterprise in the Sustainable Development category. They published their first sustainability report in 1997 and receive the Queen's award in recognition of continuous achievement in the sustainability of their operations and efforts to effect positive change.



Low carbon travel for region's youngsters: As part of a national Government programme, nearly £150k will be shared between six areas of the SW to fund 4,000 children to gain cycle skills and confidence in 2008-9.



Mobile giant to tackle CO2: Vodafone has pledged to halve its carbon emissions by 2020 by reducing its energy consumption and increasing its use of renewable energy sources. Last year the company produced 1.23m tonnes of CO2.



Music to our ears: The UK music industry has promised to do all it can to reduce its annual 1m tonne carbon footprint by cutting down on packaging as well as encouraging gig-goers to take public transport. The pledge came after pressure placed on the industry by researchers at the University of Oxford.



The 1930s House... E.ON and the University of Nottingham are building a replica 1930s house to test new energy efficiency technologies for older houses. Although the government has set targets for new builds to be carbon neutral by 2016, greening existing stock is a neglected issue particularly given that homes account for more than 1/3 of the carbon dioxide emitted in the UK.



Working well: Findings were released from the first UK Well@Work pilot programme, which over the last two years reached up to 10,000 employees in 32 workplaces in England. The British Heart Foundation programme, funded by the Department of Health, Sport England and the Big Lottery Fund, showed that workplace health programmes can have a positive impact on levels of physical activity, fruit and vegetable intake, staff morale, communications and working atmosphere.



Carbon shopping: The Carbon Trust is working with Tesco on a two year trial that aims to help shoppers make greener choices. Initially, 20 products will carry the new carbon-footprint labels, revealing how much carbon dioxide is used in their production, use and disposal. Although critics say the scheme is too complex, it does highlight the increasing demand by consumers for carbon information. Tesco has also launched an energy rating on a wide range of small appliances and similar products, from lightbulbs to microwaves.



Organic benefits A recent international scientific report led by Professor Robert Watson, now the chief scientist of Defra, has revealed that organic farming will increase food production and yields, challenging the belief of those who argue that GM crop provide the only solution to the problem of feeding a growing population.



Top winner. There's cause for celebration at Fifteen Cornwall, which took home a top prize at this year's Enjoy England Awards for Excellence (also known as the Tourism Oscars). The Watergate Bay restaurant edged out hundreds of other businesses to take home the gold in the 'Taste of England' category. The award topped off a successful night for South West's tourism businesses who won 8 other awards - well done to all!

Please contact SSW if you would like more information on the source of any story

On your radar?

South West food and health update: You can read the new monthly regional food and health update at www.swpho.nhs.uk/resource/view.aspx?RID=36975

Soil Association publications: Soil Not Oil presents international case studies on how to reduce agriculture's dependence on oil, and instead to put local needs first and focus on organic and sustainable growing to benefit local economy and communities. 'One Planet Agriculture' presents the case for the future of post peak-oil food and farming, and will be followed shortly by 'One Planet Agriculture: Handbook for Practical Action'. Visit www.soilassociation.org

RegenSW extends its remit: RegenSW – previously the Regional Renewable Energy Agency – has broadened its remit and to become a 'sustainable energy' agency. Regen will continue to support the SW's renewables industry but has now received Regional Development Agency funding to boost the energy-efficiency sector.

Science Research and Innovation Centre (SRIC), the University of Plymouth: SRIC offers assistance to businesses on: waste management issues; environmental management certification; market feasibility studies; product development; carbon footprint reduction; chemical and radiochemical analysis; knowledge networking opportunities. For more information email david.abbott@plymouth.ac.uk or visit www.plymouth.ac.uk/sric

So last century...



Older homes left in the cold Not enough is being done to improve the energy efficiency of existing housing stock, MPs on the communities and local government committee have warned in a new report. A focus on new build has meant that efficiency gains from older stock, which emit twice as much carbon, have been neglected – from basic insulation to more imaginative measures such as smart meters.



Misreporting: UK tabloids have been accused of deliberately damaging public perception of climate change. The University of Oxford's Environmental Change Institute has found that superficial and simplistic, "deliberately contrarian", tabloid coverage and limited depth in reporting contributed to a "significant divergence from the scientific consensus that humans contribute to climate change". With an accuracy of coverage veering between just 67% and 83% over six years, research also found that only 1.8% of tabloid coverage is written by correspondents with specialist knowledge. The research called for tabloids to more carefully consider their handling of climate change issues. "There are few tabloid titles that are taking this seriously, which is quite serious given their influence and the socio-economic interests of their readers."

Greenwash Guide from Futerra: Includes research, analysis and recommendations and is presented in an informative and engaging way. The guide highlights the threat of greenwash, and the associated consumer mistrust, to the 'green pound'. Available to download from www.futerra.co.uk

Slow travel blog: After 45,000 miles, 381 days and 1.8 tonnes of carbon they are now back home – read about Ed Gillespie and Fiona King's 'round-the-world without flying' adventure at www.lowcarbontravel.com Coverage of their homecoming at www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/globetrotters-with-a-conscience-around-the-world-in-381-days-799016.html

A values based approach to sustainability: Do you have an appetite for an alternative 'values based' approach to encourage us, *en masse*, to respond effectively to the scale and urgency of global sustainability challenges – something beyond pinning our hopes on cheerful marketing approaches or eleventh hour techno fixes? Visit www.valuingnature.org for articles and debate including information about the growing interest in 'Ecotherapy.'

Community energy grant scheme launched: Schools, village halls, visitor centres and other community organisations can take advantage of the recently launched Community Sustainable Energy Programme (CSEP). The programme, funded through the Big Lottery Fund's Changing Spaces Programme, provides grants towards the cost of microgeneration technologies (eg solar, wind and heat pump) as well as energy efficiency measures, such as loft and cavity wall insulation. For more information visit www.communitysustainable.org.uk

South West Observatory: State of the South West 2008 online: The South West Observatory and partners have updated the State of the South West reference guide to environmental, social and economic characteristics of the region. It gives an accurate assessment and analysis of information for the SW, across a broad range of policy themes, presenting key issues and priorities along with supporting data: www.swo.org.uk/SOTSW2008/index.html

Up & coming...

The first **Ethical Expo** will be held in Castle Park, Bristol, 9 - 10 May.. It aims help consumers make the right choices by bringing together producers, distributors, resellers and the public. There will be 60 major exhibitors and a programme of demonstrations, keynote speakers, seminars and workshops covering three areas; Eating, Wearing and Living – all designed to educate, inform and enthuse. For more information visit www.ethicalexpo.com

The Royal Bath & West Show 2008 takes place at the Bath and West Showground, 28 – 31 May. The event includes a large local food area showcasing the best of the South West www.bathandwest.com/show_show_1.php

Spring Green: Bristol Architecture Centre continues its Spring Green season, 'Shaping Sustainable Neighbourhoods,' confronting issues such as housing growth and climate change and considering how suburbs can be designed to create sustainable, healthy and enjoyable places to live. Exhibition 'Suburban Futures: Designing Sustainable Neighbourhoods' is running until 8 June. For information visit www.architecturecentre.co.uk/events/spring_green_2008

Over to YOU

Remember – we're your independent sustainability champs – and as an independent charity we're here to act as a critical friend for the common good. If you're involved in action for sustainability let us know and we can champion it! Equally if you're experiencing barriers to adopting a more sustainable approach let us know so we can feed back messages on your behalf. You can also tell us about local and regional events coming up over the next month so we can include this in the next edition *Sustainability Now*.

Contact us at: info@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk **Deadline for submissions: close of Friday 23 May.**

Other news from Sustainability South West

More SSW news available on our new look website at:

www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk

...regular updates on SSW coordinated projects available from:

Fair Shares, Fair Choice – the SW's growing low carbon movement

www.fairsharesfairchoice.com

Sustainability Shaper – the SW's regional sustainable development framework

www.shapersw.net

Future Foundations – the SW's sustainable construction charter

www.futurefoundations.co.uk

Future Footprints – the SW's sustainable tourism visitor campaign

www.futurefootprints.org.uk

Planting Places – networks for SW urban greenspace project

www.plantingplaces.org.uk

Sustainability Now is a monthly bulletin from Sustainability South West, the region's independent Champion Body for sustainable development. SSW is a charity and its Mission is: 'To champion and assist action now to achieve a South West that is genuinely sustainable: healthy, productive, socially-just and living within environmental limits.'

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