

Carbon Fast – Carbon Diet

All levels of society, from international bodies to individuals, must play their part in countering the threat of global warming. Furthermore, the adoption of a carbon-frugal lifestyle by individuals offers the greatest opportunity for the rapid reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, since nearly half the CO₂ produced in Britain results from actions under our personal control. The CO₂ we emit today will remain in the atmosphere, heating up the earth, for a thousand years!

Tearfund's 'Carbon Fast' extends throughout Lent. But what about the rest of the year? Could you move to a carbon-frugal lifestyle over a set period of time – say, undertake an additional one of the following each month or quarter?

Home:

- 1) Bring your home up to the highest possible standard of insulation - contact Energy Saving Trust (0800 512 012) for independent advice on grants and suppliers. This is a win (for the environment), win (for your pocket), win (for the country) situation!
- 2) Fit energy efficient light bulbs (shop around – the price varies enormously).
- 3) Switch to a green electricity supplier, such as Good Energy (Tel. 0845 456 1640; www.good-energy.co.uk). [According to an in-depth National Consumer Council study (2007), "Good Energy is the only supplier to receive three unqualified ticks for its green supply... For those consumers who want a green electricity supply, pure and simple, this is probably the closest they will get to it."]
- 4) Turn your central heating thermostat down 2 degrees (and buy a light fleece!); use a shower rather than a bath; wash clothes at 30°C or less; don't leave appliances on stand-by; draw curtains at night.
- 5) When replacing your boiler, refrigerator, washing machine, etc, buy the option with the highest possible energy efficiency. If your boiler is 10 or more years old, replace it.
- 6) Reduce your consumption of meat, particularly of beef, the production of which consumes vast quantities of grain and gives rise to emissions of methane, a potent 'greenhouse gas'. Perfectly palatable (and low fat!) substitutes are readily available.

Travel:

- 7) Leave the car at home whenever possible, and walk, cycle or take public transport. [Better by far to do without a car. But if you can't, choose a modest model with the best fuel economy you can get, but minimise its use.]
- 8) Air travel is exceedingly damaging to the environment and its use should be minimised.

Microgeneration:

- 9) Solar panels, heat pumps, etc.

Ease the Pain:

10) None of us can eliminate the damage we are doing to creation and the poor, completely and immediately. However, we can help poor communities to adapt to the problems they face and to develop their economies using clean energy through, for example, Tearfund's 'My Global Impact' programme. Go to www.tearfund.org/mgi

On no account should such payments be at the expense of other charitable giving! Furthermore, you should *not* use them to salve your conscience whilst you '*carry on pollutin*'!

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