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?Green Sheep in the Brave New World?

May 2008.

1. The Big Diversion

People have been sending emails and phoning to ask Mother of All Things ?Why have the sheep newsletters stopped -have you sacked that useless Rouseabout?? Nope, he is still here -just easily diverted.

And what a diversion.

Rouseabout was foolish enough to look into the global warming arguments and has been indignant ever since. ?Those fools say that carbon dioxide, the rare but crucial natural atmospheric gas that sustains all life, is a pollutant that is going to cause the world to fry. Worse still, they want us to stop using carbon fuels (wood, coal, oil, gas and candles) and eliminate our farting and belching friends, sheep and cattle.?

Can we have volunteers of those who want to freeze and starve in the dark? (In case you had not noticed, neither wind power nor solar power produces energy during the long still winter nights).

2. All Sheep are Green.

Let?s look at sheep. Sheep are composed of fat, protein, bone and the spark of life. Speaking loosely, fat is largely carbohydrates, protein is carbohydrates plus nitrogen, and bone is calcium phosphate, plus some carbon minerals and tissues. Humans are built similarly. Notice the common thread ? ?all life is a carbon equation?.

Now you all know that damara sheep are the smartest sheep on earth. But not even damaras are smart enough to produce carbon out of nothing. Nor do they eat coal or drink diesel fuel. To grow, they must get a

continuous supply of carbon from somewhere.

We have no cultivation on Sherana, no carbon fertiliser is applied, we do not feed grain to our sheep and they exist most of the time on natural grassland pasture. But every nine months, every ewe delivers a carbon copy containing a few kilos of brand new carbon. Some even produce three carbon copies.

Where does all that new carbon come from?

Is it from the soil? Raw soil is just broken down rocks and minerals and seldom contains organic carbon.

Carbon gets into the soil by the activity of plants and the associated life in worms, fungi and miscellaneous microbes.

We try to improve our pastures every year, we fix erosion gullies, we rotate our grazing flocks to rest the pasture, we return every unused bit of organic matter to the soil and we replace the minerals we ship off in sheep bones and muscles, so largely the soil is a stable feature (?sustainable? is the right buzz word).

Sustainably managed soil does not add to or subtract from the world's carbon reserve. It is a stable storehouse of carbon ? it gets used and replaced.

But notice every clump of pasture ? it has its feet deep in the earth digging for moisture and minerals, and its branches begging for sustenance from the sky. What does it get from the sky? Two things mainly -solar energy from that big nuclear power plant called the sun, and carbon dioxide, the gas of life, from the air.

Plants combine these two natural ingredients with nitrogen (also from the air) to produce the sugars and proteins that all animals live on. After they have extracted the carbon from carbon dioxide, they expel the oxygen they don't need back to the atmosphere for the benefit of all those dependent on oxygen (mainly the whole animal kingdom). All these benefits depend on the CO₂ in the air we breathe, the dreaded carbon dioxide that some ignorant people want to tax and bury.

And where does the air get its carbon dioxide from? Nature is a big emitter and the rest comes mainly from the combustion of carbon fuels:

? Nature emits a huge and unmeasured amount of carbon dioxide from volcanoes, gas seeps, rotting vegetation, autumn leaves, peat deposits, coal seams, fault lines and submarine vents. And

living,
breathing oceans, lakes, ponds and streams emit CO₂ when warmed and absorb it again when cooled. Even live plants emit CO₂ at night.

? All animals use internal combustion (digestion) to get energy from plant material like grass, legumes, lettuce, sugar, bananas, beer and buns; and from animal material like roast lamb, hamburgers, bacon, eggs and butter. Their front emissions are largely carbon dioxide and their rear

emissions are largely methane, both natural atmospheric gases. Methane get oxidised in the atmosphere to carbon dioxide and recycled by plants.

? Plant material is also recycled via open air combustion in bushfires, via closed combustion in our pot

bellied stove or via termites and many other natural scavengers.

? Internal combustion of fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas) produces most of our machine energy ? electricity and power to move generators, machines, cars, trucks, ships, trains and planes.

Every method of combustion of hydrogen-carbon fuels produces the same two gases ? water vapour from the

hydrogen part and carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the carbon part. Both go into the air. One gas forms clouds

and rain and is the basis for all things we drink, the other forms organic matter and is the basis for all things

we eat. Both also form an insulating blanket for the earth, moderating extremes of temperature. Neither is a

source of earth heating. (The only natural primary heat sources for the earth are geothermal heat from nuclear

fires deep within the earth and solar heat from that big nuclear furnace in the sky.)

Sheep and cattle grazing natural pastures are very efficient harvesters of solar energy and more deserving of

solar subsidies than the inefficient, expensive and depreciating metal monstrosities starting to uglify many

sunny or windy places.

What happens to all the carbon our pastures extract from the air? It ends up as roast lamb on your plate,

muscles on your growing kids, fat on some roaming dingo and some gets eaten by maggots and returns to the

soil. Some is returned quickly to the atmosphere via emissions from both ends. There is no possible addition

to the world supply of carbon dioxide because of the activities of sheep (or cattle or goats or elephants) ?

they all merely recycle whatever they can extract from the air during their life.

The carbon police in Canberra claim that the NET emissions from livestock represent 10% of Australia's

NET emissions. This is rot. Every atom emitted by every ruminant was extracted from the air no more than

one year previously. There are ZERO NET EMISSIONS, except for short term ebbs and flows as the

pastures grow in summer and then get eaten in winter.

So the moves by politicians in Australia and New Zealand to tax the emissions and motions from cattle and sheep are not based on good science and have nothing to do with climate or warming ? IT IS A BLATANT TAX GRAB. And it is staggering that most of our farm organisations are meekly accepting this nonsense. We urge every livestock owner to understand this process and agitate for some sense from Blunderland.

We also hear a lot about another big word these days ?sequester? ? it is a fancy word for ?bury? as in cemeteries. Trees are hailed as carbon sequesters. But trees are no better than grass or sheep ? they all extract carbon dioxide from the air and store it in their bodies for as long as they live. If those bodies die in a drought, flood or cyclone or get burnt in a bushfire, the carbon is returned immediately to the air. If they rot slowly, other life takes up the carbon, some going to the soil and the rest returning to the atmosphere.

Some trees live a long time and lock up their carbon. But a mature forest eventually stops extracting carbon ? old trees die and give it back, giving new trees room to grow and extract it again. It is only a net carbon sink if some carbon in timber gets ?sequestered? into girders, poles, houses and fence posts. In this way the valuable carbon is locked up for a long while. So why are the alarmists not promoting forest harvesting to reduce atmospheric CO₂? (Hint: It does not suit their other agendas.)

What about sheep? Our oldest sheep is 8 years old, much younger than most trees. But very few sheep die and rot on the place. Most sheep carbon get transferred into human bodies which then sequester it for three score years and ten (as long as most poles and timbers last). Even after that, it gets securely sequestered buried deep down below in the Rosevale cemetery (some enlightened people return their borrowed carbon by asking for cremation). So, and here is the punch line:

?Sheep are as Green as Trees, and neither should face a carbon Tax.?

Here is the proof: ?All Sheep are Green?.

As an aside, what happens to the extra CO₂ mankind is producing in power plants, cement factories, steel works and motor vehicles?

There are only three places for it to go ? into the atmosphere, into the oceans and lakes, or locked up in living organisms.

? Some is added to the atmosphere. Since 1900, the CO₂ in the air has gone from about 300 to about 386 parts of CO₂ per million parts of air. Imagine the atmosphere is a huge flock of 2,500 sheep ?

just one sheep is CO₂, yet that one sheep is supposed to have more influence on the temperature of the flock than the other 2,499 sheep, or the hot and cold winds, or that big ball of fire in the sky, or huge restless ocean, or the clouds and storms that come and go. He is some hot stuff sheep, that one lone CO₂ sheep ? it must be a damara?

? A large amount of CO₂ gets dissolved in the oceans to feed ocean plants or get sequestered into the ocean floor as limestone, dolomite, magnesite, siderite, corals, bones and shells. This CO₂ gets lost to the life cycle for millions of years until the limestone gets turned back to soil or calcined by man or nature to produce cement or lime.

? As CO₂ levels in the atmosphere rise (usually because of rising temperature in the sea) plant growth is miraculously increased. It is no surprise that food production and world population has grown in step since the end of the little ice age in around 1860. As temperatures went up, CO₂ was expelled from the oceans, and evaporation increased. More warmth, more moisture and more CO₂ produce more food, which feeds more population. So a lot of the CO₂ produced by man has ended up in those 6.5 billion warm bodies now walking the earth, and the food stocks that nourish them. (Since 1900, world population has increased by about 5 billion, containing about 166 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent.)

Some carbon is tied up in soils, but increasing cultivation and poor grazing practice liberates this, so on balance, farmed soils have probably lost carbon since 1900. Better farming and grazing practices could and should reverse this destructive trend.

3. Emissions Trading

Emissions Trading is a way of taxing and trading in hot air. It will be the new bubble industry. If farm animals are included (and Kiwi politicians have already threatened their farmers with this suicidal policy) every sheep will pay a tax that subsidises the planting of a monoculture of woody weeds on

farmland

somewhere else. If we are lucky, the tree planting 'industry' will be in our own country, but more likely it will be overseas. Even more likely is that our emissions tax will go to some Asian landowner who promises to NOT clear his land. In this case nothing changes except Australian producers and consumers pay hard cash to a foreign landowner for the right to emit hot air. Due diligence, auditing and litigation will soak up real resources as these scams are exposed. Everyone interested in tomorrow's food should look at the cost of these emissions trading rorts.

Anyhow back to the real world of sheep.

4. The Brave New World

Not for the first time, political hysteria is going to change our world. Moreover, the real climate is also going to change, as it always has changed since the days of the trilobites. This is my vision of the Brave New World emerging:

'Carbon taxes of some sort are going to spread across the world like a deadly virus. There are too many people who will benefit to stop it soon. Politicians slaver at the power it will give them over every aspect of our lives. Environmentalists will welcome a return to the noble savage era. And Asia, Russia, Brazil and the undeveloped world see it as a heaven sent opportunity to get massive carbon credit money from those guilt ridden and scientifically illiterate fools running the once powerful West.

'Carbon taxes cannot be 'revenue neutral' there are winners and there will be losers. And on balance we will all be losers because a huge amount of community resources will be spent producing fewer things of real value. The whole society will be worse off, some worse than others. Prices for everything will soar ' food, energy, water, transport, building materials, metal products, chemicals, plastics, cement and cars. Consumers, workers and old people will suffer everywhere. The world will shrink. Family and neighbours will become important again. Big cities will not be nice places and grog and gambling will flourish. ' It will become costly to move anything anywhere, so everyone will try to live local. Tourism will be shattered. People will again look to get a veggie gardens, and a few chooks, cows and sheep to

supplement family food supplies.

? The real climate may become even more unkind. No one can be relied on to forecast the climate

reliably. However, despite the warming scare stories being spouted by Al Gore and the computer

models, the best evidence I have seen suggests world climate is more likely to get colder and dryer.

For those interested in the possibility of cold weather see:

www.carbon-sense.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/04/solar-cycle-24-implications-for-the-united-states-archibald.pdf [1]

For those worried about rainfall see:

<http://carbon-sense.com/2008/05/26/alexander-2008/> [2]

If you thought warm and moist was bad, I assure you that cold and dry will be worse. Food production will

plummet and famine will stalk the world. The warm moist periods are always referred to a ?Golden Ages?

and the cold dries, for good reason, are called ?the Dark Ages?.

Damara sheep, as one of the hardiest survivors in the world, will become even more attractive. Pampered

artificial breeds that cannot survive without feedlots, irrigated pastures, diesel and chemicals will shrink to

the lord?s manor, but the peasants will rediscover the old hardy breeds, selected by natural selection, not by

judges in a show ring. These sheep will need to thrive in their environment with no chemical assistance, no

vaccinations, no grain feeding, no expensive irrigation, and survive whatever climate we get.

Adaptation is the only Feasible Option.

?The optimal way to deal with potential climate change is not to strive to prevent it (a useless activity in any case) but to promote growth and prosperity so that the people will have the resources to deal with any shift?.

Thomas G Moore 1995 ?Global Warming ? a Boon to Humans and other animals? Hoover Institution, Stanford University 1995.

Viv & Judy Forbes

And for more brain warming stories have a look at www.carbon-sense.com [3]

The Green Bubble

?The twin elements of a bubble are euphoria and roguery, with the proportions varying from case to case. The coming green bubble, which is already attracting large amounts of venture

capital and government money, displays both.?

Nigel Lawson, Ex Chancellor of the Exchequer, UK, Time 21 May 2008

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