

Greens Add Food Production to Their Hit List

By Dennis T. Avery, Hudson Institute

British diesel is a self-inflicted \$12 per gallon, biofuels have nearly doubled their food prices, and 40 percent of U.K. electrical power will be shut down over the next six years. Now, the same Green alarmists, who warn of man-made warming while the planet cools, demand sharp reductions in Europe's pesticide use. That will slash Europe's crop production in half during a global food emergency.

Is Green really the world's way forward?

Europe's Large Combustion Plant Directive will shutter 17 big generating plants in the UK alone for emitting too much CO₂. Never mind that the earth has not warmed as the alarmists predicted—and has been actually cooling for 16 months in defiance of the climate models.

Until now, the EU has regulated pesticides based on their contribution to producing food—balanced against the farmer's relatively small risks of using them. Henceforth, however, pesticide permissions will be radically tightened based on theoretical risks dreamed up by the alarmists.

Britain's Pesticide Safety Directorate says conventional agriculture will become impossible in much of Europe. Farming costs will soar and yields will fall. Is this simply the old Green demand for population control—through famine?

Have the pest protection chemicals been quietly killing off European citizens? Actually, Europeans are living longer than ever, and should add 5 years to their lifespan by 2050—unless they starve after the crop protection chemicals are cancelled.

Have all Europe's birds and butterflies died off due to pesticide spraying? Actually, biologists are finding increasing biodiversity across the EU as vegetation, butterflies, birds, mussels, fish, and mammals all take advantage of the warm and moderate "interglacial" climate we've had since the end of the Little Ice Age. Global temperatures increased only 0.2 degree C from 1940 to 1998, and recently have dropped back more than 0.5 degree C.

Why, then, cancel the insecticides that allow us to control the plant-munching bugs, the termites, and the roaches; the fungicides that suppress the fungus so prevalent in Europe's rainy crop fields; the herbicides that control the weeds, which otherwise steal half the sunlight, moisture, and soil nutrients from the crop plants?

Organic farmers claim they can feed the world, but Denmark's high-level Bichel Committee reported in 1999 that an all-organic farming mandate would cut Danish food production roughly

in half. The University of Michigan said in 2007 that organic farming could triple world food output—but the study's lead author was a fully-qualified geologist with no farming experience.

Humanity has recently enjoyed some of the most comfortable weather in the history of the planet. The Modern Warming should last several more centuries, at least, with less than 1 degree C of further temperature increase. The only huge run up in temperatures is found in the unverified computer models.

We have massively increased global food production, despite warnings from generations of Greens that farm science was “dangerous.” Bill Gates is trying now to extend Norman Borlaug's Green Revolution to feed Africa as well. Meanwhile, declining Third World birth rates indicate a peak human population about 2040, followed by a long, slow decline in human numbers as trade and technology spread affluence worldwide.

Is life too good? Is that why we feel compelled to make it more difficult?

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