

Environment Matters – 9 August 2005

Welcome to the latest edition of Aardvark's fortnightly news briefing.

- **US agrees climate deal with Asia** The US and five Asia-Pacific states have announced a surprise pact to cut greenhouse gases which falls outside the Kyoto Protocol on climate change. China, India, South Korea, Japan and Australia and the US account for nearly half of world greenhouse gas emissions. The US-led initiative would tackle global warming with new technology supplied to countries most in need. Critics say the new compact undermines Kyoto and is likely to be ineffective because it is non-binding. ([BBC News 28/07/05](#))
- **Renewable energy going to waste** A million hectares of countryside could be used for sources of biomass, helping to create a cleaner, greener Britain and avoid 20m tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions a year, says a government report to be published in October. Biomass, which can include straw, wood chips, willow coppice, mildewed grain, chicken litter and sewage sludge, could provide a "significant" amount of the nation's energy needs. But the problem is that the government has yet to alter development rules to give a clear lead, and potential developers lack a one-stop shop for advice and financial help. ([The Guardian 8/08/05](#))
- **Top retailers commit to tackling packaging and food waste** Thirteen top grocery retailers have shown their commitment to waste minimisation in a new initiative to reduce the amount of packaging and food waste thrown away by the British public. Asda, Boots, Budgens, the Co-operative Group, Londis, Iceland, Kwik Save, Marks & Spencer, Morrison's, Sainsbury's, Somerfield, Tesco and Waitrose have all joined forces with WRAP (the Waste & Resources Action Programme) by pledging their commitment at an executive level to supporting WRAP in achieving its objectives. ([DEFRA 26/07/05](#))
- **Hydro power station bid approved** Plans for a new £140m hydro-electric power station in the Highlands able to generate enough energy for 37,000 homes have been given the go-ahead. Enterprise Minister Nicol Stephen said the Glendoe scheme, near Fort Augustus in Invernesshire would yield economic and environmental benefits. It said it was the biggest scheme in Scotland for 40 years. ([BBC Scotland 28/07/05](#))
- **Organic farms 'best for wildlife'** Organic farms are better for wildlife than those run conventionally, according to a study covering 180 farms from Cornwall to Cumbria. The organic farms were found to contain 85% more plant species, 33% more bats, 17% more spiders and 5% more birds. ([BBC News 03/08/05](#))

Latest News from the Aardvark Team

- Aardvark continues to work on a number of soil analysis projects for developers, the latest being for Falcon Rural Housing, who requested as part of their internal QA, an investigation into previous uses of two development sites in Somerset. The Aardvark team reported no contamination issues on either site, despite one having a previous history associated with heavy goods transport and situated alongside the West Somerset Railway line.
- For the latest news please visit www.aardvarkem.co.uk

And finally

- **Australia seeks to breed test-tube sharks** The endangered gray nurse shark is its own worst enemy--its young eat each other in the womb--so Australian scientists have a radical rescue plan to artificially inseminate and breed the ocean predator in test-tubes. The gray nurse is one of the fiercest-looking but most docile marine creatures, and despite it being declared endangered in 1984 and its habitat protected, it could become extinct along Australia's east coast within 20 years, scientists say. ([Reuters 5/08/05](#))