



Environment Matters – 28 October 2005

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

- **CBI fears return of the three-day week** Amid forecasts from meteorologists that the country could be in for its coldest spell in more than 40 years, Sir Digby Jones director-general of the CBI, accused the government of failing to ensure enough storage capacity for imported gas, despite being told by business for the past three years that the depletion of North Sea supplies had left the country acutely vulnerable to a short freeze. Britain's limited stocks of gas reserves would run out after little more than a week of sub-zero temperatures. ([The Guardian 20/10/05](#))
- **'Standby culture' adds £120m a year to energy bills** Office workers who leave computers on standby are costing British industry £123.2m a year in energy bills, research has found. While three-quarters of employees say they have become more environmentally aware in the past five years, more than a third still fail to turn off their computers when not in the office. Energy campaigners say the "standby culture" is responsible for one million tons of carbon being pumped into the atmosphere each year. Home computers waste £41m a year and emit 220,000 tons of carbon dioxide when left on standby. ([The Independent 24/10/05](#))
- **UK to lead on 10 new EU environment technology projects** The UK is to take the lead on 10 new EU-wide projects to develop new environmental technologies to improve river quality, restore contaminated land, and boost recycling. The Environment Minister Elliot Morley said he was delighted that British innovation was taking the lead in Europe. ([EDIE 21/10/05](#))
- **Price rises and climate change fuel opportunities** With oil close to nominal highs and petrol prices threatening to breach £1 a litre, the economic case for alternative energy has never been stronger. Clean energy is perhaps the most politically significant as there seems to be little chance of oil prices falling significantly in the short to medium-term. This means that technologies that were uneconomical in an era of cheap oil are now viable. A number of companies that specialise in these markets are now listed on London's Alternative Investment Market (AIM). ([World Business Council for Sustainable Development 15/10/05](#))
- **Heating with Biomass is the hot topic says task force** Britain should use biomass to generate heat the Biomass Task Force told the Government. The Task Force concludes that biomass could reduce the nation's carbon emissions by almost three million tonnes a year if used to provide heating. The carbon saving would be the equivalent of taking 3.25 million cars off the road. They estimate there could be 20 million tonnes of biomass available annually. ([DEFRA 26/10/05](#))

Latest News from the Aardvark Team

- Aardvark has recently completed a water, waste and energy design strategy for a proposed development on one of the UK's outlying islands. The study design is an innovative and integrated approach which will mean the development is self sufficient and future proofed.
- For the latest Aardvark news please visit www.aardvarkem.co.uk.

And finally

- **Cows make fuel for biogas train** The world's first biogas-powered passenger train is taking its first passengers between the Swedish cities of Linköping and Västervik. And the biogas comes from the entrails of dead cows. A tanker collects the organic sludge from the abattoir and makes the short journey to the biogas factory, where the stinking fuel is stewed gently for a month, before the methane can be drawn off. Enough, from one cow, to get you about 4km (2.5 miles) on the train. ([BBC News 25/10/05](#))