



Environment Matters – 9 December 2005

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

- **Failing Ocean Current Raises Fears Of Mini Ice Age** The ocean current that gives Western Europe its relatively balmy climate is stuttering, raising fears that it might fail entirely and plunge the continent into a mini ice age. The dramatic finding comes from a study of ocean circulation in the North Atlantic, which found a 30% reduction in the warm currents that carry water north from the Gulf Stream. The slow-down, which has long been predicted, is a possible consequence of global warming. ([New Scientist 30/11/05](#))
- **New Homes To Face Tough Environmental Rules** The Government will introduce a series of 'environmental safeguards' for regulating the building of new homes, as part of its response to the Barker Review. A new Code for Sustainable Homes will be published, based on the EcoHomes standard, setting ratings on the energy efficiency and sustainability of new homes. Under the rating system, a one-star building will have higher green qualities than those currently required by the existing building regulations, while developments conforming to the highest star rating will require 'cutting-edge' technology to attain carbon neutrality. ([Green Consumer Guide 5/12/05](#))
- **Scientist Hopes For CO2 Storage** Mankind's only hope of staving off catastrophic climate change is burying CO2 emissions underground says the UK's chief scientist. Sir David King told the BBC carbon capture and storage technology was the only way forward as China and India would inevitably burn their cheap coal. This would be disastrous unless they were persuaded to put CO2 from power stations into porous rocks, he said. It is thought carbon capture and storage would add 10-15% to fuel bills. ([BBC News 6/12/05](#))

To watch out for

- **New Rules on Agricultural Waste** New Agricultural Waste Regulations will affect whether or not waste can be burnt, buried, stored, used on farm or sent elsewhere. Farm tips and burying waste on farm must cease before the regulations come into force. Some of the new rules will start early in 2006 including Duty of Care. Others will start later in 2006 such as registering for exemptions and applying for licences. ([Environment Agency 12/05](#))

Latest News from the Aardvark Team

- **Mobile Reedbed Trial Gets The Go-Ahead** Aardvark have been successful in their application for funding from the Exmoor National Park Authority for a mobile reedbed trial to address the issue of diffuse pollution and river water quality under the Water Framework Directive. The Environment Agency has identified over 40 areas at risk in the National Park AONB and reedbeds could provide a sustainable solution to the problem. The trial will run over a period of 18 months.
- For all the latest Aardvark news please visit www.aardvarkem.co.uk.

And Finally

- **The Most Destructive Crop On Earth Is No Solution To The Energy Crisis** In 2003, the biologist Jeffrey Dukes calculated that the fossil fuels we burn in one year were made from organic matter "containing 44 x 10¹⁸ grams of carbon, which is more than 400 times the net primary productivity of the planet's current biota". In plain English, this means that every year we use four centuries' worth of plants and animals. ([George Monbiot, Guardian Unlimited](#))