



Environment Matters – 3 February 2006

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

- **Air quality improvements kept up, 2005 estimates show** Long-term improvements to air quality and low pollution levels in our towns and cities are being maintained in the UK, new figures released today show. Urban pollution levels in 2005 were similar to 2004, while rural pollution was a little lower, according to government estimates. Ben Bradshaw, Local Environment Minister, said: "Air pollution affects people's health and their quality of life. In general we continue to make progress but more needs to be done to tackle pollutant concentrations, particularly nitrogen dioxide, particles and ozone. ([DEFRA 19/01/05](#))
- **New life for old plastic on farms** A farm plastic recycling scheme is being set up to operate in Somerset, Exmoor, East Devon and parts of Dorset. Farmers are being invited to bring waste plastic, including silage bags to one of the collection centres operating in early 2006. The recycling scheme this winter follows a pilot recycling scheme that FWAG successfully operated in Somerset during spring 2005. This proved to be very popular, with 320 tonnes of plastic being collected from more than 260 farmers. ([Southwest Farmer 25/01/06](#))
- **Sporting event goes green** The 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany is to be the world's first climate-neutral major sporting event. The World Cup organisers have signed a partnership agreement with the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and Germany's Environmental Minister to assess the game's environmental impact. The proposed initiative, the "Green Goal" has been developed to offset the estimated 100,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases expected to be emitted as a result of the event. A number of off-set projects will be initiated to counteract the emissions expected during the event. ([Energy E-xpress 24/01/05](#))
- **New Eco Homes Guide** The EcoHomes Very Good Standard will be a requirement from April 2006 for all homes funded by the Housing Corporation National Affordable Housing Programme 2006-08. In addition, the Government will require the Code for Sustainable Homes from April 2006 for all publicly funded homes. Housing associations and developers must appoint a licensed assessor at the earliest opportunity if they are to meet the Very Good rating for the corporation's 2006-2008 programme. ([Green Building Press 2/02/06](#))

To Watch Out For

- **Regulatory changes for 2006** Defra has published a statement of forthcoming legislation. The statement sets out when in 2006 new regulations impacting businesses and the public at large will take effect. This statement is part of a cross Whitehall initiative to give businesses more certainty, and allow them to plan for changes to regulatory requirements. The statement will be updated in June 2006. ([DEFRA 31/01/06](#))

Latest News from the Aardvark Team

- The Housing Corporation this week approved plans for a new affordable house design called 'Journey House' that Aardvark have been developing with Plymouth based Architects, GHK. A number of SW based Housing Associations have already expressed interest in the design and it is hoped that the first scheme will be built this year.
- For all the latest Aardvark news please visit www.aardvarkem.co.uk.

And Finally

- **General Garbage** The UK produces more than 434 million tonnes of waste every year. This rate of rubbish generation would fill the Albert Hall in London in less than 2 hours. Every year UK households throw away the equivalent of 3 ½ million double-decker buses (almost 30 million tonnes), a queue of which would stretch from London to Sydney (Australia) and back. On average, each person in the UK, throws away seven times their body weight (about 500kg) in rubbish every year. ([Wasteonline.org 30/01/06](#))