



Environment Matters – 5 May 2006

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

- **Freeze on air passenger duty attacked by MPs** Gordon Brown's failure to raise air passenger duty in this year's Budget to help achieve the government's environmental targets was criticised yesterday as "incoherent" and "unconvincing" by MPs. The Labour-dominated Commons Treasury select committee urged the government "to re-examine whether it is making the fullest possible use of taxation instruments as a mechanism to achieve [its] environmental targets". In its report on last month's Budget, published yesterday, the committee also criticised the government's proposed changes on the tax treatment of some trusts used for inheritance tax planning, saying it should have taken "appropriate consultation". ([The Financial Times 25/04/06](#))
- **Global wind power capacity predicted to soar** Wind energy generation will storm ahead in the next four years, with North America leading the way, according to a report by the Global Wind Energy Council. In 2005 alone, 11.5GW of wind generation capacity was installed worldwide, bringing the total up to 59.1GW - an increase of 24% on the previous year. The Europe Union was still the leading market in 2005 with 40.5GW of installed capacity, but its dominance in the coming years will diminish as North American and Asian capacity soars. ([Environmental Finance 20/04/06](#))
- **Driving Greener Every Day** Eco-driving is the new driving—it's all about making small changes to your driving style to save fuel and cut emissions. Britain will be introducing aspects of green driving into the driving test by 2008 in an attempt to cut emissions, save on fuel costs and make driving safer. Critics say that the small average saving will not encourage people to change their ways—only a higher fuel price will do the trick. ([Treehugger.com 02/05/06](#))
- **Food miles and packaging tackled by Government** New ways of ensuring food production does not cost the earth are considered by a Government strategy published this week. Margaret Becket, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, launched the Food Industry Sustainability Strategy. The plan, drawn up in partnership with industry, aims to tackle some of the environmental bugbears that plague the sector such as food miles, packaging, waste and water use. ([EDIE 28/04/06](#))
- **Ministers bullish on biomass fuel** The UK government says energy from crops, trees and waste can play a key role in meeting targets on renewable power and cutting CO2 emissions. Energy Minister Malcolm Wicks believes the sector is vital if the goal of renewable power providing 20% of UK electricity by 2020 is to be achieved. Only about 1% of UK electricity currently comes from biomass sources. Mr Wicks, speaking at the launch of the biomass action plan, says a full review will be published in the next year. ([BBC News 27/04/06](#))

Latest News from the Aardvark Team

- The Aardvark site investigation team have been out on the water again this week taking sediment samples from a lake at Reading University. The lake is being sampled as part of an on-going management and de-silting program, project managed by Kingcombe Aquacare.
- For all the latest Aardvark news go to www.aardvarkem.co.uk.

And Finally

- **75 percent back new climate law** Three quarters of the UK population would support the introduction of a new law to combat climate change, a new survey revealed. The results were released as some of the UK's top musicians prepare to play 'The Big Ask Live'. Results also showed that there is strong support for a new climate change law across all age groups and all social groups. ([Friends of the Earth 01/05/06](#))