

Environment Matters -16th February 2007

Welcome to Aardvark's fortnightly environmental news briefing,

- **Government claims its hands are tied over harmful biofuels** The Government has claimed that World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules prevent it from banning the controversial use of biofuels. The Department for Transport will start a consultation on new rules being introduced next year requiring petrol stations to sell petrol and diesel that have been blended with oil from crops such as corn, sugar or palm. ([The Independent 04/02/07](#))
- **Official: global warming is all our fault** It is now beyond doubt that Earth's climate is warming and "very likely" that most of the increases since the mid-20th century is the result of mankind's activities, a panel of UN scientists said yesterday. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said that evidence was now "unequivocal" from direct observations of global average air and sea temperatures, the widespread melting of snow and ice and rising sea levels. The scientists said there is a more than 90 per cent probability that the rise in temperatures is man-made. ([The Telegraph 04/02/07](#))
- **WRAP builds on "huge" retail interest in recycled packaging** Retailers have been told that every tonne of recycled PET plastic used in packaging their products will effectively save the equivalent of 1.5 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions. One of the major barriers towards using more recycled PET in UK food packaging has been the availability of food-grade recovered PET. Current demand is at about 60,000 tonnes a year, but supply is only at 12,000 tonnes ([letsrecycle.com 6/02/07](#))
- **Branson offers \$25m prize for saving Earth** Richard Branson has announced he will give \$25 million to the person who comes up with the best idea to remove significant amounts of carbon from the atmosphere. The Virgin boss stressed the urgency of tackling climate change and pointed out that necessity was the mother of invention. He said the prize was the largest ever offered and compared it to the competition to come up with a method to accurately measure longitude in the 18th Century. The winning solution must have the potential to remove at least one billion tonnes of carbon per year from the atmosphere. ([EDIE 09/02/07](#))
- **EU States Divided over Energy Shake-up** Plans for a radical shake-up of European Union energy markets look set to be watered down after several states declined on Thursday to back a break-up of giant utilities or make targets for renewable fuels mandatory. In their first discussion of proposals on climate change and the bloc's internal market in electricity and gas, EU energy ministers agreed to require biofuels make up 10 percent of the petrol and diesel used in vehicles by 2020. ([Planet Ark 16/02/07](#))

Latest News from the Aardvark Team

- **Green issues continue to move up the agenda** Aardvark is seeing a significant increase in business enquiries regarding opportunities for the integration of renewable energy into commercial property schemes. Developers, driven by occupier demand and planning requirements are looking to provide a 'green edge' to their schemes as occupiers are raising their environmental targets and seeking to future proof against rising energy prices by generating energy on-site to meet their own demand requirements.
- For the latest Aardvark news log on to www.aardvarkem.co.uk.

And finally

- **Reduce your environmental impact and help make poverty history** The British and Kenyan governments weighed into the growing debate over "food miles" yesterday, insisting it was ethically and environmentally sound to buy flowers from Kenya on Valentine's Day. People in Britain will buy 10,000 tonnes of roses today. Recent research shows that flowers flown from Africa can use less energy overall than those produced in Europe. This is about social justice and making it easier, not harder, for African people to make a decent living. ([IEMA 14/02/07](#))