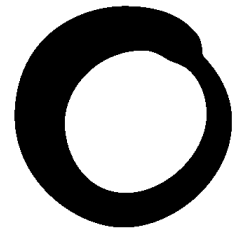


# Real Food News

February 2007



**Friends of  
the Earth**

## LIVESTOCK NEWS

### **Hoofprints - Livestock's impact on the environment**

Our new briefing looks into the environmental and social impacts of the production and consumption of livestock products.



**Livestock products are responsible for huge amounts of rainforest destruction**

Most of us have heard of the term environmental footprint – used to describe the impact that we all as individuals have on the planet.

But recently the **environmental footprint of the livestock sector** has also come under scrutiny for its contribution to escalating environmental degradation. This '*hoofprint*' has some of the largest impacts

on almost every environmental problem - including climate change, biodiversity loss, overuse of natural resources and environmental pollution.

Growing population and changing diets means that **global livestock production is predicted to double by 2050**, predominantly through industrial production systems.

This presents serious problems for a planet already struggling to cope with current levels of consumption. But at the same time, the livestock sector is a key part of economies across the world and provides livelihoods for about 1 billion of the world's poor.

What is clear is that we require a rethink of livestock farming systems if we are to ensure a sustainable and equitable future for food and farming.

The briefing sets out the **background for our new campaign on the impacts of the livestock sector**. There's still a lot more work to do, but please have a read of the paper

then feel free to contact Richard with any questions. It is available on request or at:

<http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/hoofprints.pdf>

### **The Cattle Realm – ranching report from the Amazon**

The highlights from a new report into the expansion of **cattle ranching in the Amazon** are now available in English.

Thanks to subsidies from domestic and international institutions, as well as displacement of cattle by other agricultural activities in the South of Brazil, ranching has expanded at an unprecedented rate in the Amazon region.

You can download the highlights in English of the new report produced by Amigos da Terra - Amazônia Brasileira. <http://www.amazonia.org.br/arquivos/259673.pdf>

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# SUPERMARKET NEWS

## Commission backs down

**The Competition Commission has backed down over the worst of its supermarket planning recommendations.**

In a nutshell, the Commission has unexpectedly decided not to specifically recommend removing key planning tests to make more land available for supermarkets on the edge of town centres and out of town.



Thank you to everyone who sent them emails, postcards and letters – **your campaigning has helped achieve some great results.**

Their suggested remedies also include further measures that we have been campaigning for: a much **tighter Code of Practice** to stop unfair costs and risks being passed on to farmers and other suppliers and the appointment of an ombudsman to oversee the Code. It is now essential that the proposed ombudsman is given sufficient powers to enable them to ensure that the Code is adhered to.

However, whilst the Commission has scrapped some of its poor recommendations, we are still disappointed that their remedies will do nothing to promote real diversity in our towns and cities.

The Commission has now recommended the introduction of a Competition Test. There has been speculation in the media that this will lead to a lot more out of town supermarkets. There is certainly a risk that if the competition test is given too much weight then it may become easier for say Asda to get planning permission in a town which currently has a big Tesco. However this depends on how Government reacts to the proposal and how it is dealt with in the planning system.

We believe that the Commission's recommendations have failed independent shops and town centres because they have:

- Focused solely on choice between big stores rather than the overall diversity of the retail offering.
- Failed to do anything to stop the decline of local shops.
- Done nothing to stop the rapid expansion of big supermarkets despite its own findings that two new supermarkets already open every week and that when a

new supermarket opens, greengrocers and markets are more likely to go out of business.

- Failed to make recommendations to stop practices such as below cost selling, which undermines local retailers - despite noting that below cost selling by supermarkets may have caused a high number of off licenses to close between 2003 and 2004.



## Press for change

As we have previously mentioned, the Government is about to consult on proposals for retail planning policy for town centres (PPS6). We're now expecting the consultation to launch sometime this month.

The consultation means there is still a threat to policies which currently protect town centres. But it is also an opportunity to swing things the other way and get stronger policies to promote things like diversity and accessibility. The fact that the Competition Commission have backed down on some of their proposals is also a huge advantage. As soon as the opportunity arises to take action we'll be back in touch, so please keep checking your inboxes and doormats for more information.

## **Read our retail planning proposals**

**Ahead of the Government's consultation we have released a list of measures needed to promote diverse and sustainable town centres.**

The joint statement, released as part of a consortium of environmental and public interest groups, aims to help steer the Government in the right direction at this crucial point in the future of high streets, independent shops and town centres.

## **GM crops increase pesticide use**

**The true story of GM and the environment is uncovered in Friends of the Earth International's new report, "Who benefits from GM crops".**

Despite industry boasts that they would benefit the environment, the current batch of commercial GM crops has actually increased pesticide use.



Roundup Ready crops - currently the most common GM crops - are an example of their

For a copy please contact Richard Hines or visit:

[http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/  
media\\_briefing/town\\_centre\\_fir  
st.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/media_briefing/town_centre_fir st.pdf)

## **Shop Local First event summary**

**Read the report from November's Shop Local First event.**

In November we held a seminar in London to discuss the immense potential for independent local shops and

street markets to lead the way in green retailing.

In the last Real Food News we gave you a brief flavour of what was talked about, but we have now produced a summary of the event. This includes details of the speaker's presentation, as well as the outcomes of the discussion groups.

To read the report, please contact Richard Hines or visit:

[http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/  
briefings/shop\\_local\\_event.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/shop_local_event.pdf)

## **GM NEWS**

failure. In the US there was a 15-fold increase in the use of the herbicide Roundup between 1994 and 2004.

Weeds are also becoming resistant to pesticides. This means farmers spray more Roundup - and turn to older, more damaging, pesticides. This increases costs and threatens the environment.

Another industry claim is that poor farmers will benefit. But since GM cotton was adopted in the Makhatini Flats in South Africa, around three quarters of small farmers have gone out of business.

They have also failed to tackle hunger. Most commercial GM crops are grown for animal feed for western countries and biofuels. None have been introduced to address hunger and poverty issues.

### **Read the report**

We have both long and short versions of the report available, plus a summary of the key questions and answers. Please contact Richard for copies, or download them below:

### **Executive summary:**

[http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/  
briefings/who\\_benefits\\_summar  
y.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/who_benefits_summary.pdf)

### **Full report:**

[http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/  
briefings/who\\_benefits.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/who_benefits.pdf)

### **Questions & Answers:**

[http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/  
briefings/who\\_benefits\\_questio  
ns.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/who_benefits_questions.pdf)

## **New GM threat in Yorkshire**

**Scientists at Leeds University have applied to DEFRA to release GM potatoes modified to repel potato cyst nematodes.**

We are opposing the trials for a number of reasons, including:

- Risk of contamination for neighbouring potato crops

- from insect cross-pollination.
- Lack of safety data on unexpected chemical changes in the GM potatoes.
- Lack of allergenicity testing on the GM repellent chemicals produced by the GM potato.
- The presence of antibiotic resistant marker genes in the GM potatoes.

Also, there is no market demand for GM potatoes in the UK and they are unnecessary – the pest can be controlled using good husbandry. The keys are to have long rotations allowing five years or more between crops, to plant trap crops, and to maintain good hygiene in the field to prevent potato cyst nematode infestations growing large enough to threaten crop yields.