



SEARCH



This Issue is one of the more important Issues of *World Agriculture*.

The pages here are more numerous than is normally the case. We deal with one of our fundamental purposes and objectives.

This is to give a clear, description of the some of the complex, vital problems confronting this World and where possible propose solutions. Policy makers carry out their duties in response to pressure from the voting public.

It is up to that public with the very best and well-informed motives to apply the pressure for solutions to issues which are for the long term sustainable benefits of the whole world.

Unfortunately this should not involve many of the current, widely publicised, pressure groups, which frequently have sectional interests at heart, or are composed of ill-informed individuals.

It is for scientists, economists and sociologists, who normally discourse amongst themselves, to make clear statements 'for the man in the street' what urgent and grave issues need action.

The most important issue, bar none at the present time, is climate change, and unless the world acts quickly we conclude the situation could be catastrophic.

Unfortunately, the required action will undoubtedly have an adverse effect on the standard of living of many at present and so would be difficult for policy makers to invoke and institute. But that is the nature of the beast!

In the first paper we describe the many purposes of agroforestry. This is by Chavan *et al.* which demonstrates the multi-functional role played by agroforestry in the landscape. These include a range of “environmental services such as those of provisioning services (food, fuel, fibre, fresh water and genetic resources), regulating services (climate regulation, water maintenance and erosion control), cultural services (spiritual enrichment, reflection, recreation and aesthetic values) and those of supporting services (production of oxygen and soil formation).”

We then consider the activity of forestry in carbon sequestration as part of the carbon cycle of Nature.

Subsequently, we discuss a recently published book, which shows the conflict in the mind of the general public between the countryside which has three roles: it has an essential aesthetic role, it has an essential food producing job and it has its most important role as part of the carbon cycle.

This is vital, because without fulfilling that role the other two would fail. We conclude that a greatly increased world forestry expanse alone will not, by itself, solve the problem of the high rate of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. It will require urgent and difficult political action to rectify this situation.

The final short trenchant note by Professor Sir John Marsh makes clear the indispensable part played by the political leader.

“This is a leadership challenge missing from a political system that is professionally neutral about religion. It delivers power to those who guess what the voters would like to hear and reflect that to them as policy intention. It is wholly irresponsible about the impact of such populist policies upon the real welfare of society.”

“It is the nature of research that those who participate develop their own language and their own view of the world.

“Confronted by problems each group seeks and sometimes identifies solutions within that framework.

“This note argues that because global warming affects all the elements that underpin the lifestyles we seek and enjoy we need a shared responsibility that includes natural sciences, socio-economic analysis, political and religious conversation and communicators at all levels.

“Parallel debates among experts are not enough. It has to involve the whole community in ways that offer not just a continuation of current consumption patterns but a lifestyle that is more rewarding and sustainable.”

David Frape

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 [Dr David Frape](#)

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Comments

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