



Everyone Is Fiddling as California Burns

As of October 31, 2007, my home state has been burning for the past 10 days. So far over 2000 homes and more than 500,000 acres of forestland have been destroyed. Is this a glimpse into our near future?

Coincidentally, on Sunday, October 21, 2007, the day the fires in Southern California broke out, the TV news program, *60 minutes*, ran the segment, "The Age Of Mega-Fires;" reporting how the size of large wildfires has increased over the past decade from 100,000 acres to 200,000 acres. They predicted that out-of-control infernos might soon consume 500,000 acres and more—they had no idea how soon "soon" would be. According to *60 minutes'* investigators, this escalation is due to global warming. Climate change has resulted in longer, drier fire seasons. Such tinderbox conditions had not been predicted to occur for another 40 years.

The rate of growth of mega fires is not the only climate change prediction scientists have recently had to update. Mark Serreze, senior research scientist at National Snow and Ice Data Center termed the decline of Arctic ice, "astounding." "Most researchers had anticipated that the complete disappearance of the Arctic ice pack during summer months would happen after the year 2070," he said, but now, "losing summer sea ice cover by 2030 is not unreasonable." Seems like we have much less time to fix things than we once thought we did.

Not Much Interest in Our Destructive Diet

To some degree every person these days is aware of the damage caused by human activities to our environment and most of us are making corrections: recycling, fluorescent light bulbs, and hybrid cars. This is all good. But what have people done about our planet-destroying diet? Nothing! This lack of attention to food troubles me greatly because of the potential good that could be done for humankind.

One year ago, the 407-page United Nations' report, *Livestock's Long Shadow*, reported that 18% of the greenhouse gasses produced annually are a direct consequence of farming cows, pigs, and chickens and that animal husbandry is among the top polluters of Planet Earth. (Recall that 13.5% of greenhouse gasses are produced by all transportation.)

Over the past year, to appease the public's lust for cheap calories, Hardee's has introduced the 900 -calorie Country Breakfast Burrito and McDonalds' upped their rendition of "a heart attack in a bun" with the Angus third-pounder. Robert Atkins is barely cold in his grave, yet his earth-polluting recommendations have already been reincarnated by Gary Taubes in his new book *Good Calories, Bad Calories*. These trends tell me the public still has no clue—and many of those who do understand just don't care enough to take action, because life is still good. Based on what has happened with fire and ice over the past few years, our "comfy lives" may be changing sooner than we had expected.

Let These Events Inspire Us to Speak Out about Our Food

Begin now by educating yourself and everyone around you. No longer tolerate people saying, "You have to eat meat to get protein, starches make you fat, and milk is necessary for strong bones." These are not innocent lies. Deception and dishonesty threaten your children's and grandchildren's futures.

Change is inevitable. When people become desperate enough they will ask for real solutions. You and I need to be ready to provide real answers and real leadership. Those of us who know the truth have an obligation to take action now and in the future.

Concise McDougall Newsletter Articles Written to Help You Share the Truth. Copy and Give Them to Family and Friends—Even When They Do Not Seem Interested.

When Friends Ask:

[Where do you get your calcium?](#)

[Why don't you drink milk?](#)

[Where do you get your protein?](#)

[Why did you quit meat?](#)

For more information on this subject see my [December 2006](#) and [January 2007](#) newsletters.