

# ***Cows, Cars, and the Ethanol Con***

Media Statement by Viv Forbes  
Chairman, The Carbon Sense Coalition.

Any quotes taken directly from this statement may be attributed to Mr Forbes

*To view in your browser see:*

<http://carbon-sense.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/cows-cars-ethanol.pdf>

The Carbon Sense Coalition today called for an end to government promotion, tax breaks and market mandates for ethanol.

The Chairman of Carbon Sense, Mr Viv Forbes, said it was amazing that the same government that promotes ethanol, also attacks the livestock industry for using the same inputs and producing the same emissions as the ethanol industry.

## ***Quote:***

Why are emissions from cows digesting grain classed as bad, whereas the same emissions from cars burning grain ethanol are lauded as green and good?

Consider a paddock of corn. Most of the carbon in the growing plant comes from carbon dioxide in the air which is converted to plant material using solar energy via the magic of photosynthesis. Other minor carbon compounds come from the atmosphere via busy microbes in the soil.

This plant material, either biomass or grain, can be fed to cattle or other livestock, made into ethanol for motor fuel, or made into food for people.

All cows, cars and people then use an internal digestion/combustion process to extract the energy collected and stored by the corn plants.

In every case, this process produces gaseous emissions, mainly carbon dioxide.

In cattle and people, some of the plant's carbon is stored for a while in flesh and bones. The rest is emitted as the natural gases carbon dioxide and methane. This methane is soon oxidised in the atmosphere to produce carbon dioxide.

In cars, virtually every atom of carbon in the ethanol burned produces one molecule of carbon dioxide.

Over the life of a cow running on corn or a car running on ethanol, they both produce exactly the same carbon emissions from exactly the same plant input. Every atom of carbon extracted from the air by the green plant eventually returns to the atmosphere as carbon dioxide, the plant food. This is the natural carbon-based cycle of life.

It is therefore scientific incompetence or deliberate fraud by global warming alarmists, vested interests and "scientists" to claim that consuming ethanol in cars is good and should be subsidised but consuming the same plant material in cows must be rationed and taxed.

We are told that ethanol is a renewable energy. Closer inspection shows it ties up a lot of good cropping land; uses a lot of motor fuel to plant, harvest, and transport the grain; and

then a lot more energy to ferment, distil and distribute it to make up its mandated proportion of motor fuel. Even more energy is used to make, transport and apply fertiliser. Growing corn for ethanol is a zero sum game at best.

We can surely learn from history.

Back in 2005, US corn prices were \$2.30 per bushel. Then the US Congress mandated the use of ethanol in motor fuel so that even before the recent US drought, corn prices had risen to \$5.50 per bushel. In 2007, the US Congress increased the quantity of ethanol to be added to gasoline and the demand for corn again soared. Then the widespread drought in the US reduced the supply of corn, and corn prices rose again to a peak of \$8.34 per bushel in August 2012. The US is now using 40% of their corn harvest to provide about 10% of their vehicle fuel.

Such foolishness has done NOTHING for the climate, but has increased food prices, put more land under cultivation, increased nitrogen fertiliser use, and caused starvation in countries dependent on US corn exports.

Ethanol madness has magnified the effects of the drought - twenty US ethanol plants have closed and cattle feedlots are closing because of a shortage of grain.

And to cap the foolishness, ethanol production consumes more energy than it produces. It is an inferior motor fuel, producing lower km/litre and also damaging some engines.

An ethanol industry propped up by subsidies and mandates is un-sustainable. It increases the tax burden and pushes up the cost of grains, beef, pork, eggs, milk and cereals. Subsidising ethanol brings no benefits for the climate or the environment and harms the poor and hungry of the world.

And should the world move into a period of natural global cooling, which is at least as likely as a resumption of last century's gentle warming, food production will plummet and a world-wide food crisis will be upon us.

It is time to end the ethanol con.

No more forcing motorists to buy it. No more tax breaks for construction of ethanol plants. No more subsidies or special protection for ethanol speculators. Let ethanol production compete fairly with all other sources of transport energy.

And let's have no more slander about emissions of the livestock industry which, when all is considered, is greener than the ethanol industry.

Sensible politicians need to stop pandering to the anti-human green lobby, stop posturing on the world green stage, learn some carbon chemistry, and stop burning food for fuel.

### ***UNQUOTE***

*This report was first published in Blues Magazine, April 2013.*

*Viv Forbes is a geologist and grass farmer who has spent his whole life in the primary industries, farming and mining, mainly in coal, cattle and sheep. He is self-employed and should be retired. He fears for the damage being done to the energy and food industries by baseless scare-mongering about the harmless, non-polluting plant food, carbon dioxide. He is the founder of the Carbon Sense Coalition, [www.carbon-sense.com](http://www.carbon-sense.com)*

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