

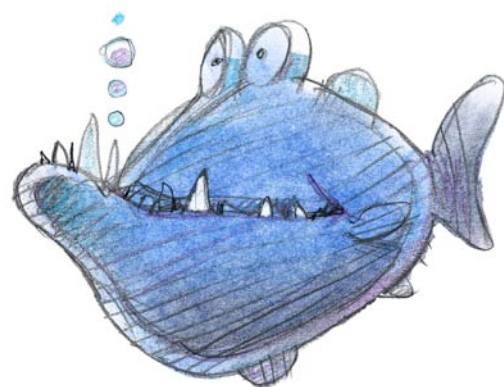
The Yippittee!

for kids who are crazy about conservation!

Issue 2 December 2009

Food Glorious Food!

Phew! That was a close one! I just managed to avoid getting caught by one of those great big fishing nets. I hear the British people like eating fish and chips! Well while we're on the subject of food, I suppose it's around about now that you'll be tucking into your Christmas dinner, but have you thought about how food gets onto your dinner plate? No I don't mean who cooks it! I mean who grows or rears it, where, how and what effects does that have on the world around us - our environment? Food has to travel you know. Sometimes it goes a long way to get to the shops and this pollutes the air - it makes it dirty. If we eat meat or animal products like eggs, do we think about how those animals were looked after? Well, hopefully this Yippittee will give you lots of FOOD FOR THOUGHT! Ha, ha. Don't forget to keep an eye out for more fun activities, puzzles and jokes! If you've got any ideas for future editions of the Yippittee let us know - you never know, we might just use them! Now read on to hear a fishy tale about what's been happening in the oceans where I live...



A Fishy Business

Imagine a toy shop - with a difference. You can take any toy as long as you replace it with another one. If you don't, the toy shop will eventually become empty with everyone taking toys until there's nothing left for other children to play with. It's a bit like that in the world. Sometimes we take so much we don't allow nature to recover and put things back.

Think about fishing. If we take too many fish out of the sea at once, there will only be a small number left. They won't be able to have enough babies to replace the fish that were caught. If this keeps happening eventually there will be none left. Which is precisely why there aren't many cod fish in our seas at the moment. They are quite rare. This is a lesson that we shouldn't take more than we need.

Now there are rules to stop fishermen from taking too many fish. The trouble is that the fishermen need to catch lots to make enough money to pay their bills and look after their families, so it is a tricky problem! But if we take too much now, there won't be enough for us in the future.

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Don't Panic, It's Organic!

Organic vegetables and fruit are ones which have not been sprayed with chemicals. Normally farmers use chemicals called pesticides on their fields to protect their crops from damage and disease. Pesticides are used to kill bugs which might damage the crops but they can harm other insects too. This means there is less food for creatures which might like to eat those insects, like bats and frogs. Farmers want to grow as much food as possible on their land in a short space of time so a lot of man-made fertilizers are used. This is called intensive farming. Intensive farming can damage the soil so that even more chemicals have to be used which is bad for wildlife and can pollute the streams. There is also less space for wild flowers and plants to grow which would attract wildlife.

Did you know
organic farmers can only use about four chemicals whereas in intensive farming about 500 are used!

If you see the word "organic" on a label, it means no chemicals were used to grow the plant. Yet sometimes meat and dairy products such as milk, yoghurt, cheese and also eggs are labelled as organic too. This means that the animals are only fed organic food and are looked after better than non-organic farm animals.



Why is it a good idea? Eating foods which may have traces of chemicals on them all our lives can't be good for us! Organic is better for wildlife and some insects can actually help the plants. Ladybirds and lacewings love eating aphids, those little green flies which destroy plants.

So why not? Organic food tends to be more expensive because more people are needed to work on the farms and because farmers can't grow as much food. However, the more people buy it, the cheaper it will become.

Did you know
apples can be sprayed up to 16 times with 36 different chemicals!
Better to be organic!

Action Stations!

One way to be sure your food is organic is to grow your own! Then you know exactly what you have put on it and you might attract some wildlife too! Try buying at least one organic product every week.

Chick, chick, chick, chick chicken, lay a little egg for me!

Egg sandwiches - you either love 'em or hate 'em. But eggs come hidden in all sorts of foods like cakes and pizzas too.

Yet we sometimes forget to think about the chicken which laid the eggs. Some of these have happy lives running around outside, being able to peck and scratch the ground, perch on branches and stretch their wings. These are called **free range** chickens.



However, there are other chickens who aren't as lucky. They spend their lives squashed up in cages unable to move around very much at all. These are called **battery hens**.

So next time you buy eggs, or a chicken to eat, spare a thought for the chicken and buy free range!

Action Stations! Look out for free range eggs in the ingredients on food labels too, like mayonnaise.

Smelly cows!

When we talk about looking after our world we usually think about recycling, not using our cars too much and switching off lights. But did you know that a lot of pollution is caused when cows and other farm animals "break wind"?! (In other words when they burp and fart!) This is because they release a very damaging gas called methane (see "Greenhouse Gases" below).

This gas is 23 times worse than carbon dioxide so many people think we should eat less meat to help prevent further climate change.

Did you know...?

Farm animals breaking wind causes more pollution than all the cars, trucks, planes, trains and buses put together!

Huge amounts of land are needed for herds of cows to graze on. In South America, particularly Brazil, vast areas of rainforest are chopped down to

do just that. Many of these cows are turned into beefburgers for people to eat in North America.



Even British farm animals are part of the problem because they are often fed soya which is grown on fields where the rainforest has been chopped down.

You need a lot of food to feed an animal up and turn it into meat. Not only does that use land but also lots of water to look after the animal and grow its food.

To get 1 kg of beef you need 15 times more water than you'd need to grow 1 kg wheat. To get 1 beefburger 2,400 litres of water will have been used.

To grow farm animals' food a lot of artificial fertilizers and pesticides are used which are bad for the environment unless the meat is "organic" (see page 2).

Action Stations!

Go to a local butcher and find out which farms they get their meat from, how the animals are kept and what they are fed. Now go to a supermarket and see if you can find out the same information.

Have a "meat free day" at least once a week. What could you eat instead?

Did you know...?

In Britain we eat 5 times more meat than we did 50 years ago!



Greenhouse Gases.

Have you ever been inside a greenhouse? Then you must know that it can get pretty hot in there! It's the glass that traps the heat from the sun inside. Now let's think about the world. Surrounding the world there is an invisible blanket called the atmosphere. This keeps the world at a good temperature for us to survive in because the atmosphere is full of gases which act a bit like the glass in a greenhouse. They trap the heat from the sun, keeping us nice and warm. So we call them greenhouse gases.

The trouble is that when we pollute the air by driving our cars, flying, making electricity or when cows fart (!) we put extra greenhouse gases into the atmosphere such as carbon dioxide and methane. When these gases go into the atmosphere, they act like a greenhouse and trap even more heat. This causes temperatures around the world to be warmer than usual. We call it Global Warming. As well as causing drought (when there is not enough rain), it can also make the weather do crazy things like cause big storms and floods. It can make it difficult to grow food and makes it harder for wildlife to survive. For these reasons we need to try and create as little pollution as possible in our everyday lives.

Did you know...

In one year a cow lets off the same amount of pollution as an aeroplane going from London to New York and back again, twice!

Strawberry Sensation!

Once upon a time there were three strawberries. They looked the same as each other but had very different lives. The first strawberry had a very simple life. She grew in the garden with all the other fruits and vegetables. One day when she was big enough and had turned bright red a little girl called Lucy skipped down the garden path with a small bowl and picked the strawberry and her friends. She then went back to her house and gobbled them up with some cream for her lunch. "Mmm, delicious", she said.

Down the road lived a little boy called Charlie. He didn't have a garden but one June day he had seen a sign saying "pick your own" outside a nearby farm where the second strawberry lived. So the following Saturday he got on his bicycle with his friends, rode to the farm and picked a punnet full to the brim with strawberries. By the time he got home he had eaten them all!



Now along their street there also lived a lady called Mrs Robinson. She loved strawberries so much that she ate them all year round! Every time she went shopping at the nearby supermarket she would buy some strawberries and today was no exception. She jumped into her car and drove to the supermarket. Now the third strawberry was more exotic! When Mrs Robinson looked at the label she could see that it had come from sunny Spain, a country 958 miles away. All the strawberries were in plastic containers because they needed protecting on their journey.

The supermarket would only sell the strawberries if they were in tip top condition so as soon as they were picked they had to be put on an aeroplane and flown quickly over to Britain. The aeroplane put lots of pollution into the air, especially a harmful gas called carbon dioxide. Not only that but to get from the farm to the airport the strawberries had to travel in a big truck. Then, when the plane had landed, the strawberries had to be put onto another truck to take them to a big warehouse. Those trucks were also very smelly and polluting. At the warehouse the strawberries were sorted out and the best ones were put into the plastic containers. They then went on another lorry to different supermarkets all over the country. Those strawberries had travelled for miles!

Once the strawberries were on the supermarket shelf many people (who usually went there in their cars) bought the strawberries, not really thinking about the incredible journey they'd been on or the pollution made to get them to the shops so quickly. All Mrs Robinson cared about was eating her favourite food all year round. She didn't care about the plastic container that couldn't be recycled, so she just threw it in the bin. On the other hand Lucy and Charlie just enjoyed eating strawberries as a special treat in the summer when they could pick the fruit themselves from places nearby without harming the environment.

Food miles are how far food travels to get to you and how much pollution the journey makes. For example, aeroplanes are far more polluting than ships.

The best thing to do is buy fruit and vegetables when they are "in season" - when are normally ready to be picked and eaten. You don't, for example, find strawberries to eat during the winter. This means that the ones in the supermarket will have had to travel a long way from a hotter country.

Action Stations!

Find out which months different foods are in season such as: pumpkin, carrots, cabbages, cherries, parsnips, tomatoes, radishes, beetroot, broccoli, runner beans, sprouts and apples. What's in season this month? Why not cook a seasonal meal using only local "in season" ingredients.

Not so simple... there are other things to think about apart from food miles, read on to find out more!

Food Miles – not so simple!

While it is very important to think about how far our food has travelled, as you have seen in the story about strawberries, it is also very important to think about how the food was produced in the first place. Occasionally something that has travelled a long distance may be more environmentally friendly than something which was produced locally. That might be because it used less energy, less water or less pesticides.

Look at the following examples:

Buying **apples** from Britain “in season” (late July - October) is a good thing. But if we buy British apples in June, it might not be any better than buying apples from New Zealand 12,000 miles away! That’s because to keep the British apples fresh they have to be kept in fridges to stop them from going off. This uses so much electricity that bringing apples from abroad can actually make less pollution!

We can buy British **meat** which many people think is better for the animals. Unfortunately the food those animals eat is often grown many miles away and sometimes rainforests are cut down to grow it (see page 3).

Flowers from Holland travel less distance than flowers from Kenya in Africa but produce 5 times more carbon dioxide! That’s because Kenyan ones they are grown in the sunshine instead of in greenhouses like the ones in Holland which are artificially heated up and use lots of energy.

Likewise most **tomatoes** grown in the UK are grown in greenhouses which are heated and lighted artificially in the cooler months. They release 3 times more carbon dioxide than ones brought over by truck from Spain! However, some Spanish tomatoes use massive amounts of water in areas where there are shortages and large quantities of pesticides.

Action Stations!

The way to ensure the least possible food miles is to grow your own fruit and veg! Lettuces and radishes are easy ones to start off with. Don’t worry if you don’t have a garden, it may be possible to grow a few herbs in pots on a window sill or in the yard.

Try to buy food directly from nearby farms or a farmer’s market where they can even tell you which farm the food came from.

Farming – from pasture to plate

Farm

where they grow the
food or rear the animals



Factory

where the food is used in recipes
and put in packaging



Warehouse

where the food is sorted out and
put into lorries



Supermarket

where the food is sold



Your plate!

when the food is eaten!

It's Just Not Fair!

Imagine doing a paper round and only getting paid 25 pence for all your hard work. That is what it is like for many people around the world who work so hard for almost nothing. Now there is a symbol to look out for when you go shopping - it's the Fairtrade logo. It means that the farmers who grow the food get paid a better, fairer price for all their hard work.

Although the food is not local and has travelled a long way, Fairtrade farmers must look



after the environment where they live, for example by making sure that the rivers don't get polluted with chemicals and by recycling their waste. It also means that the farmers don't have to earn money in other ways which might damage the environment such as by chopping down trees or killing rare animals.

So apart from food miles, there are other things to consider when you go shopping. Here's an idea though - buy things that grow in Britain from British farmers and other foods which we can only buy from abroad such as oranges, bananas, tea, coffee, sugar and chocolate from people who are paid fairly and respect their environment - look for the Fairtrade mark!

Action Stations!

See if you can use or sell Fairly Traded items at school.

Do an assembly about Fairtrade.

Other symbols to look out for...



This symbol means that special nets are used with bigger gaps so only fully grown fish are caught. The younger, smaller fish can escape and breed.



This little red tractor shows that the food is British and meets certain standards to do with caring for animals and the environment.



This symbol shows that food is organic, meeting the high standards of the British soil association. (See page 2).

Dolphin Friendly.



Eaten a tin of tuna lately? Look closely at the label and hopefully you find the words "dolphin friendly" or even better "dolphin safe". This tells us something about how the tuna was caught. You see dolphins like to swim together with a type of tuna called "yellow fin". In the past this caused problems when the nets caught not only the fish but trapped the dolphins too. Now there are rules so the nets have to have "escape hatches" through which the dolphins can get out. Another way of catching tuna is by having lots of fishing lines miles long with bait on the end of them. However, sadly these ways of fishing can still catch sharks, turtles and albatrosses by mistake.

If the label says "dolphin safe" (such as tuna from the COOP or Sainsbury's) then it is better than just "friendly" because the rules about how the fish are caught are stricter and there are inspectors on every fishing boat making sure that the rules are followed.

Some kinds of tuna have been over fished (see the first page to learn about that). All bluefin tuna are endangered, so buy other types such as skipjack.

10 things you Never Knew About Tomatoes!

The tomato is the world's most popular fruit! Over 60 million tonnes are produced every year!

There are around 10,000 varieties of tomato!

Tomatoes were discovered by the Spanish in South and Central America where the Aztec people in Mexico and the Incas in Peru were already eating them.

When the Spanish brought tomatoes back with them in around 1556, people thought they were poisonous because the plant is in the same family as the plant called "deadly nightshade".



The French used to call them "pommes d'amour" or "love apples"!

Every August in Spain there is a festival called "Tomatina" when thousands of people throw tomatoes at each other!

A tomato is a fruit because it grows on a stalk and has seeds. Some are yellow, not red.

One tomato plant can produce about 15 tomatoes.

Green tomatoes ripen faster if they are stored with apples.

The world record for the largest tomato ever was set in 1986 with a tomato weighing 3.51 kg, as heavy as a new born baby!

It was grown in Oklahoma, USA.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!

When you go shopping, it's not just the food you buy but all the packaging as well! This usually goes in our dustbins and ends up in a landfill site - a great big hole in the ground where rubbish is left to rot and pollute for hundreds of years.

So why do we need packaging? There are some good reasons:

1. to keep the food nice and fresh and make it last longer
2. to make sure the food doesn't get damaged or broken

However, sometimes the packaging is unnecessary and only there to make the food look good so that more people will buy it. So here are three things you can do about that...

1. Reduce! This means make less waste in the first place. Try to buy things which aren't wrapped up in lots of packaging, especially fruit and vegetables which you can buy loose.

2. Reuse! If you have packaging try to use it again. For example the cardboard from cereal packets, plastic bags and containers.

3. Recycle. This is when our old rubbish gets turned into something new! Great idea! You can recycle plastic bottles, glass, paper, cans, fruit juice cartons and cardboard. Sometimes grown ups need a little help to do this!



Action Stations!

Write to your local supermarket and ask them why they use so much packaging on their fruit and vegetables.

Crazy About Conservation!

This is your page so if you want to send us a poem, story or letter about the environment, sent it to us at this address: Crazy about Conservation!, YPTE, Suite 29, Yeovil Innovation Centre, Barracks Close, Copse Road, Yeovil, Somerset, BA22 8RN or e-mail it to us at... info@ypte.org.uk

You're joking!

Why did the student eat his homework?

Because the teacher told him it was a piece of cake!

What did one tomato say to another?

You go on ahead and I'll ketchup!

Waiter, waiter, this soup tastes funny!

Waiter: so why aren't you laughing?!

What did the hungry computer eat?

Chips, one byte at a time!

Tasty Tips:

- * Buy organic food.
- * Grow your own food
- * Buy free range eggs and chicken.
- * Try and buy some things from your local shops.

Remember this catchphrase next time you go shopping!

Local
Organic
Animal Friendly
Fairtrade

Food for Thought Wordsearch

r v x s p u d d i n g
t e k r a m r e p u s
i g m e h s c i a k l
u e e t d e e a c z v
r t a a a l w d k s e
f a t w i i a c a e l
k b f a r m i n g n c
w l j f y n l t i a y
i e i l a c o l n h c
r s y g c d i n g t e
h f r e e r a n g e r
g o s r e d u c e m p

Can you find:

cake

dairy

farming

fish

free range

fruit

local

meat

methane

miles

organic

packaging

pie

pudding

recycle

reduce

supermarket

vegetables

water

Here are some useful websites to find out more:

Organix www.organix.com/Childrens-Food-Club/default.html

Recycle Zone www.recyclezone.org.uk

Cool Kids www.coolkidsforacoolclimate.com

Children of the Earth www.Childrenoftheearth.org

The Fairtrade Foundation www.fairtrade.org.uk