United Kingdom

Effects of Climate Change

The main effects in the UK will be related to increases in global temperatures. This adds more energy to the atmosphere and so results in more extremes of weather.

York Floods in 2006

In general, there may be more winter rainfall. Increases in sudden, heavy rains will make flash floods more likely.

Possibly the most dramatic illustrations have been seen in York (November, 2000), Boscastle (August, 2004) and Carlisle (January, 2005).

Drier and hotter summers will bring problems. Less rainfall may mean water restrictions. Higher temperatures may lead to more heat-related deaths, especially in the elderly and infirm. In 2003, a summer heat wave in France resulted in an estimated 15,000 deaths.

Plants and Animals

Changing climate will affect the natural flora and fauna. There is speculation that diseases, such as malaria, which are associated with hotter climates may become more common as the insects that carry them are able to survive further north.

As a wealthy country, the UK will be able to cope better with climate change than many developing countries, however an impact will still be felt.

Practical Action Project – UK office

At the head office at Bourton Hall in Rugby, Warwickshire, it has become increasingly important to take steps to reduce our own carbon footprint. In addition to our own wind turbine, the Environment Group has introduced a vegetable plot and a composting scheme.

Vegetable Plot

This was the first year for the vegetable plot, started as a volunteer project by Spencer Davies and a small group of willing ‘green fingered’ helpers.

There were good harvests of beans, tomatoes, carrots, squashes, spring onions, broccoli, lettuce and sweet corn. Other vegetables being successfully grown include cauliflower, parsnips, and broccoli.

The first attempt was extremely successful and they are looking to expand next year. Members could join a group to contribute £5 each to seeds and materials such as rabbit proof fencing. Each member did their bit of digging, planting and watering.

Tea and Coffee

The Environment Group calculated that staff in the UK office were throwing away enough tea bags and coffee grounds each year to fill the back of an MPV! So now all vegetable matter, tea bags and coffee grounds are collected and taken outside regularly to the compost bins built out of reclaimed wood by Neil Noble, our technical enquiries man.

Obviously the allotment group is making full use of this facility, and our grounds-man, Pete, now has a useful place to deposit the occasional load of grass cuttings.

It's even saving the organization money as we add the occasional bag of shredded confidential waste paper rather than paying for it to be taken away for recycling!

All this proves that saving the environment can be fun, fulfilling and save money!