

Re: Latvia refuses to go green: new power station to return the country to dark ages of coal

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From: Stephen Sprunk (stephen_at_sprunk.org)

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Date: Fri, 25 Feb 2005 10:37:01 -0600

"Hatunen" <hatuunen@cox.net> wrote in message
news:0uk911ttmmdtdip0ikcpplhh29rdo93ca@4ax.com...

> *On Wed, 16 Feb 2005 21:30:34 -0600, "jim blair"*

> *<jebclair@XXXfacstaff.wisc.edu> wrote:*

>

> > *But IF any bio-mass fuel were to be widely used, land for growing it*
> > *would soon be in competition with food production. I would like to*
> > *see some figures on the land area needed to replace the oil we now*
> > *burn, as compared to what is now devoted to crops. Want to replace*
> > *the forests and wetlands with bio-fuel farms?*

If one were to use corn, the approximate land area needed to replace our entire gasoline import volume would be about 50% larger than the current amount of corn planted; I did the math here several months back. However, there are other crops that actually have higher yields than corn and can grow in areas where corn wouldn't be grown anyways, e.g. switchgrass.

Also, the land area of source crops drops with each advance in fermenting techniques, which are happening rapidly with increasing research funding. It's possible by the time ethanol actually hit mainstream use, the amount of crops necessary would be a quarter or even less of what'd be required today.

> *And do we really want government farm policy determining our fuel*
> *supply?*

Is that better or worse than paying some farmers not to grow anything so that other farmers will get higher prices at the market?

> *Farmers plant crops that seem to be likely to provide them with*
> *the highest income. How do we keep farmers from switching from*
> *bio-ethanol crops to, say, soy beans, should the price of soy*
> *beans rise?*

Supply and demand will even that out.

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This also ignores that there are many types of land suitable for growing fuel source crops that is not suitable for growing "normal" food crops. They are not necessarily in competition.

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Stephen Sprunk "Stupid people surround themselves with smart
CCIE #3723 people. Smart people surround themselves with
K5SSS smart people who disagree with them." --Aaron Sorkin