



This week's environment news concerns Climate Week, as it has been designated by those who designate those things. We are all required to think seriously about our carbon footprint – at least for this week!

I've always wondered who decides what day or week it's going to be: does a group of heavenly beings cluster around a diary every year to decide on which dates we are going to think about what?

It's unfortunate that these 'weeks' or 'days' (presumably for less important issues - I'm thinking of Yorkshire Day) can devalue the issue they are meant to support by seeming trivial or, worse, badly organised; or they can reinforce the idea that people only think about important issues for one week (or day) in the year. If the population is going to take climate change seriously it's going to need to live responsibly all year!

Climate Week has been sponsored by huge business enterprises. I was reminded by Tesco in an email that I had an unparalleled opportunity to eat 'low-carbon' food. Does that mean I haven't got to burn my toast - or burn it just a little bit?

Another of the sponsors is SodaStream. It is, somehow, comforting to think that even a fizzy drink can be made more environmentally friendly. As the blurb on the Climate Week website says: "...one single SodaStream bottle can save up to 2000 bottles and cans." You can win one of their marvellous machines in a competition to find the best low carbon recipe. You can enter at www.climateweek.com, but be quick – the competition closes on Sunday.

The issue of food miles remains a significant challenge for all of us, particularly with the massive changes in the way food is produced and marketed in this country. The BBC is currently running a campaign to re-introduce 'forgotten foods' onto the nation's dining tables.

A classic example of a food that has become virtually impossible to make in its traditional form is the Bury black pudding. As a native of that venerable town I well remember the Saturday tradition of buying a freshly-boiled pudding from the market, either while out shopping or, later, on the way to Gigg Lane to watch Colin Bell and Ray Pointer from the Boys' Stand. The thing is that modern regulations make it difficult to use fresh blood, which is what a black pudding is made from, so powdered, dried blood is used. That, of course, is just one more unnecessary process to add to the pudding's carbon footprint.

If more locally-produced food were made, sold and eaten, the original ingredients could be re-introduced. Of course the black pudding is anathema to vegetarians and those who aver that meat is by its nature a high-carbon food, but it uses parts of the pig that would otherwise be wasted. Maybe there should be a separate category in the Environment Directory for traditional food producers.

Another BBC report concerned the amount of bread that is wasted every day in this country. Apparently people think that a white sliced loaf will 'go off' in two days and some even keep bread in the fridge, despite the fact that 5°C is just about the worst temperature to keep bread at. The answer, of course, is to buy less at a time and buy good quality wholemeal bread. Even the supermarket 'baked-in-store' loaves are far superior in taste to factory white sliced. My favourite comes from our local Co-op, who do not make enough and are constantly running out. You'd think they'd clock onto that and do something about it – like make more!

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