

Ruminations

We could shut all of the cows inside, feed them on soya meal and fit them with methane masks, and UK GHG emissions would not fall.

We could kick all of the cows out onto a hill to live on tor grass and milk them once a day, and UK GHG emissions would not fall.

We could shoot all of the cows tomorrow, and UK GHG emissions would not fall.

There is nothing wrong our side of the farm gate. No amount of meddling with agriculture will reduce UK GHG emissions. On the contrary, meddle to the point where productivity falls and emissions will rise due to increased food miles, importing food produced abroad to lower environmental standards than we adhere to.

If Government instructed our greatest scientific brains to design a machine to convert nature's bounty into nutrient rich, tasty food for humans, with minimal environmental impact, they would come up with the cow.

1863. The year that manmade CO₂ emissions overtook natural background emissions.

What has changed since 1863?

Farming? Not really, it's still cows chomping on grass and farmers planting crops.

The food chain? Absolutely. Lorries flying in opposite directions on motorways hauling identical loaves of bread; a planning system that means you have to climb into a car to buy so much as a pint of milk; landfill sites overflowing with packaging waste.

Tesco's freezers burn more electricity in a year than does all of UK agriculture.

<https://www.savemoneycutcarbon.com/...ume-enough-electricity-to-power-800000-homes/>

*It is estimated that the supermarket fridges consume around **1% of the country's electricity** – enough to power **800,000 homes**.*

<https://harksys.com/blog/the-true-running-cost-of-a-supermarket/#:~:text=According to research, supermarkets nationwide,per year.>

According to [research](#), supermarkets nationwide consume approximately 3 percent of the UK's electricity production. Compared to other types of commercial buildings, supermarkets usually have one of the highest specific energy consumptions. For larger stores energy intensity can reach 700 kWh/sqm. per year.

edit: For comparison:

https://ukerc.rl.ac.uk/pdf/AC0401_Final.pdf

Our analysis further indicates that agriculture emits around 1.19 million tonnes of carbon as a result of direct energy use, which is equivalent to 0.8% of total UK emissions. This is relatively small when put in the context of emissions for the whole food chain.

DTI, in its Digest of UK Energy Statistics (DUKES), publishes "Final Energy Consumption" data for a range of industries based on returns made by energy suppliers¹. From this it appears that direct energy use in agriculture accounts for just 0.6% of the UK's annual energy use.