

Organic Land Care *with*

"If man cheats the earth, the earth will cheat man."

-Chinese-

Earth knows no desolation.

She smells regeneration in the moist breath of decay.

- George Meredith-



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Our Mission:

"To support our communities in their transition to organic practices"

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SOUL

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www.organiclandcare.org.

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It was interesting to be in Europe for work and pleasure, much like being in an old landscape trying to address the problems of our times. When in London, I had the privilege to attend a debate called "The Big Ask". It was a debate about British government policy, what it is doing to address climate change, and in this debate specifically, London. Representatives from the three major political parties were in attendance, including a minister from the government, and the leader of the NGO Friends of the Earth (The Big Ask - <http://www.thebigask.eu/>). In this debate, which was moderated by a reporter from a major London newspaper, members of the audience posed questions directly to the panel. It was fascinating to hear about the same concerns that we are facing in Canada but also to hear the responses directly from politicians. It seemed that England is farther ahead than we are in addressing and understanding the issues of climate change and other related environmental issues.

While in London, a number of newspaper articles appeared that described the effects of pesticide use in the African country of Kenya and chemical use in India, and how the use of these were impacting various populations of animals and birds. It seemed timely that these newspaper articles should talk about pesticide use while we in Victoria discuss the use of chemicals on our landscapes. These articles provide additional information that ecosystems are not closed systems but instead are intertwined networks where what we do to one part affects another. Therefore, I have summarized these articles below to deepen the discussion about how we are affecting the planet and maybe creating an imbalance with creatures "both great and small."

All the best to everyone, and I hope that you find the global perspective of this newsletter interesting.

David Greig

The Times, Wednesday, April 30, 2008.

Vultures Spiraling to Oblivion as Cattle Drugs Poison the Carcasses They Feed On.

By Helen Nugent

As SOUL and Gaia College continually state, we are all part of an ecosystem that is interconnected through a myriad of webs. This article, about Asian vultures, again provides evidence about the interconnectedness within an ecosystem.

In a recent study from India, it was found that the anti-inflammatory livestock drug, diclofenac, is killing both the long-billed and slender-billed vultures. Their numbers have declined by 97% and only one thousandth of the Asian vultures' 1992 population remains.

In a study published in the Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society, it was shown that diclofenac, although banned for livestock use in 2006, is still being used for livestock through a human use version. Because vultures clean the environment of carrion, carcasses containing this chemical cause kidney failure in these birds and certain death. Again the question of chemical use and pesticide use demands a deeper discussion.

If a large environmental regulator such as a vulture can be lost because of a chemical inserted into the environment, how then will such a gap be replaced?

The Times, Wednesday, April 30, 2008.

The Lion That Lost Its Pride and Its Life...Paralyzed by Poison.

By Rob Crilly, Narobi, Kenya.

During the month of April, four lions in the Kenya game reserve Masai Mara died after feeding on a hippo contaminated with carbofuran (US trade name Furadan) – a pesticide used to kill insects in food crops. The pesticide causes paralysis in lions and leaves them unable to protect themselves from other predators.

This pesticide, although banned in the UK and the US, is apparently being used indiscriminately throughout Kenya. The article states that the hippo grazed in an area close to the lodge where this chemical was used “to keep insects away from well-heeled guests.” The US manufacturer claimed that the hippo carcass could not have contained enough pesticide to kill a lion and argued that a ban on this pesticide was unjustified.

It is interesting that companies refuse to take responsibility for what their products do and their long term environmental affects. Not taking responsibility for the environmental affects of their products is all too similar to the stance that pesticide companies take in our country.

I guess it is too bad for the endangered lion population in Kenya.



We are planning to hold our Annual General Meeting in Vancouver this June, and hope that all will join us.

We will let you know the details shortly...