

Consumption Statistics

By **MICHAEL BLOCH**
Green Living Tips

Fast facts—consumption statistics
Sometimes it can be difficult to relay to people just how much we consume; particularly those of us in developed countries. While purchasing green this and eco-friendly that are all well and good; one of the root causes of our environmental problems is hyper-consumption. We simply buy too much of what we don't need and often even what we don't really want.

Here's some fast facts on consumption relating to various goods, services and resources we use.

* Half the world lives on less than two dollars a day—GlobalWatch.

* 12 percent of the world's population lives in North America and Western Europe and accounts for 60 percent of private consumption spending, but a third of humanity that lives in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa accounts for only 3.2 percent.—World Watch Institute

* In 1950, the global population was

2.6 billion people. We had 53 million cars which works out to be one car for every 50 persons. Today, there are over 6 billion people and 500 million cars—more than one car for every dozen inhabitants.—Sierra Club (lots of fascinating facts on that page)

* If the Chinese consume resources in 2031 at a level that Americans do now, grain consumption per person there would climb from around 600 pounds today to around 2000 pounds needed to sustain a typical western diet. This would equate to 1,352 million tons of grain, equal to two thirds of all the grain harvested in the world in 2004.—One World

* In 1950, Americans consumed 144 pounds of meat and poultry per person on average. In 2007, that shot up to 222 pounds.—Factory Farming Campaign.

* Global oil production is currently about 81 million barrels a day and is predicted to fall to 39 million barrels a day by 2030 due to diminishing resources (see Peak oil)—Energy Watch Group via Guardian

* In 2003, gasoline consumption per capita in North America was 1,593.1 liters

per person, whereas in developing countries it was 59.2 liters per person.—World Resources Institute.

* Atmospheric carbon dioxide levels in November of 1958 were at 313.34 parts per million. In March 2009, levels were at 387.41 parts per million, an increase of over 20%.—Carbonify.com

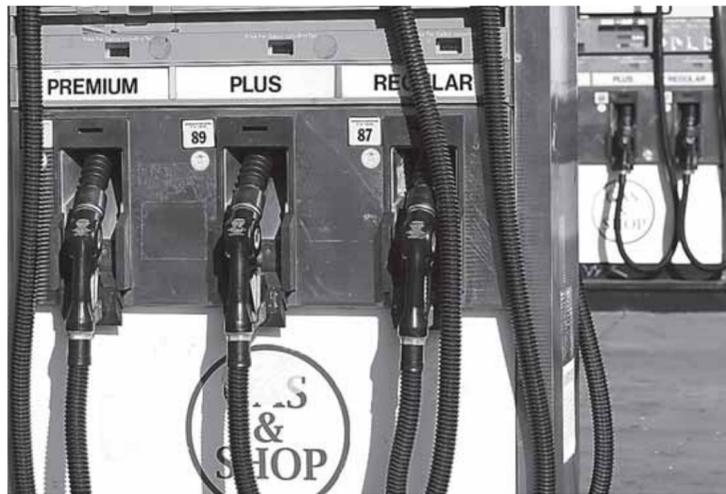
* Industrialized nations, representing only 20% of the world's population, consume 87 percent of the world's printing and writing papers and global production in the pulp, paper and publishing sector is expected to increase by 77% from 1995 to 2020. The pulp and paper industry is the single largest consumer of water used in industrial activities in OECD countries and is the third greatest industrial greenhouse gas emitter, after the chemical and steel industries.—Co-op America

* The average American buys 53 times as many products as someone in China and one American's consumption of resources is equal valiant to that of 35 Indians. Over a lifetime, the typical American will create 13 times as much environmental damage as the average Brazilian.—Sierra Club via CNN

* South Australia is the driest state in the driest continent in the world. Yet it's water consumption is 445 liters per day per person (2001/2002) according to Environment SA. Australia's average per person water consumption was 493 liters per day. In the USA, average water consumption per person in 2008 was 575 liters daily. China's daily per capita consumption in 2006 was 86 liters according to Data 360

* The world's annual consumption of plastic materials has increased from around 5 million tons in the 1950s to nearly 100 million tons today.—Waste Online

* The USA's electricity consumption per capita is 12,343.098 kWh per year and 71.4 % of that electricity is generated via fossil fuel. Australia's consumption is 10,252.432 kWh per capita, with 90.8 % fossil fuel dependent. German consumption is 6,366.428 kWh per capita with only 61.8 % of that fossil fuel generation dependent.—Nation



GAS: In 2003, gasoline consumption per capita in North America was 1,593.1 liters per person. JUSTIN SULLIVAN/GETTY IMAGES

Master

* Between 2000 and 2005 around 10 million acres of forests were lost per year in South America, which incorporates the might Amazon forest. The land is cleared primarily for cattle ranches and soybean plantations. Only 20 - 25% of Brazilian soybeans are used domestically; most is exported overseas for use in food, textiles and increasingly - cattle feed.—Choices Magazine and Monga Bay

* The food we eat now typically travels between 1,500 and 3,000 miles from farm to our dinner plate (also known as food miles). The distance had increased by up to 25 percent between 1980 and 2001. Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University

* To grow a pound of wheat requires around 130 gallons of virtual water. For meat, depending on the type - multiply that by five to ten times.—Water Footprint

* Global coal consumption in 1980 was 4,129.498 million short tons. In 2006, it was 6,743.786 million short tons. Coal consumption is projected to grow at about 2.5% per year over the next 20 years.—US Department of Energy

It's frightening stuff isn't it? Readings

statistics like these has certainly helped me stop and think "do I really need this" when shopping and using utilities. It's not just a guilt trip; this also helps save money to go towards things that really matter!

Remember that hyper-consumption can also extend to buying "green". Our thinking is that if something is labeled environmentally friendly, then we can use more of it, but we really need to bear in mind that however earth friendly a product may be, it still requires energy to produce, resources to create and transport to get it to us. Even in the world of green shopping it's still a case of everything in moderation.

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Green Living Tips is an online resource powered by renewable energy offering a wide variety of earth friendly tips, green guides, advice and environment related news to help consumers and businesses reduce costs, consumption and environmental impact.



MEAT & POULTRY: By 2007, meat and poultry consumption had shot up to 222 pounds in North America. MYCHELE DANIAU/AFRI/GETTY IMAGES

The Future Is Bright for Solar at LAUSD

By **SAMANTHA KOOS & NAOMI ZIMMERMANN**
Green Technology Magazine

The best ambassadors for more sustainable practices may not be old enough to drive that new hybrid car, but they certainly know the value of sunshine. Students at El Dorado Avenue Elementary School in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), when asked why their school was having a solar power system installed, explained just how elementary it is: Because it is good for our future.

LAUSD Board Member Julie Korenstein, who has led the charge for more sustainable practices at the District, joined these students on May 21 to celebrate a milestone in renewable energy for schools nationwide. El Dorado Avenue Elementary School will be among the very first schools converted to "grid neutral," producing as much energy as it consumes in a year.

"The installation of a solar-powered system at El Dorado Elementary School is extremely important in helping to conserve energy and to reduce the carbon footprint," Korenstein said. "We all need to work together to assure

that there will be a healthier environment for our children."

California State Architect David Thorman, who is at the forefront of discussions to make grid neutral schools a reality, was also on hand to express what this grid neutral school signifies statewide. "El Dorado Elementary is demonstrating that grid neutral is obtainable in both new and existing schools. Decades after first opening its doors, it is exciting to see El Dorado Elementary will soon be a model for what 21st century schools should be," he said. "El Dorado serves as an example of how California schools can help meet the challenge the Governor has given us to reduce greenhouse gases statewide. Everyone involved in this project should be very proud."

With a goal of 50 MW (megawatts) installed and online by the close of the 2012 fiscal year, LAUSD has one of the most ambitious solar energy policies and programs of any major public agency in the United States.

LAUSD's Facilities Services Division (FSD) is on track to install and start generating nearly five MW of solar power by the end of 2009. One MW of power has al-



SOLAR ENERGY: Solar panels like these can help places like the El Dorado Avenue Elementary School become "Grid Neutral."

MICHAEL SMITH/GETTY IMAGES

ready been installed on the roof of the District's Pico Rivera warehouse and is generating electricity. In February, the LAUSD Board of Education gave its approval for

FSD to move forward with eight additional solar projects at seven school sites and one local district office that will generate 3.7 MW of power. Two of the schools in this first

group of projects, Ann Elementary School and El Dorado Elementary School, will be grid-neutral.

In a time of perpetually shrinking budgets, particularly in education, solar energy is emerging as one of the few silver linings. The savings in electrical costs to LAUSD for the Pico Rivera warehouse alone are approximately \$65,000 a year. In total, the cost savings generated by the nine sites will total more than \$1 million per year. These are dollars that would otherwise be spent out of LAUSD's general fund and can now be used in more direct support of classroom instruction.

The District is in the process of surveying more than 200 sites within LAUSD for possible solar panel installation. Of these, 122 sites have already been identified as viable for solar panel installation. More projects will be brought to the Board of Education for approval by the close of the 2008-09 school year. Funding for these projects stems from several different sources, including Los Angeles Department of Water and Power settlement funds, utility incentives, and Measure Q bond funds.

Installing solar panels is one part of the District's plan to achieve its

goal of reducing the District's annual energy consumption by 10 percent by 2012. This means reducing the District's energy use by more than 50 million kilowatt hours (KWh) by 2012. Other aspects of energy reduction plans include initiating a District-wide conservation awareness program, installing energy management systems in 120 high schools, retrofitting the lighting fixtures and systems and retrofitting heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems, where appropriate.

By harnessing the power of the sun, the District is not only saving natural resources, but is seeking to better serve its students, teachers and staff by employing more environmentally friendly operations. Or, more simply, as the students of El Dorado Avenue Elementary School will tell you, it is good for our future.

For more information, please visit the LAUSD's new sustainability website at www.laschools.org.

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