

Fighting Climate Change

On 12 July, the Country Land and Business Association (CLA) published measures to improve the rural economy's contribution to combating global warming. The CLA regards the countryside as the "front line" of the battle against climate change, and calls for the expansion of renewable energy sources.

The report, published in advance of the Bonn inter-governmental meeting on climate change, is intended to show how agriculture and the rural economy can contribute to lowering the levels of greenhouse gases, without suffering in the process. Its 102 proposals include, *inter alia*, the growing of elephant grass and willow to replace fossil fuels, the expansion of farm reservoirs, and more investment in communications technologies to reduce travel needs.

The CLA claims that the role of farming and rural business has been neglected in the debate on global warm-

ing, and calls on the government and the European Union to draw up a coherent policy to encourage farmers and landowners to reduce emissions of carbon, methane and nitrous oxide.

Agriculture is known to be responsible for a high proportion of methane and nitrous oxide emissions through intensive fertiliser use and livestock production. The report criticises the UK government for failing to give enough encouragement to "carbon sinks" – soil or crops able to soak up carbon dioxide and prevent it warming the atmosphere. The report states that "the UK government is currently concentrating on emission reductions rather than carbon sinks to meet the commitments under the Kyoto Protocol. We consider that a twin-track approach to reducing emissions by actual emissions reduction and the use of carbon sinks would be more effective." (MJ)

