VOICE
Voice of Irish Concern for the Environment

Winter Newsletter 2009 **December, 9 Upper Mount Street**

Need a good New Year's resolution? A look at the new 10:10 Campaign by Ciara Aucoin

The concept is simple and what is asked of us is not too big, a 10% reduction in our carbon emissions in the year 2010. Founded by film director Franny Armstrong, the 10:10 UK campaign was inspired by Armstrong's hit 'The Age of Stupid' in which she showed what the world could look like in 2050 if we continue living as we are now. Irish environmentalists, VOICE included, started to wonder if we could do the same and bumped heads until an Irish version of 10:10 was born. Irish environmental groups and Minister John Gormley came together on the steps of the Dail on the 29th of October to launch the first branch of the international campaign 10:10. The 10:10 campaign plans to go global, with the next countries rumoured to sign up after Ireland being Australia and New Zealand.

Why 10:10? We know that unless we act quickly to reduce our consumption of fossil fuels and the rate at which we emit greenhouse gases, life on earth will face huge obstacles in the years to come. With all these warnings, but no action, the 10:10 campaign aims to make immediate changes. While governments constantly speak about the need to reach long term targets, and the need for real improvements in far off dates like 2050, 10:10 asks for change starting January 1st 2010.

How does it work? Individuals, businesses, organisations, schools and colleges pledge to reduce their carbon emissions in the year 2010 by 10%. We all know the importance of stopping runaway climate change and that we all need to make simple changes to our habits and lifestyle patterns. By signing up on the website www.1010.ie and pledging to reduce your emissions by 10% in 2010, you add your name to the growing list of people in Ireland and abroad committed to saving our planet.

You will receive confirmation of your registration and access to information and tools to enable you to make your 10% reduction in emissions. You can calculate your carbon footprint, i.e. the impact you are having on the planet by your household use of energy, your annual travel, and other lifestyle habits. You will be emailed tips and advice on how you can reduce your carbon footprint in a way best suited to your home, football club, business or college. You can download reminder charts for your fridge and learn how the different ways cutting your carbon emissions can also save you money.

Watch out for 10:10 themed events this New Years eve and day. The end of 2010 will see an awards night for the greenest business, school, university and person. VOICE has played a lead role in the forming of the Irish branch and has a key role in getting the Educational sectors of Irish society to pledge to 10:10.

VOICE campaigner Ciara Aucoin signing up to 10:10 with Minister Gomley, Duncan Stewart, Evelyn Cusack and many more!

How is 10:10 different to other climate change campaigns?

- It is immediate. Unlike government targets, the 10:10 campaign aims to make real changes in the year 2010, and not in the distant 2050.
- It is simple yet universal. Everyone in society can play their part, from the football club to government buildings.
- It provides advice and supports individual creativity. 10:10 will give tips and advice, but also allows groups and people to make the most suitable reductions to suit their own priorities.
- It puts the individual firmly in the centre of a national movement to tackle climate change

Sign up today!

*Please note the 10:10 website is still under construction but sign up your self, your school and your business today to get your self ready for the start of a new, greener you in 2010.

See **www.1010.ie** today !

"Farmed Salmon Exposed: The global reach of the Norwegian salmon farming industry"

By Sarah C. Dilworth

How closely do you read the labels of the salmon you buy? Do you know where it comes from, how it is farmed, or the types of industries you, as a consumer, are really supporting? Canadian filmmaker, Damien Gillis, answers these questions and raises many more regarding the international farmed salmon industry in the newly released documentary, "Farmed Salmon Exposed". Don Staniford, Global Coordinator for Pure Salmon Campaign, hosted the Irish premiere screening on 12 November 2009.

The film focuses on two Norwegian-based multinational corporations and their unsustainable, dirty practices in salmon aquaculture. The policies employed by Cermaq, and Marine Harvest are the central focus of the film. Both companies have established salmon farms in Ireland, Scotland, Canada and Chile. The "open-net" salmon farms, in which farmed salmon are not completely removed from the natural environment, have detrimental effects on the marine environment. Farmed salmon are commonly infected with diseases and parasites such as sea lice or infectious salmon anemia (ISA). Salmon farms are often along wild salmon migration routes, infecting juvenile wild salmon with lethal levels of sea lice or ISA, one study found that up to 95% of wild juvenile salmon were killed by sea lice from salmon farms. Most salmon farming companies, even ones that claim to be *organic*, administer pesticides, antibiotics, and fungicides in attempt to contain disease.

Other major effects on our worldwide ecosystem are the virtual "dead zones" in and around salmon farms as a result ofthe dumping of faecal waste, chemicals, and toxins directly into the sea. Salmon farms must relocate every so often because of dead zones. In Scotland, very few wild salmon runs exist and sea trout have disappeared from the west coast, due to the excess of waste released into the sea.

Here in Ireland, farmed salmon has had a major impact on the tourism industry. Fly-fishing, which was once a *huge* draw in the west, has become obsolete as Irish rivers can longer support this sport due to the deterioration in marine life.

Aside from Cermaq's and Marine Harvest's apathy towards the environment, neither are they socially conscious. In Chile, workers are unable to create or join unions, receive very little benefits, are not provided with the proper protective equipment, and are often injured, in addition to becoming ill from the extreme overuse of chemicals.

Salmon is carnivorous and consumes a lot of wild fish, estimated at five pounds of wild fish used in feed, to every pound of salmon produced. Consequently feeding farmed salmon puts pressure on other wild fish stocks.

One potential solution to the problem, advocated by the Pure Salmon Campaign, is closed-containment technology, in which salmon are physically separated from the natural environment. This is a cleaner solution as waste can be treated, the wild fish population is protected from diseases and parasites; fewer chemicals are required; and feed use is reduced. However, the issue of depletion of wild fish population for feed remains. Visit **www.puresalmon.org** for more information.

Now just what can we, the consumers, do?

First, read labels of fish in the supermarket and local market. Make sure your salmon is not farm raised, and boycott companies that do not adhere to clean, safe, sustainable ways of raising their fish.

Look out for the Marine Stewardship Council logo that promote sustainable fishing, www.msc.org

Always remember that the most effective tool you can use is the power of your purse; what you spend your hard-earned money on really does create change.

Food Matters !

Included in this newsletter is VOICE's Food Matters leaflet. It summarises the main issues around food and how its production, distribution and waste impact on the environment. Thanks to all our supporters for making this project a success and be sure to watch our for Food Matters events on our website's Events calendar.

GIY– It's Dirty Work, but why not, everybody's doing it! By Ciara Aucoin

What is GIY, you may ask. GIY is a Grow it Yourself network for people who want to grow their own food. Like all movements, GIY Ireland started as a seed. Expecting ten people to turn up to a meeting in a local library about growing vegetables, Michael and Eilish Kelly were stunned to see a turnout of 100. They set about creating a network of allotment and backyard growers to enable them to learn from each other; and share tips and advice on growing in Ireland. With 18 GIY groups now established across the country the founders are keen for more local champions to establish GIY meetings in their areas. Their message is that we are not powerless in global battles against climate change and economic struggles, and that each and everyone one of us can make a difference to the problems of food security, food quality and food cost by simply giving growing a go. For more information about how you can exercise your green thumb or to find out more about the network see www.giyireland.com

Getting Rid of Your Bin (2009) by Feidhlim Harty

As VOICE members we are all interested in helping to find ways to help protect the world around us. I am always on the look-out for ways to open people's hearts and minds to the environment and what steps can be taken to make this a better world. Earlier this year I wrote *Get Rid of Your Bin and Save Money* as a way to help move in the right direction.

Originally the title had been "Get Rid of Your Bin - get rid of your bin charges and save the Earth". The publishers thought that this was a bit long. They also wanted the "...and Save Money" market. I wasn't so sure, but afterwards I did notice that it was the money bit that caught some people's eye. Getting rid of your bin charges is no mean consideration. At about €3-400/year, the savings can be substantial. For anybody who has anything but a chock-a-block, bursting-at-the-seams bin every fortnight, cutting down a bit more can actually begin to make cancelling your bin collection look really sensible. In fact, even if it is chock-a-block full, the new pay by weight charges make waste reduction fairly lucrative. The book is filled throughout with small simple reminders for every room in the house, for parties, festivals, pets, the office and so on etc. One interesting thing that I noticed in writing it is that not only do you stand to save money on disposal, but you stand to save a good deal on purchases to.

If you want to find innovative ways to minimise your environmental impact, or to get rid of your bin collection charges completely, this is the ideal handbook. It provides the information, ideas, tips and then the motivation to keep you going through the process.

Get Rid of Your Bin and Save Money retails for around €8.99 in most good bookshops and signed copies are available to order directly on www.wetlandsystems.ie. Féidhlim Harty is the author of Get Rid of Your Bin and Save Money, director of FH Wetland Systems Ltd environmental consultancy and co-ordinator of Garden of Eden Projects Ireland.

There are 2 signed copies of this book and Eco Escapes Ireland up for grabs! Simply answer the following question: what are the campaigns listed in the sidebar of our new website? Email answers to info@voiceireland.org. Winners will be selected at random.

What is happening in Copenhagen? by Sarah C. Dilworth

Environment ministers from the 193 member countries meet once a year to discuss, debate, and negotiate developments in the UN convention on Climate Change (which has been ratified by 193 nations since 1992). This meeting is called a Conference of the Parties (COP) and is held annually. The conference will commence December 7, 2009 and end on December 18, 2009 at the Bella Center in Copenhagen. The goal of the conference is establish a global climate agreement for the period from 2012, when Kyoto Protocol expires, to which all countries will adhere. Talks for this new agreement began two years ago in Bali. This goal is in line with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's overall goal of stabilizing the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere to a level that brings an end to the dangerous, man-made effects of climate change. It is imperative that this stabilization occurs in a way that does not bring about extreme shock to the ecosystem, but rather lets the environment naturally adapt. In this process, food supply safety must not be compromised, and sustainable socio-economic development cannot be threatened. A new agreement is needed not only because the Kyoto Protocol expires in two short years, but also because it only was applied to a small group of countries.

The new agreement is hoping to be more comprehensive. There is likely to be heated debate between the industrialized nations and the developing countries. Developing countries see the current problem of climate change as largely the fault of the industrialized countries. The issue is further complicated by the fact that many poorer, developing nations have been forced to cope with climate changes' devastating effects, all the while, adhering to the newer policies. The issue of funding to help developing nations stay on track to meet the new targets of lower greenhouse gas emissions will also be explored.

What does it mean for Ireland? As a member of the EU, Ireland will have to adhere to whatever policies or standards that are set for Europe. Now, more than ever, we need to support serious change on all levels these including multilateral global agreements and hope that a fair and safe deal is struck at Copenhagen in the current talks.

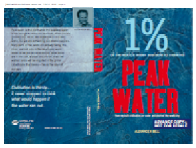
Book Reviews

Eco Escapes: the handbook to responsible escapism Ireland (2008) by Catherine Mack

This book is the perfect guide for those planning low-budget, eco-friendly holidays in Ireland in the New Year. Irish travel writer, Catherine Mack gives a personal insight into her top 50 ecoescapes around the country highlighting the places that keep responsible tourism at the core of their business.

Available in book shops and online at www.amazon.co.uk

Peak Water (2009) by Alexander Bell



Peak Water was written to alert the world to a crisis: we are using more water than is available in the places where we live. The book starts with a fascinating overlook of the history of water and its role in the development of the first towns and cities and moves into the grim facts behind a looming water crisis.

See www.peakwater.org.uk for more information.

VOICE, 9 Upper Mount Street, Dublin 2

The €ost of Water We Drink by Mindy O' Brien

With discussions of the impending budget, with onerous cuts and tax increases, the last thing you may want to hear about is the cost of water. However, with Minister Gormley and the Greens supporting it, I have to put in my two cents and lay out the argument for water charges.

We in Ireland have received water from our taps and flushed our loos free for years. However, non-domestic users, such as commercial enterprises, industry, farmers and schools have faced water charges for years. Ireland is the only EU country that has opted not to implement EU laws which direct that water usage and sewerage should be paid for.

Cryptosporidium found in Galway's drinking water illustrates the difficulty with Ireland's water system...it's antiquated, with many of the treatment systems originally established during the Victorian times. Shaken confidence in water quality has meant many people still buy bottled water, and many homes have installed filtration systems. The EPA have estimated that households spend around €76 million per annum providing drinking water other than tap water in the home. Distribution pipes leak up to 40% of drinking quality water per day and government pledged to invest €5.8 billion in capital expenditure for 955 projects from 2007-2009, through the Department of the Environment's Water Services Investment Programme 2007-2009. Much of the money used for such upgrades come from the DoE's annual budget and EU structural funds. However, these funding mechanisms have been depleted in the current climate.

Not only does Ireland need to invest in our crumbling infrastructure, it also costs money to treat and distribute drinking water. We often think "but sure, doesn't water fall out of the sky for free!! In bucketloads!", but according to Forfas, it costs around €2 to treat 1 cubic metre of raw water. The total daily cost of treating and distributing drinking water is around €3.4 million (1,700,000 metres^3 treated each day), which amounts to over €1.2 billion annually. Recent flooding leading to the contamination of water treatment plants has brought sharply into focus the need to upgrade our water treatment facilities. If we don't invest in future infrastructure needs, we will face increasingly polluted waterways from inadequately treated sewerage, and poor quality drinking water.

A big thanks to all those who attended **The Wave** this December 5th! It was a total success for VOICE and Stop Climate Chaos in highlighting the importance of securing a deal in Copenhagen this month. Over 500 people came out dressed in blue and holding placards calling for 'justice in Copenhagen' showing the importance in securing a fair and safe climate change deal for all countries. See **www.stopclimatechaos.ie** for more details.

'Food Matters' Stall at Dublin Food Coop Dec 19th 10-4pm

Come to this Christams themed event where VOICE will be offering information on how the ways we eat and shop effect the environment and wider global society. The Dublin Food Coop sees about 400 people every Saturday at their wonderful premises in the heart of Dublin city centre. The Coop offers fresh, local and seasonal produce, a range of organic and ethically traded foods and products and much, much more. VOICE will be there on **Saturday December 19th** to give a short talk on how to reduce food waste this Christmas. VOICE's Food Matters campaign focuses on environmental impact of food and its waste and shows people how small changes to their shopping patterns can make big a big difference. Come to get all your groceries for the Christmas week and to hear tips on how households can be more eco-conscious during this season of plenty!!

'Tis the Season to be Giving!

And lastly please help VOICE in what ever way you can this Christmas. We are working on a number of important campaigns and continually feel hindered by a lack of funds. Like all charities in Ireland at this time, VOICE is feeling the pinch so please contribute what you can. See our insert for signing a friend up to VOICE for Christmas! Also, if you have extra time on your hands and think that you could assist VOICE by ***volunteering*** *please let us know. Email:* ***info@voiceireland.org*** *and from everybody at VOICE we wish you a Happy Christmas and a very prosperous New Year!*