

# Spotlight on carbon

By T.J. BURNHAM

If you see the carbon issue as a trendy concept with the life span of a lamb chop in a lion cage, think again.

Farmers who sequester carbon dioxide have an opportunity to benefit from the nation's new carbon awareness.

Reducing carbon emissions may have been only a "duck and cover" matter for most big businesses a decade ago, but today several Fortune 500 companies are taking action, says Janet Peace.

As a senior economist at the Pew Center on Global Climate Change in Arlington, Va., her perspective on today's carbon consciousness is from the top of the think tank.

Forty-five major U.S. mega companies are working through the Pew Charitable Trust in an active policy dialogue on carbon emissions, she said at the Northwest Environmental Business Council's conference on "Managing Carbon: Policy and Practice" in Portland, Ore., in November.

## Key Points

- U.S. corporations see profits in increasing environmental acts.
- The Pew Center works with businesses to find solutions.
- Regulation also is driving corporations to make changes.

While the carbon movement is still in the research stage, it's primed to explode into a major big business, she says. In fact, Peace hinted, it may be the profitability of reducing carbon that boosts the idea onto center stage as a prime corporate strategy.

## Improving public relations

Much of the driving force behind this shift in board room thinking hinges on improved public relations that major U.S. companies will harvest if they foster a greener image.

"Media coverage drives public awareness [over carbon], with almost every major magazine covering the global warming issue," she said. "This affects public per-



**CORPORATE SUPPORT:** Janet Peace, a senior economist at the Pew Center on Global Climate Change, says businesses are realizing the potential of joining the carbon movement.

ception," with 70% of the general U.S. population saying something needs to be done about greenhouse gases such as carbon, said Peace, referencing an ABC and Stanford University study in 2007.

An even bigger motivation is that nearly 79% of those polled in a Gallup survey favor mandatory carbon limits.

## States set policies

"Fourteen states already have major greenhouse gas management policies," she said.

Public and private company carbon concerns are reflected in Washington, D.C., where no fewer than 120 climate-related hearings and 150 legislative bills mentioning climate change have boiled up since January 2007.

Many of these look at long-term, steep cuts in emissions by 2025, a deadline that has caught the attention of corporate CEOs from Los Angeles to New York.

Companies affiliated with the Pew group clearly see new climate change policies emerging from regulators, said Peace. Profit and company image are top motivators to reduce emissions, she reported.

"They see new markets for clean technology," said Peace. Chief among the corporate plums could be new brands and products.

These corporations feel regulation is a key driver spurring them to make changes to reduce emissions. "They expect regulation very soon," she said. "Companies that think regulation will affect their markets need to take action today."

Fully assessing the emissions footprint of each company is an immediate need, Peace added. Cleaning up their act could be profitable.

Corporations are beginning to realize that "there are a lot of opportunities in integrating climate into corporate strategy," she said.

## Incentives sought for innovations

**T**WENTY-FIVE of America's leading businesses and six of the nation's leading climate and environmental groups working under the umbrella of the U.S. Climate Action Partnership are searching for incentives.

USCAP is calling for the U.S. to provide incentives for businesses to create technological innovations that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"They're asking for reward for risks some of these companies are taking," explains Janet Peace, senior economist for the Pew Center on Global Climate Change, which helped found USCAP.

"We are now in the design stage of [greenhouse gas] legislation," she says. "Any policy regulation on greenhouse gases will change the competitive landscape" of corporate America.

USCAP members are united to reduce emissions that pollute the atmosphere in view of what Peace calls a "major shift in global business perspective in responding to climate change as a core business issue."

Today's businesses "need a climate-change strategy," she warns.

"The time for change is now."

"They must keep their eyes on what they can potentially make a profit from, take advantage of emerging opportunities and gain competitive advantages.

"The need is to shift from risk management to business opportunities" when thinking about greenhouse gas emissions, she noted.

## Inside look at Pew Center

**S**INCE 1998, the Pew Center on Global Climate Change has functioned as a nonprofit, non-partisan and independent think tank charged with bringing credible information, straight answers and innovative solutions to the issue of global climate change.

"Working on an issue that is often polarized and politicized, the Pew Center provides a forum for objective research and analysis and the development of pragmatic policies and solutions," so declares its mission statement.

■ For more on Pew, go to [www.pewclimate.org](http://www.pewclimate.org) on the Internet.

## Western Close-up

### Red Angus Association awards Oregon couple

Harold and Mary Otley of Otley Brothers Cattle near Diamond, Ore., received the Commercial Breeder of the Year Award from the Red Angus Association of America in 2007. Praised for their top-quality management and production, the couple is distinguished by another factor: Harold is 90 and Mary is 85.

### Cantwell honored for biodiesel efforts

U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell of Washington was presented a National Energy Leadership Award by the National Biodiesel Board late in 2007 for her work pro-

moting biodiesel development. She was lauded for her energy conservation efforts as a member of the Senate Finance Committee, and the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

### Grain inspector in Montana retires

Kay Turnquist, a grain inspector and protein analyst at the Montana State Grain Laboratory for the past 33 years, has announced her retirement. She was a dedicated employee "who has been operating the protein equipment at the lab for 30 years," says Craig Essebagggers, bureau chief for the Montana State Grain Laboratory.

### Wyoming 4-H educator noted for Extension work

Amber Wallingford has received the Newer Employee Recognition Award from the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service. Wallingford, who serves Washakie County, was credited for being a resource mentor and example to new 4-H educators, according to nomination comments. She began her work with Extension in 2002.

### Idaho professor wins teaching prize

University of Idaho animal physiologist and dairy management professor Amin Ahmadzedehe won a USDA and National Association of State

Universities and Land-Grant Colleges teaching award. The annual competition requires a teacher's students to visit dairies, review their operations and recommend management changes. He also won the Montana State University College of Agricultural and Life Sciences teaching excellence award in 2006.

### Country singer Murphey gets Colorado kudos

Country singer Michael Martin Murphey received the distinguished Service to Agriculture award during the Colorado Farm Bureau annual meeting in Denver. He was cited for his participation in a concert following last year's severe storms

that devastated the livestock industry in southern Colorado. His fundraising concert helped raise more than \$750,000 for affected ranches and farmers.

### National 4-H honors Montana educators

The National Association of Extension 4-H Agents honored four Montana State University Extension educators at its 62nd annual conference. Rae Lynn Benson received the Achievement in Service Award; Jane Wolery was given the Distinguished Service Award; Kirk Astroth is the recipient of the Meritorious Service Award; and Sheila Friedrich was recognized for 25 years of service.