



## Drumbeat: September 27, 2009

Posted by [Leanan](#) on September 27, 2009 - 9:05am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

### [Paul Roberts - The Future of Food in a Peak Oil](#)

Roberts pointed out that in 1900, the average household spent half its daily income and half its hours providing food. Today, we spend much less time and much less money as a percent of our income, thanks to the industrialized food system. "I don't think too many people want to go back to 1900, spending that much time making food," he said later in response to a question about how disconnected we've become from our food sources.

"But," he continued, "we have recognized that there are also costs. At the end of the day, food is not an industrial product. Food is not iPods or SUVs and there are troubling questions when industrialization is applied to food." In a system where the inspection person on the chicken processing line has only three seconds to look for defects, he elaborated, it was only a matter of time before something like the 2007 recall of 22 million pounds of potentially E. coli-tainted hamburgers, which sickened dozens and ultimately put the meat company out of business.

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hierarchies. In contrast to the presuppositions of the powerful (and Hollywood), steadfast about the inevitability of anarchic mayhem and riot, Solnit makes a convincing case for the sheer dignity and decency of people coming together amid terror.

### [Study may shift where foods grow](#)

WASHINGTON — New York may be the nation's second leading producer of apples, and Maine is near the top in potatoes — but the vast majority of the fruit and vegetables eaten in the Northeast come from other parts of the country.

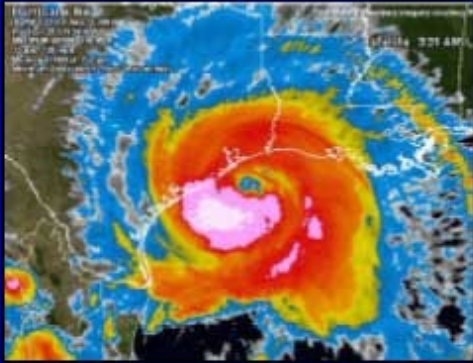
A federal study aims to change that, by figuring out what could be grown more in the Northeast to satisfy big-city markets.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture said this week it is pouring an additional \$230,000 into the food security effort, which will examine soil types, climate and economic issues that could shed light on the region's potential to produce more of its own food. Doing so could dull the effect of high fuel prices and other transportation-related woes than can drive prices up in grocery stores.

[New Presentations from Matt Simmons](#)

## Galveston Bay Is Fragile And Vulnerable

- Hurricanes could destroy the Bay:
  - Rita could have done this
  - Ike nearly did this
  - CNN's "We Were Warned" based on mythical force-5 Hurricane Stephen decimating the Ship Channel
- Oil spills could kill the Bay:
  - Shifting sand bars make tanker traffic tricky
  - Dense fog often shuts down Ship Channel
  - A tanker wreck or explosion into the Gulf could drain America's useable oil



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- *What Lies Beyond The Fossil Fuel Horizon?*
- *Investing In Energy: A Nightmare Or An Enlightened Dream*
- *How Did Our Energy Hole Get So Deep?*

[Pemex's Export Revenues Down 55.5 Percent](#)

MEXICO CITY – Mexican state oil giant Petroleos Mexicanos said the value of its crude exports during the first eight months of the year totaled \$15.4 billion, 55.5 percent less than in the same period of 2008.

[UK acts to back Cadogan Petroleum](#)

THE British government has intervened on behalf of Cadogan Petroleum, the quoted oil explorer embroiled in a dispute with Ukraine that has pushed it to the brink of liquidation.

[Climate change bill may drift](#)

WASHINGTON — Although President Barack Obama confidently assured world leaders last week that the U.S. was determined to combat global climate change, that resolve isn't shared in the U.S. Senate.

The chamber has instead been consumed by other domestic priorities — including the administration-backed push to overhaul health care — and Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., is months behind her original timetable for introducing legislation that would cap greenhouse gas emissions blamed for global warming.

With all of the obstacles, it is increasingly likely the Obama administration will not have a new climate change law — or even a preliminary version passed by the Senate — to bring to international negotiations on a global warming pact this December in Copenhagen.

### [Heavier Rainstorms Ahead Due To Global Climate Change, Study Predicts](#)

ScienceDaily — Heavier rainstorms lie in our future. That's the clear conclusion of a new MIT and Caltech study on the impact that global climate change will have on precipitation patterns.

### [Dust storms spread deadly diseases worldwide](#)

Huge dust storms, like the ones that blanketed Sydney twice last week, hit Queensland yesterday and turned the air red across much of eastern Australia, are spreading lethal epidemics around the world. However, they can also absorb climate change emissions, say researchers studying the little understood but growing phenomenon.

### [Small island states warn ecosystems already threatened by climate change effects, urge drastic reduction in greenhouse gases](#)

Still reeling in the aftermath of a global economic crisis begun far beyond their shores, leaders of small island nations, among others addressing the General Assembly today, exhorted large economies to drastically reduce greenhouse gases that were threatening their ecosystems and sending shock waves through the very markets and industries on which their fragile economies depended.

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### [Iran Plans 1 Billion-Euro Bond Sale to Fund Gas Field](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Iran plans to sell 1 billion euros (\$1.47 billion) of bonds by December to fund the development of the South Pars natural-gas field, the Oil Ministry's Shana news agency reported today.

### [Saudi not in favour of high prices](#)

Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter, wants to keep crude prices from rising to the record of \$147.27 a barrel seen last year, said the kingdom's oil minister.

### [Saudi jobless rate to ease by 2014](#)

Saudi Arabia's festering unemployment problem could ease at the end of the forthcoming five-year development plan as the world's oil powerhouse is intensifying efforts to find jobs for citizens, a local report said yesterday.

Unemployment in the kingdom, which sits atop a quarter of the world's recoverable oil deposits, stood at nearly 10.5 per cent at the end of 2008 and it is expected to shrink to 7.1 per cent at the end of 2014, said the report by the Riyadh Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

### [U.S. to Demand Inspection of New Iran Plant 'Within Weeks'](#)

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration plans to tell Iran this week that it must open a newly revealed nuclear enrichment site to international inspectors “within weeks,” according to senior administration officials. The administration will also tell Tehran that inspectors must have full access to the key personnel who put together the clandestine plant and to the documents surrounding its construction, the officials said Saturday.

### [Smuggling Europe's Waste to Poorer Countries](#)

Exporting waste illegally to poor countries has become a vast and growing international

business, as companies try to minimize the costs of new environmental laws, like those here, that tax waste or require that it be recycled or otherwise disposed of in an environmentally responsible way.

Rotterdam, the busiest port in Europe, has unwittingly become Europe's main external garbage chute, a gateway for trash bound for places like China, Indonesia, India and Africa. There, electronic waste and construction debris containing toxic chemicals are often dismantled by children at great cost to their health. Other garbage that is supposed to be recycled according to European law may be simply burned or left to rot, polluting air and water and releasing the heat-trapping gases linked to global warming.

### [U.S. Panel Shifts Focus to Reusing Nuclear Fuel](#)

OXON HILL, Md. — With a federal plan to handle nuclear waste in deadlocked disarray, an advisory panel that has spent 20 years studying a proposed repository at Yucca Mountain turned Wednesday to discussing ways of reusing the fuel instead.

But the meeting of the panel, the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board, made evident that such reuse was uncertain, along with the future of Yucca Mountain, in Nevada, about 100 miles from Las Vegas.

### [Solar Module Prices Halt Slide on German Demand, Barclays Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Solar module prices, which have dropped by more than half in the past year, have stopped declining as a seasonal demand increase in Germany reduces inventories, according to Barclays Capital.

### [Schwarzenegger to Children: Hurry Up in There!](#)

LOS ANGELES — In a new twist on an old saw trotted out by generations of parents who think their children have it easier, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has taken to monitoring his children's water use by timing how long they spend in the shower. If they are in there too long, he said, he turns off the hot water midstream, inciting screams.

### [The Future of Cars Was Hydrogen. Once](#)

The enthusiasm for electric vehicles keeps growing, but only few years ago the auto industry was betting on hydrogen-powered fuel cell cars.

### [Tiny Cars Feel Smart](#)



The Slaughters, both 86, are among several owners of ultra-compact Smart fortwo cars at Lake Ashton, a gated retirement community in Lake Wales.

It might seem odd to find so many of the cars, which project an air of European futurism, in a place where Cadillacs are common and the entertainment leans toward Joe Piscopo.

Then again, when you don't have kids you don't need a back seat.

### [Australia: Cutting the train line won't 'fix our city'](#)

The report's supporters obscure its true nature by focusing on the urgent need to reverse urban decay. But the reality is that the main goal of the "fix our city" campaign is to cut the rail line.

The rail line sits on prime land. Developing this land (especially the last 500 metres of it) has been the goal of a 25-year push by developers to get rid of the line.

### [E.P.A. Ordered to Reconsider New Mexico Power Plant Permit](#)

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — A federal appeals board has ordered the Environmental Protection Agency to reconsider an air permit issued for a planned coal-fired power plant on the Navajo Nation.

The decision, in part, grants a request by regional agency officials who wanted to take another look at parts of the permit for the \$3 billion Desert Rock Energy Project, which is planned for tribal land in northwestern New Mexico.

### [There's nothing 'clean' about it](#)

Have you ever had that nightmare where you're being chased by a monster and yet your legs feel like lead and you can't get away?

That's how I feel every time Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty start babbling about the joys of dragging us into a global cap-and-trade market, supposedly to lower man-made carbon dioxide emissions.

### [Fossil fuels are running out anyway: so why fight about climate-change?](#)

Since fossil fuels are, in fact, running out, it seems senseless to keep arguing about climate change. The point is, whether or not you care to believe the evidence under our noses, what we need to be concentrating on is finding new, clean, renewable, eco-

friendly energy sources.

### [Population: Overconsumption is the real problem](#)

THERE is a pervading myth that efforts to fight climate change and other environmental perils will be to no avail unless we "do something" about population growth. Even seasoned analysts talk about the threat of "exponential" population growth. But there is no exponential growth. In most of the world fertility rates are falling fast, and the countries where population growth continues are those that contribute least to our planetary predicament.



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