



## Drumbeat: December 29, 2009

Posted by [Leanan](#) on December 29, 2009 - 8:45am

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

### [Michael J. Economides: The Botched Airline Bombing and Our National Nervous Breakdown](#)

Other than the healthcare issue, in my area of interest, energy, there have been two very important events recently that both warrant major national attention, potentially worth trillions.

The first was the recent bid for Iraqi oil fields in which, the Iraqi government, showing a marked independence from the expectations of the conspiracy and the war-for-oil theorists, shut out American oil companies. The Iraqi oilfields, languishing for years, first because of the draconian sanctions during the Saddam Hussein years and the ravages of war since then, are perhaps the most potentially prolific in the world. Over the next decade, Iraqi oil production is expected to top 11 million barrels per day, quadrupling the current production of 2.5 million barrels per day and vying to surpass Saudi Arabia as the world's biggest oil producer. In the process it will make a mockery of the constantly re-surfacing Peak Oil talk.

The second was the meeting in Copenhagen, which although it fell far short of the promises made by its promoters, it has legitimized what many thought was very sketchy science, the man-made link to climate change. The toothpaste is out of the tube and future legislation, any legislation, on cap-and-trade will have huge and lasting negative economic impact both in size and on the lifestyle as we know it.

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e, a variety of factors are significantly raising the risks to electricity system security for the winters of 2010, 2011 and 2012, although the commission does not believe the risk is enough to procure emergency reserve energy over the next three years.

### [Putin criticises Ukraine oil tariff demands](#)

Vladimir Putin, Russia's prime minister, accused Ukraine of "abuse" even as Moscow and Kiev resolved an oil transit dispute on Tuesday, averting a potential disruption in supplies.

### [Michael J. Economides: The Botched Airline Bombing and Our National Nervous Breakdown](#)

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### [Can farming save Detroit?](#)

Then one day about a year and a half ago, Hantz had a revelation. "We need scarcity," he thought to himself as he drove past block after unoccupied block. "We can't create opportunities, but we can create scarcity." And that, he says one afternoon in his living room between puffs on an expensive cigar, "is how I got onto this idea of the farm."

Yes, a farm. A large-scale, for-profit agricultural enterprise, wholly contained within the city limits of Detroit. Hantz thinks farming could do his city a lot of good: restore big chunks of tax-delinquent, resource-draining urban blight to pastoral productivity; provide decent jobs with benefits; supply local markets and restaurants with fresh produce; attract tourists from all over the world; and -- most important of all -- stimulate development around the edges as the local land market tilts from stultifying abundance to something more like scarcity and investors move in. Hantz is willing to commit \$30 million to the project. He'll start with a pilot program this spring involving up to 50 acres on Detroit's east side. "Out of the gates," he says, "it'll be the largest urban farm in the world."

### [Reverse flow takes heat out of crisis for Slovakia](#)

As a consequence of the latest Russia-Ukraine dispute, the Bratstvo, or Brotherhood, pipeline that carries natural gas from east to west through the central European country went dry.

"Suddenly we saw the big zero on the pressure gauges in eastern Slovakia," recalls Maros Sefcovic, the country's European commissioner. "It was a rather distressing

experience.”

Soon the government was forced to decide between shutting down its schools and hospitals or industry. It chose the latter. So desperate was the situation that it announced plans to restart a mothballed reactor at the Bohunice nuclear plant, which Slovakia had closed as a condition of its prized accession to the European Union.

But then a young engineer had a disarmingly simple idea. Why not reverse the flow of the Bratstvo from west to east to carry gas supplies from the Czech Republic back to Slovakia?

### [Oman to announce largest budget in history for 2010](#)

Oman will join Saudi Arabia in announcing the largest budget in its history for 2010 as it appears buoyed by higher oil prices and a sharp decline in its fiscal deficit through 2009, Oman's newspapers reported yesterday.

### [Russia looks to exempt more oil fields from fees](#)

VLADIVOSTOK, Russia (Reuters) - Russian oil firms are seeking to expand the list of oil fields eligible for zero export duty, Deputy Prime Igor Sechin said on Monday, but the government will put forward tough conditions, he added.

Russia exempted 13 East Siberian oilfields this year from paying export duties starting Dec. 1 to spur investments and revive stagnating output.

**[Survivalism Lite](#):** *They call themselves 'preppers.' They are regular people with homes and families. But like the survivalists that came before them, they're preparing for the worst.*

In the past, survivalists and conspiracy theorists might go out into the woods, live out of a bunker, waiting (or sometimes hoping) for the apocalypse to hit. It was men, mostly; many of them antigovernment, often portrayed by the media as radicals of the likes of Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh. In the late 1990s, Y2K fears brought survivalism to the mainstream, only to usher it back out again when disaster didn't strike. (Suddenly, unused survival gear began showing up in classifieds and on eBay.) A decade later, "preppers" are what you might call survivalism's Third Wave: regular people with jobs and homes whose are increasingly fearful about the future—their paranoia compounded by 24-hour cable news. "Between the media and the Internet, many people have built up a sense that there's this calamity out there that needs to be avoided," says Art Markman, a cognitive psychologist at the University of Texas who studies the way people think. And while they may not envision themselves as Kevin Costner in *Waterworld* — in fact, many preppers go out of their way to avoid the stereotypes that come along with the "survivalist" label—they've made a clear-eyed calculation about the risks at hand and aren't waiting around for anybody else to fix them. "I consider it more of a reaction than a movement," says Tom Martin, a 32-year-

old Idaho truck driver who is the founder of the American Preppers Network, which receives some 5,000 visitors to its Web site each day. "There are so many variables and potential disasters out there, being a prepper is just a reaction to that potential."

### [Prepare for lower oil prices](#)

The outlook for the oil price remains mired in much confusion. Peak oil theorists see production in terminal decline. Others, who expect the oil price to revisit its 2008 highs, argue that rapid demand growth from emerging markets, most notably China, will underpin a long and aggressive rally in the price.

Some even argue that as the world runs out of oil we shall slip back into pre-industrial ways as energy is rationed and human behaviour has to change as a result – an argument that has been regularly trotted out over the last five centuries. First, in Britain in the 16th century as the country was perceived to be running out of wood, its primary energy source at that time. Then 300 years later by economist William Jevons who believed that Britain's coal supply, and therefore primary energy supply, was in terminal decline.

### [Chevron Threatens To Leave Longtime Home](#)

The biggest producer of greenhouse gases in California is the Chevron Corp.'s oil refinery in the Bay Area town of Richmond, just east of San Francisco.

The refinery opened more than a century ago, and in spite of the bad air, Richmond has always been a loyal company town.

Until lately.

### [Potent fuel at MIT reactor makes for uneasy politics](#)

WASHINGTON - MIT's 50-year-old nuclear reactor, one of only three US research facilities not run by the Department of Energy that still use material that could also be used to make atomic bombs, will probably not be converted to use a safer fuel for at least another five years because of technical obstacles, according to a recent government report obtained by the Globe.

That means the reactor on the university's Cambridge campus, originally slated for fuel conversion by 2014, will continue to present a political liability for US officials, who are strongly urging other countries around the world - most notably Iran - to forgo the civilian use of highly enriched uranium to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.

### [UAE to sell nuclear power, free more oil to export](#)

DUBAI (Reuters) - A \$40 billion deal by the United Arab Emirates to acquire nuclear reactors puts it ahead in a drive to meet fast growing power needs among its Gulf neighbors, while also allowing it to export more of its oil.

The prospect of starting electricity exports within the next decade is a key element behind the UAE's award to a South Korean consortium on Sunday of the deal to build and operate four reactors in the third largest oil exporter.

...All six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman, have shown interest in nuclear power to meet soaring domestic demand for electricity and free more oil and gas for export.

### [FACTBOX - Nuclear power plans in Africa, Middle East](#)

(Reuters) - Many countries in Africa and the Middle East have said they want to develop civilian nuclear programmes to meet rising power demand.

Nuclear is seen by many as a long-term solution to high fuel costs and an effective way to cut carbon emissions from the electricity generation sector.

A fall in fossil fuel prices since summer 2008 has made nuclear power less attractive than it was when oil CLC1 was above \$147 a barrel in July 2008. South Africa is the only country in the region with an operational nuclear power plant.

Below are the nuclear aspirations of countries across Africa and the Middle East.

### [China has most nuclear projects](#)

China has the largest number of nuclear powered projects under construction in the world, officials from the National Energy Administration said.

### [Nigeria's Daily Oil Exports Scheduled to Increase in February](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Nigeria, a favored supplier of oil to U.S. refiners, plans to export about 1.7 percent more of its 14 biggest crude types a day in February compared with the previous month, preliminary loading schedules show.

Shipments of Nigeria's 14 biggest crude grades will average about 1.965 million barrels a day, or a total of 55 million barrels, according to the loading plans obtained by Bloomberg. That includes at least four cargoes of Forcados delayed from January, meaning 1.931 million barrels a day will load in that month.

### [Russia's Rosneft plans to up oil output 4 pct in '10](#)

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Rosneft, Russia's No.1 crude producer, plans to increase oil and gas condensate output by around 4 percent to 117.6 million tonnes in 2010, the company said on Tuesday.

### [On International Oil Companies, China and Nigeria's Crude Oil Licenses](#)

Nigeria currently holds the world's tenth largest reserves of crude oil and is the fifth highest supplier to the United States. She also boasts the world's seventh largest natural gas deposits. The country is currently a battleground of sorts in a contest that has pitched International Oil Companies, IOCs, against a Chinese National Oil Company, NOC, for a significant proportion of Nigeria's 36 billion-barrel crude oil reserves.

### [Kazakhstan in Talks Over Karachaganak Field Stake](#)

The Kazakhstan government is in talks with a BG Group PLC-led consortium over obtaining a stake in the Karachaganak development, one of Kazakhstan's largest oil and gas condensate fields, Kazakh prime minister Karim Masimov said Tuesday.

### [Powerless Nepal loses lustre as New Year destination](#)

Kathmandu (IANS) Slapped with a 51-hour weekly power outage from Wednesday and a warning that next month it could go up to 12 hours a day, Nepal has begun to lose its lustre as a holiday destination, especially for the budget tourist from India who crosses over the open border by bus.

The Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) Tuesday announced that due to the power-generating rivers drying up and the demand for energy increasing, it would enforce between seven to eight hours of blackout daily.

### [Long Beach's Black Gold: Oil Reserves Could Help Financial Woes](#)

One of the solutions to Long Beach's ongoing budget problems may be buried deep underground.

Complex contract negotiations involving the Wilmington Oil Field in and around the Port of Long Beach could uncover a cash gusher for public and private interests.

### [Developing answers to the oil shortage](#)



For the past month, this column has focused on the limited supplies of and unlimited demand for oil. The future looks bleak with an oil shortage that we as a nation seem ill prepared to handle. But, given that our public and private sectors can gain a sense of urgency and take a more dedicated approach than we have in the development of new technologies and new energy sources, we can overcome what could be a significant obstacle to the betterment of our standard of living for years to come.

To put this complex issue into simple terms, here are four ways in which we can guarantee a brighter future for America by limiting the impact that oil has on our personal, corporate and national finances while ensuring that we have access to transportation, something that is instrumental to the pursuits of a free people...

### [Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula](#)

Analysts say Yemen is of huge significance to al-Qaeda.

"Weapons, training, crossing points and the launch of operations have all come from Yemen," Abd Alelah-Haidar, a "terrorism" specialist who has met Wuhaishi, told Al Jazeera.

"This country is seen as having strategic significance, not only by al-Qaeda, but also by others.

### [Iran bars single women from gas field](#)

IRAN has barred single women from working for a state firm that operates a huge gas field and petrochemical plants on the shores of the Gulf, the Fars news agency reported overnight.

...More than 18 months ago, Iranian newspapers carried an instruction by the company requiring that "single employees start creating a family".

"As being married is one of the criteria of employment, we are announcing for the last time that all female and male colleagues have until September 21 to go ahead with this important and moral religious duty," the instruction said.

### [Saudi Minister: Industrial future bright](#)

The king had stated that developing the industrial sector is the Kingdom's strategic choice to diversify revenue sources.

"We developed the new strategy based on the king's vision," the minister said. He said King Abdullah wanted to know every detail of the strategy's mechanisms to ensure its success and effectiveness.

Alireza called upon the world-class industrial organizations in the Eastern Province, including Saudi Aramco and petrochemical industries, to support the strategy to make it a huge success.

### [Texas' now-strong banks hold lessons for rest of U.S.](#)

Peaking last year at \$147 a barrel, high oil prices threw Texas a lifeline when the rest of the country was sinking into recession. The Texas economy isn't as dependent as it used to be on energy. Oil and gas production now accounts for about 6% of Texas' economic output, vs. almost 20% in 1981, according to the Dallas Fed. But Texas-based drilling companies get work around the world when energy prices are high. So an uptick in oil and gas prices can still help the state, sometimes working to delay or fend off recessions that hit the rest of the country.

Texas, for instance, escaped the 1990-1991 recession, partly because Texans benefited from the high energy prices that hurt everyone else. Same thing happened this time. Dallas Fed economist Yucel believes high energy prices bought Texas about a half-year reprieve: The recession that began in late 2007 elsewhere didn't reach Texas until mid-2008.

### [North America Hydro Development](#)

Government support, at levels unseen since the 1980s, is driving new U.S. hydroelectric development while Canada beckons "Come on in, the water's fine!"

### [China High Speed Rail Ups The Ante](#)

In an effort to expand its high-speed rail network (eventually linking Guangzhou with Beijing), China has delivered what looks to be the fastest rail link in the world.

Traveling at an average speed of 217 miles an hour, the Chinese have once again upped the ante when it comes to cleaner and more efficient transportation alternatives. In fact, China now expects to build 42 high-speed rail lines by 2012. Will they pull off such a lofty goal in such a short amount of time? Hard to say. But I certainly wouldn't bet against them at this point.

### [Chinese firm says won't pay Goldman on options losses](#)

BEIJING (Reuters) - A small Chinese power generator on Tuesday rejected demands from a Goldman Sachs unit to pay for nearly \$80 million lost on two oil hedging contracts, part of a long-running dispute over how China deals with derivatives losses.



Goldman Sachs was one of the foreign banks, along with Citigroup, Merrill Lynch and Morgan Stanley, blamed by the state assets watchdog for providing "extremely complicated" and difficult to understand derivatives products.

...The State Assets Supervision and Administration Commission said in September that it would back state-owned companies in any legal action against the foreign banks that sold them oil derivatives, which resulted in losses when oil prices dived late last year.

### [Oil down to near \\$78 a barrel after big surge](#)

Oil prices fell to near \$78 a barrel Tuesday as the dollar recovered against the British pound and the yen. Expectations of falling U.S. stockpiles and gains on stock markets helped contain the retreat.

### [Shell chief calls 2010 'challenging' for refining, costs](#)

Royal Dutch Shell Plc, Europe's largest oil company, expects the pressure on refining margins and costs to persist next year amid a challenging economic situation.

"I expect that 2010 will be, from a macro environment point of view, still a challenging year," Peter Voser, chief executive officer at the Hague-based Shell, said in a video to employees. "We'll see pressure on refining margins and some further pressure on competitive performance regarding costs."

### [Russia Agrees to Pay 30% More to Send Oil to EU, Ukraine Says](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Russia agreed to pay 30 percent more to transport oil to Europe via Ukraine next year, according to Ukrainian state energy company NAK Naftogaz Ukrainy.

Representatives of the two countries' energy ministries signed an accord late yesterday, Valentyn Zemlyanskyi, Naftogaz's spokesman, said today by telephone from Kiev. Igor Dyomin, a spokesman for Russian oil shipper OAO Transneft, wasn't immediately able to comment.

### [Natural gas pipeline proposed for NY, NJ](#)

NEW YORK (AP) - Chesapeake Energy Corp. will provide the natural gas for a pipeline expansion in New York City that energy companies involved in the project say will boost the metropolitan area's use of the fuel and cut down on pollution from other heating sources.

Oklahoma City-based Chesapeake is active in drilling in the Marcellus shale, a vast formation of energy-rich rock that runs through several states, including New York. Gas from the shale will be used to supply the project.

### [Lukoil-led group signs deal for prized Iraqi oilfield](#)

BAGHDAD/OSLO (Reuters) - A group led by Russian energy firm Lukoil signed an initial deal on Tuesday to develop Iraq's West Qurna Phase Two oilfield, as its partner in the venture Statoil said it had increased its stake.

Iraq awarded 10 oilfield development contracts to global oil firms in two energy auctions this year. If they come to fruition, the deals could more than quadruple Iraqi oil output capacity to about 12 million barrels per day.

### [ONGC to Lend \\$857 Million to Unit for Myanmar Project](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Oil & Natural Gas Corp. will lend 40 billion rupees (\$857 million) to its overseas unit investing in a gas project off Myanmar's coast as India's biggest explorer seeks to meet rising fuel demand at home.

"For us it makes more sense to invest in assets through ONGC Videsh Ltd. than put the money in banks," ONGC Chairman and Managing Director R.S. Sharma said in a telephone interview today. The interest-free loan has no maturity date, Sharma said.

### [CNPC builds overseas capacity](#)

China National Petroleum Corporation's overseas operations have the capacity to produce 1.4 million barrels per day of crude oil and 10 billion cubic metres of natural gas per year, according to the company's in-house newspaper.

### [Bashneft Oil Executive Shot Dead in Russia, Investigators Say](#)

(Bloomberg) -- An executive at OAO Bashneft, the Russian oil producer controlled by billionaire Vladimir Yevtushenkov, was shot to death, investigators said.

### [Much-delayed Arctic pipeline environmental study expected this week, years late](#)

Even at noon, Inuvik's weak December sun never seems to light the Arctic community brighter than twilight — no longer night, not quite day.

It's a little like how businessmen have been feeling about their own prospects in the Mackenzie Delta community after seemingly endless delays in a project they've pinned their hopes on - the Mackenzie Valley gas pipeline.

### [Kazakhstan Plans to Boost Oil Output by 5.6 Percent Next Year](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Kazakhstan, central Asia's biggest energy producer, plans to boost oil output by 5.6 percent next year from a year earlier.

### [Kazakhstan Plans to Boost Coal Production By 3.6% Next Year](#)

(Bloomberg) -- Kazakhstan, central Asia's biggest energy producer, plans to boost coal output by as much as 3.6 percent next year from a year earlier.

Coal production is forecast to rise to between 96 million and 97 million metric tons in 2010, Economy Minister Bakhyt Sultanov said in telephone interview from the capital Astana today.

### [Iran arrests sister of Nobel laureate](#)

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) -- Iranian security forces made a wave of new arrests Tuesday, including Nobel peace laureate Shirin Ebadi's sister and a relative of opposition leader Mir Hossein Mousavi, pressing forward with a broadening crackdown on the reformist movement in the wake of deadly protests this week.

The government accused Western countries of fomenting the violence, threatening to "slap" Britain in the face as it summoned London's ambassador to an urgent meeting.

### [U.K. mounts warfare exercise in Falklands](#)

STANLEY, Falkland Islands, Dec. 28 (UPI) -- British forces mounted a warfare exercise involving navy and air force personnel in the Falkland Islands, scene of a 1982 conflict between Argentina and Britain and more recently of intense oil and gas exploration activities.

### [Asia's green-tech rivals: Clean-energy competition in the region will be intense](#)

The battle lines are being drawn in Asia over green technologies, as governments adapt their tradition of state influence on industry for an era in which eco-friendly products may spell export success. In China, Japan, South Korea and elsewhere, a big portion of

fiscal-stimulus measures is dedicated to green projects. It is seen as a way to create new jobs, cut carbon emissions at home—and sell products abroad.

Globally, governments have budgeted as much as \$500 billion for “Green New Deal” projects, estimates HSBC, a bank. Asia accounts for more than three-fifths of the total. Around 20% of this will have been spent by the end of 2009, with most of the rest to be lavished in 2010. Private capital is also pouring in.

### [China's Energy Solution: Ignore the Cost](#)

Perhaps you've heard the argument that the world needs to move from coal to renewables at any cost. China now appears to be applying this idea quite literally.

In an amendment to a 2006 renewable energy law, the Chinese government has mandated that state-owned electric grid companies buy all of the renewable energy produced by generators, regardless of the price.

### [China: Nuclear power project starts](#)

The first phase of building two giant reactors for a new nuclear project that will cut carbon emissions and boost the local economy started December 28.

Two 1250 mW reactors will be built in the first phase, at the site in Haiyang, east China's Shandong province, and are scheduled to be put into use in May 2014 and March 2015 respectively.

### [2009 biggest year yet for Canadian wind power](#)

Canada's wind industry had its biggest year ever in 2009, as 880 megawatts of new wind-generated power came on stream - the most ever added in one year.

With turbines across the country now capable of churning out about 3,250 megawatts of electricity in total - enough to power about one million homes - the sector has reached a new level of maturity.

### [The Lithium Rush](#)

Nearly four kilometers above sea level in the Bolivian Andes lies the Salar de Uyuni, the world's largest salt flat. But there is more to this surreal, moonlike landscape than meets the eye. Flowing in salt-water channels beneath the surface is the world's largest supply of lithium--and, possibly, the future of transportation. Lithium is the key ingredient in

the lithium-ion batteries that will power the electric vehicles that will soon be rolling off production lines worldwide. Demand for the metal is expected to double in the next 10 years, and Bolivia, with an untapped resource estimated at nine million tons by the U.S. Geological Survey, is being called a potential "Saudi Arabia of lithium."

### [Can a solar-powered airplane be the future of aviation?](#)

While the world's attention was tuned to the recent global climate conference in Copenhagen, in an old airplane hangar on a small Swiss airfield, a group of visionaries, dreamers and engineers was busily assembling a vehicle that is their solution to global climate change and the future of commercial aviation. This airplane uses no fossil or bio-fuels. It is a solar-powered airplane, collecting the sun's rays on 12,000 solar cells spread across its wings to charge the special lithium-polymer batteries that will continue to power the airplane from sunset till the next sunrise.

### [A Race-Car Designer's Shift to Greener Rides](#)

To aficionados of auto-racing and high-performance sports cars, Gordon Murray is a legend. He's designed championship-winning Formula One cars, as well as two iconic, drop-dead-beautiful sports cars: the McLaren F1, one of the fastest road cars ever made, and the Mercedes SLR McLaren. These cars were, of course, built for speed and power; fuel economy wasn't even an afterthought. So it's somewhat surprising that the 63-year-old South African engineer is now more interested in cleaning up the planet by reducing carbon emissions than cleaning up at a Grand Prix finish line.

Murray's latest project is an environmentally friendly, compact commuter car — a change of focus he insists isn't as dramatic as it sounds. "Philosophically, they're quite similar," he says. "It's all about designing cars that are lightweight," which makes them highly efficient as well. The major difference between the two types of cars, however, is cost. Creating a lightweight, highly efficient car that is also affordable — not to mention cool and fun — is "the most challenging thing I've ever done," Murray says.

### [Moore shop class works toward 90-mpg car](#)

MOORE — Shop class isn't what it used to be, at least when Moore High School teacher Clint Jensen is leading it.

Instead of tinkering on beat-up Buicks, Moore students are building a car from the ground up — and not just any car, one they hope will drive 90 miles on a single gallon of gas.

### [Fidel Castro: Humanity's Right To Life](#)

The United States, with less than 5% of the world population releases 25% of the carbon dioxide. The new US President had promised to cooperate with the international effort to tackle a new problem that afflicts that country as much as the rest of the world. In the meetings leading to the Summit, it became clear that the leaders of that nation and of the wealthiest countries were maneuvering to place the burden of sacrifices on the emergent and poor countries.

### [Scottish Renewables calls on government to release fossil levy money](#)

Trade association Scottish Renewables is calling on the UK's chancellor Alistair Darling to release the £174 million currently sitting in the Scottish Fossil Fuel Levy fund so it can be ploughed back into the renewables sector and help tackle climate change.

### [Experts: Quick action needed to prevent Arab region water crisis](#)

(MENAFN - Jordan Times) With people in over 17 Arab countries living well below the water poverty line of 500 cubic metres annually, Arab decision makers on Monday called for coordinated efforts to address the impact of climate change on the limited resource.

Experts said more than 75 per cent of the surface water in the Arab world, most of which is made up of semi-arid or arid land, originates from outside its borders, thus necessitating measures to protect water security and curb future political crises erupting from water shortages.

### [Macca's meat-free message is a recipe for farming disaster in Wales](#)

A WELSH farmers leader has hit back at the campaign by high-profile figures like Sir Paul McCartney and Sir Richard Branson to cut out meat consumption in the cause of cutting carbon emissions.

In his new year message, Gareth Vaughan, president of the Farmers' Union of Wales, said recently published reports in the medical journal The Lancet and by the UK Government's independent watchdog the Sustainable Development Commission had also highlighted the dangers of failing to properly examine the whole picture.

### [Taiwan feels global warming, say report](#)

The Central Weather Bureau (CWB) on Tuesday published a study on weather changes in Taiwan over the past century, which showed that local temperatures had risen by an average of 0.8 degrees Celsius. The average temperature rose by 1.2 degrees in plains areas and 1.4 degrees in metropolitan areas, according to the study, which compiled weather change statistics between 1897 and 2008.



One noteworthy finding was that the minimum temperature increased by 2.1 degrees while the maximum temperature rose by 0.7 degrees on average in metropolitan areas.

### [Fewer deaths in disasters in 2009: Munich Re](#)

FRANKFURT (AFP) – We made it through the year with a minimum of natural disasters, German re-insurer Munich Re said on Tuesday, but climate change still threatens our planet and the failed Copenhagen summit ensures losses will rise in the future.

Munich Re said natural catastrophes took many fewer lives and caused much less damage on average in 2009 than in the previous decade.

But the group also pointed to a higher total number of destructive events, around 850, than the average of 770 per year since 2000.

### [Brazil sets ambitious emissions targets](#)

Brazil will make its ambitious 2020 greenhouse gas emissions targets legally binding even though global climate talks failed this month, the country's environment minister said yesterday.

### [The Lawyers Win in Global Warming](#)

Carbon dioxide air emissions is one of the big issues in global warming debate. However, before you start controlling by putting the carbon in the ground, you first have to put lawyers in a room to argue. After a year that saw billions of dollars spent around a variety of carbon capture and storage pilot projects, the focus in 2010 will shift from press conferences and engineering discussion to court cases and conference tables.

### [Emissions Disclosure as a Business Virtue](#)

Cupping their hands near holes drilled for cable routing, workers at the Boeing Company's four-acre data processing site near Seattle noticed this year that air used to keep the computers cool was seeping through floor openings.

Mindful of the company's drive to slash electricity consumption by 25 percent, they tucked insulation into holes there and at five similar sites. The resulting savings are projected at \$55,000, or some 685,000 kilowatt hours of electricity a year.

Yet Boeing's goal is not just to save money. The hope is to keep pace with other companies that have joined in a vast global experiment in tracking the carbon dioxide

emissions generated by industry.

### [National Intelligence Council Research Report - North Africa: The Impact of Climate Change to 2030 \[PDF\]](#)

It is estimated that Morocco and Algeria's water resources will be reduced by 10-15 percent by 2020, Tunisia's water resources will decline by 28 percent by 2030, and 74.8 percent of Egyptians will have less than adequate fresh water by the same year.

Conflicts over water, as have been observed in the past, are likely to surface between African countries. In addition, low-efficiency surface irrigation practices may produce higher water losses, decreases in land productivity, and increased salination.

Egypt, where agriculture is impossible without irrigation, is at risk of being largely impacted. ...as the price of water becomes apparent, North African countries will likely rely more on food imports.

### [Arctic Could Face Warmer and Ice-Free Conditions](#)

There is increased evidence that the Arctic could face seasonally ice-free conditions and much warmer temperatures in the future.

Scientists documented evidence that the Arctic Ocean and Nordic Seas were too warm to support summer sea ice during the mid-Pliocene warm period (3.3 to 3 million years ago). This period is characterized by warm temperatures similar to those projected for the end of this century, and is used as an analog to understand future conditions.



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