

After reading your discussion paper I believe a holistic approach to carbon emissions from agriculture, as you cannot just target methane emissions etc without considering the carbon absorption that also takes place in a biocycle like farming. What I mean by this is that as pastures or crops grow I assume that they absorb carbon this carbon is then eaten or harvested to be eaten at a later date, where the carbon is again absorbed to form tissue or fibre. I also imagine that not all of this tissue or fibre is instantly converted back into greenhouse gasses some ends up in landfill (bones or worn-out clothing). I would also think that the living biomass (plants and animals) that is produced on a farm if it is not eaten or harvested will eventually die and rot and release the greenhouse gasses it has stored in its lifetime, this brings me to the problem of carbon sinks.

The trouble with relying on farmland to absorb to lock up carbon in sinks (trees) is that a tree will only live for between 80 to 300 years, not really a long time when you consider that the greenhouse gasses causing the problem have been sequestered for millions of years and a carbon sink will only lock up some of these gasses until it reaches its maximum capacity then it will start to die and release these gasses again, it is also vulnerable to destruction from storms or fires.

Have any studies been carried out to assess the net output of greenhouse gasses from a hectare of bushland, a hectare of farmland, and a hectare of city or town? Also if vast areas are set aside for carbon sinks how much will this affect land and food prices? Proper insurance would also have to be available to spread the risk from fire or storm that could destroy a carbon sink.

On our farm we are actively perusing a programme of dung-beetle introduction, these little insects can in the future bury the total output of manure from our herd of cattle, thereby sequestering it into the soil. We have also enquired about establishing wind turbines on our property however the nearby power cables would need to be upgraded from 11000 volts to 23000 volts so that is not an option.

Perhaps the population of the world is too great and instead of always going for growth maybe we should be looking to keep or reduce the status-quo.

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