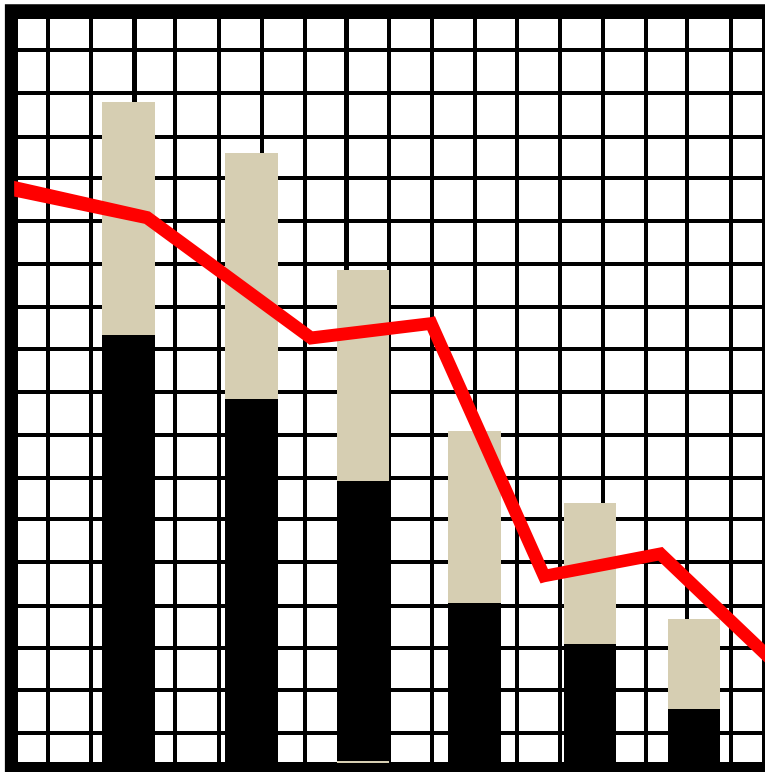


Peak Oil

Time to think about the future?

Global oil production could peak and then decline within the next few years, posing serious challenges to transport and farming.

And there are no easy fixes



Local food will be vital

Peak Oil and Food Security

Our food supply is among the most vulnerable on earth to an energy shortage.

The oil and gas used to feed us is absolutely staggering – and it can't go on. "Every single calorie we eat is backed by at least a calorie of oil, more like ten," said an article in Harpers Magazine in February 2004.

We depend so much on road haulage that the nation's larder is actually our motorway system.

Around 40% of the trucks on British roads move farm products and food. They go from ports and airports, between huge processing plants, dairies and abattoirs, to vast central depots, and finally to the supermarkets. Any major problem with fuel supplies would quickly result in rows and rows of empty supermarket shelves and desperate shoppers hunting for anything to make do with.

Restricted supplies and ever-rising costs of oil and gas carry even worse long-term dangers.

After the food shortages of the Second World War, great advances were made in make the UK self-sufficient in food . Crops were boosted by huge applications of Nitrogen fertiliser which needs gas to produce. The crops also needed herbicides, fungicides and pesticides to protect them from disease. Making these chemicals and fertilisers needs massive amounts of oil and natural gas. Recently, much of our food production has been moved to lower-cost countries – needing even more oil to carry the food to our plates.

We face a future where oil and gas are no longer abundant.

There will be dwindling oil supplies for transport and chemicals, and likely declines in global food production as climate change begins to bite. This makes the production of food at a local level, using methods which use less energy , a national priority.

You can make a difference right now by buying your food locally from farmer's markets and other local producers and box schemes. You can also encourage local and national politicians to support local food production.