




# earthwise

News and Ideas for UCS Members and Activists

## President Moves on Scientific Integrity

Government scientists cheered in March as President Obama formally asked the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy to develop a plan aimed at preventing political interference in federal science. In his memorandum, the president set forth the following principles: federal agencies should make public any non-classified scientific information considered in policy decisions, candidates for executive-branch scientific positions should be chosen based on their knowledge and experience, and agencies should adopt procedures that allow political interference in science to be reported and addressed.

UCS met more than a dozen times with presidential transition teams over the winter to urge increased transparency in decision making, whistle-blower protections for scientists, and other reforms. The president's directive is just one of several actions his administration has taken that closely mirror our recommendations.

Implementation of this directive will be complex and time-consuming, but UCS will work with the administration to create a realistic and effective plan and build public support for its execution. To read the memorandum and learn more about our recommendations for further reforms, visit the UCS website at [www.ucsusa.org/scientific\\_integrity](http://www.ucsusa.org/scientific_integrity). 

## close to home

### A New Wave in Community Farming

The growing popularity of community supported agriculture programs (or CSAs), in which people buy shares of a local farm's harvest, has led some city dwellers to give up their cubicles for a career in farming. Take Denise and Cameron Anderson, for example. The former urban professionals now run a CSA called 2silos Farm outside Columbus, OH, that sells farm-fresh vegetables in the summer and pasture-raised meat and eggs year-round.



*Denise and Cameron Anderson, owners of 2silos Farm in Ohio, launched a meat CSA last year. Here, they show off some of their pasture-raised animals.*

© 2silos Farm

#### Not Bad for a Hobbyist

Like more than a third of U.S. farm operators today, the Andersons did not start out in agriculture; raising chickens and selling the eggs at farmers markets was essentially a hobby for Denise (one that provided supplemental income) in 2003. But when Cameron lost his job as a Web developer, the couple decided to pursue farming full-time. They expanded their egg sales to include area retailers and restaurants, and started raising a flock of sheep.

Last year, with help from friends who run the area's largest vegetable CSA, the Andersons launched a meat CSA. More than 12,500 small and mid-sized farms nationwide market their products through CSAs, but meat and dairy CSAs or "buying clubs" represent a relatively new trend. Members of the 2silos CSA pay an annual fee that helps underwrite the farm's operating costs, then in return receive six monthly shares of eggs and a variety of meat cuts (approximately 20 pounds per month).

The Andersons like this marketing arrangement because it offers them guaranteed sales and customer loyalty while giving consumers the opportunity to

*(continued on back page)*

on a personal note

## Finding Common Ground on Deforestation



Of the many factors contributing to global warming, one that has yet to be addressed in any significant way is the clearing of the world's tropical forests. Stopping this large-scale deforestation may seem like an intractable problem. But at a recent event co-hosted by the Union of Concerned Scientists for members of Congress and their staffs, President Bharrat Jagdeo of Guyana helped me understand that the solution lies in understanding and responding to the concerns and needs of the peoples who depend on these forests for their livelihood.

He explained that while the world values the selling of timber and clearing of forests to plant crops or raise livestock, it “does not value most of the services that forests provide when trees are kept alive,” such as their capacity for absorbing heat-trapping carbon dioxide emissions. President Jagdeo has emerged as a leader among rainforest nations calling for a compact with the developed world that would provide an economic incentive to keep these critical forests—and their irreplaceable biodiversity—intact.

That's where UCS comes in. With our expertise in deforestation science and policy, we help international policy makers craft incentives that will benefit both the global environment and local economies. Our analysis shows that \$20 billion in annual funding could cut deforestation-related emissions in half by 2020; the funds can come from the auction of permits that carbon polluters would be required to purchase, or the sale of a limited amount of “offsets,” which would allow polluters to meet their emissions reduction targets partly by funding forest conservation initiatives.

Compensating rainforest nations for protecting their carbon-storing forests is in every nation's interest. The entire world would benefit from a sharp reduction in global warming emissions—about 20 percent of which are produced by deforestation—and the developing world would also benefit from an alternative revenue stream that could address such pressing needs, in President Jagdeo's words, as “better schools and hospitals, teachers and doctors . . . and jobs for our citizens.”

By focusing on these common interests, UCS will continue to encourage the international community to forge a comprehensive policy on tropical forests that will benefit people all over the world.


KEVIN KNOBLOCH, *president*

## fast facts



*Taxpayers may pay for another bailout of the nuclear power industry*

Proponents of nuclear power are calling for as many as 300 new plants by 2050 as a way to reduce global warming pollution. But history shows this could be a financially risky path:

- The industry has an extremely poor record of predicting construction costs, which has led to massive overruns and the abandonment of more than 100 reactors since the 1970s. As a result, ratepayers and taxpayers have paid almost \$300 billion in today's dollars for the industry's past failures.
- The Department of Energy has already allocated \$18.5 billion in loan guarantees for new nuclear plants, but the industry is asking Congress for much more.
- The average risk of default on nuclear loan guarantees is about 50 percent. At this rate, taxpayers could lose between \$360 billion (for 100 new plants) and \$1.6 trillion (for 300 new plants). 

## Partner with Us

Nearly 5,000 UCS members support our work through small monthly gifts automatically withdrawn from their bank accounts or charged to their credit cards. If you're not already one of them, consider joining the **Partners for the Earth** program today—it saves time, postage, and paper. For more information, go to [www.ucsusa.org/pfe](http://www.ucsusa.org/pfe) or call our membership department at (800) 666-8276 x8000.

## Help Shape Strong Climate Policy

### What's at Stake

A clean energy future that curbs global warming.

### How You Can Help

Urge Congress to send President Obama strong climate legislation this year.

### What's Happening

In February, Congress passed a stimulus package that included strong provisions for renewable energy and energy efficiency. This is an important first step in breaking our dependence on oil, putting Americans back to work, and protecting future generations from the worst effects of global warming—but it is not enough. Scientific research indicates that climatic changes are happening faster than projected and that further delay will result in even greater costs to human health and the environment.

With Congress poised to consider climate legislation in the months ahead, we must challenge our lawmakers to take bold action that will curb global warming and transition the United States to a clean energy economy.

### What You Can Do

Tell your legislators that a comprehensive climate policy must:


- Require U.S. global warming emissions reductions of 35 percent below current levels by 2020 and at least 80 percent by 2050, with the flexibility to rapidly adjust these targets if emerging climate science concludes deeper cuts are needed
- Require 25 percent of our nation's electricity to be generated from renewable resources by 2025—a standard that would create 297,000 U.S. jobs and save consumers \$64.3 billion by 2025



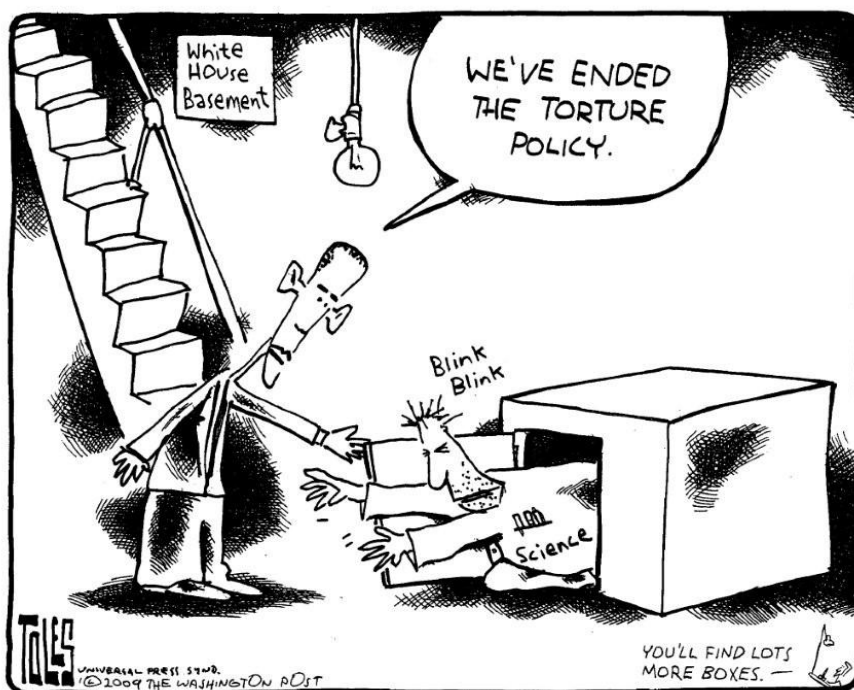
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- Require polluters to pay for their global warming emissions; invest the revenue in clean energy and energy efficiency, prevention of tropical deforestation, transfer of clean technologies to developing nations, and assistance for disadvantaged communities in adapting to unavoidable climate changes
- Exclude any loopholes that would let polluters delay or avoid needed pollution reductions, especially unlimited

carbon “offsets” or a “safety valve” that limits the fee for emissions

Remind your elected officials that swift action will maximize consumer savings and minimize global warming's impact over the long term. To contact your U.S. senators or representative, send an email from the online UCS Action Network at [www.ucsaction.org](http://www.ucsaction.org) or call the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and ask to be connected to the appropriate office. 

## drawing conclusions



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## A New Wave in Community Farming *(continued from front page)*

purchase fresh, often organic food at a competitive price. It also keeps food dollars in the community. The 2silos CSA was so successful in its first year—“We had so much interest, we had to expand just to meet our first winter’s demand,” Denise says—that the Andersons added a summer vegetable CSA for 2009.

### A Smarter Way to Raise Animals

The 2silos CSA now offers chicken, eggs, beef, lamb, pork, and even goose and rabbit, but the Andersons don’t have the space to raise all these animals themselves. Instead, they have joined forces with four neighboring farms that supply the CSA with livestock. Though each farm raises different animals, they share a common commitment to sustainable farming practices. All of the animals are raised on carefully managed pastures, a system that produces more nutritious meat while minimizing the pollution problems that plague overcrowded CAFOs (confined animal feeding operations).

“Smart pasture systems” and other farms that reduce the non-therapeutic use of antibiotics common in CAFOs are even healthier for animals and people alike. Missouri hog farmer Russ Kremer knows this well; years ago, he nearly died from an antibiotic-resistant infection related to his small CAFO’s routine overuse of antibiotics. He responded by updating his operation to a modern, cost-saving model that houses hardy breeds of pigs in an airy, straw-filled barn with constant access to pasture—an environment that virtually eliminates the need for antibiotics.

UCS is working to expand government support for farmers like the Andersons and Russ Kremer who are moving U.S. agriculture away from the unhealthy practices of the past by investing in organic and smart pasture systems. Visit our website at [www.ucsusa.org/food\\_and\\_agriculture](http://www.ucsusa.org/food_and_agriculture) to learn more about these efforts, download a fact sheet on meat CSAs, or view a slide show about Russ Kremer and his farm. 

## UCS on the web

**Can you Digg it?** A useful and fun new way to share UCS news and analysis with people all over the world is through “bookmarking” websites such as Delicious.com, Digg.com, Reddit.com, and StumbleUpon.com. Register for free at any of these sites and you’ll be able to add UCS links and vote for your favorites. You can also point people to specific content on our site by clicking the Share icon at the top of each UCS webpage.

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## dialogue

*Hybrid and diesel vehicles both get good mileage, but do they have similar impact in terms of global warming emissions?*

First, we should point out that while gasoline-electric hybrids and diesel vehicles both achieve impressive highway fuel economy, hybrids excel in city driving. For example, the Honda Civic Hybrid and the diesel Volkswagen Jetta TDI have similar highway fuel economy (45 and 40 mpg, respectively) but the Civic Hybrid gets 40 mpg in the city versus 29 mpg for the Jetta. In addition, diesel and gasoline have different chemical compositions and, thus, different emissions when burned. Over the course of the entire fuel cycle (i.e., from the time the fuel is extracted at the wellhead to the point at which it is emitted from a vehicle’s tailpipe), burning a gallon of diesel emits roughly 10 percent more global warming emissions than a gallon of gasoline.

As a result of the combined differences in chemical composition and fuel efficiency, the Civic Hybrid emits an estimated 4.4 tons of heat-trapping emissions for every 15,000 miles of driving (a typical amount of mileage for U.S. drivers in one year), while the Jetta releases 6.4 tons—not unlike many other cars on the road, such as the non-hybrid Ford Focus (6.8 tons). Diesels, while significantly cleaner than those from years past, also produce more smog-forming pollution than typical gasoline-powered hybrids.

UCS is working to ensure that automakers reduce emissions from both diesel and gasoline vehicles. To learn more, visit [www.ucsusa.org/clean\\_vehicles](http://www.ucsusa.org/clean_vehicles). To compare the emissions performance of specific diesel and hybrid models, visit [www.fueleconomy.gov](http://www.fueleconomy.gov). 