

Mr Murray Sherwin
Productivity Commission

Dear Mr Sherwin

Whatever possessed the Green party to propose taxing petrol cars to subsidize electric cars. There are so many better ways [\(Link\)](#) to encourage the uptake of Electric vehicles without making most of the drivers in the country hate electric cars and their owners while at the same time making yourselves unelectable.

Leaving that aside, it is amazing how often an idea appears just as it is needed. Even more amazing is how often it appears independently at the same time in different places. Think of the Theory of Evolution by Wallace and Darwin or Calculus, invented by Newton and Leibniz. We are at such a time now and instead of a single new idea it is a convergence of ideas all working toward solving a raft of problems we face. I hope the adoption doesn't take as long as Calculus and the Theory of Evolution did. Solvable now are:

Carbon sequestration

Saving and improving our soils

Water conservation

increasing infiltration

Abating stream pollution

Blunting climate change

Flood mitigation

Sustainable agriculture

Mitigation of the output of oxides of Nitrogen

Methane capture and use (partial)

Improved bottom line (for farmers)

and would you believe, making the farmers the darlings of the ecological movements.

The reporter of this revolution is David R Montgomery and it is interesting how he came to investigate the subject. Prof Montgomery is a physical geographer who became interested in the archeology of soils; of how civilization after civilization washed their soils down on to the flats and into the rivers to be washed to the oceans; how their sea ports were silted up by their top soils and became land locked; and how their civilizations faltered and disappeared and the areas they occupied, only becoming populated again after the many centuries needed to rebuild their soils from the bottom up.

Then, he and his wife moved into a property in Seattle, Washington state on a piece of land that had the top soil removed before building their house. His wife in a few short years re-created rich top soil with amazing peripheral results and David began to put two and two together.

The upshot was that he traveled the world observing farms far and wide and interviewing farmers who, quite independently, had come up with a new/old way of farming. I say old/new because all the methods would have been familiar to farmers before the advent of cheap, fossil-fuel-produced-fertilizer but in every case with a modern twist based on current knowledge.

Here is a short summary of the book he wrote, *Growing a Revolution*.

<http://mtkass.blogspot.co.nz/2017/08/restoring-our-soils.html>

The original should be required reading for your staff.

If you find this interesting, here is a summary of his previous book, *Dirt*, in which he describes his earlier archaeological work.

<http://mtkass.blogspot.co.nz/2017/11/dirt.html>

Incidentally, a couple of months ago there was an article in the Farmers Magazine detailing composting barns. You may remember that the Green party came out strongly against barn cows in the McKenzie country. I quite sympathize with their dilemma. On the radio you are only allowed sound bites and like most things in the affairs of man, the subject is much more nuanced than can be expressed in a sound bite. Here is an article on Composting barns.

<http://mtkass.blogspot.co.nz/2017/10/composting-barns.html>

They can be serious contributors to solving the above list of problems.

Note that if these measures were applied, Farmers, even dairy farmers would be the darlings of the Greens while improving their bottom line . Wouldn't that be something.

<http://mtkass.blogspot.co.nz/2018/01/mitigating-harm-dairy-causes-to.htm>

Kind regards

William

William Hughes-Games

Waipara Gardens

N. Cant.