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The Earth Only Endures. By J. Pretty. London: Earthscan (2009), pp. 274, £17.99. ISBN: 978-1-84407-613-0.

This book aims to describe humanity's relations with nature, animals and places. The 16 essays are organised into 5 parts: Green Places, Animals and Us, Food and the Land, People and the Land, and The Future. Other than some black and white photographs at the beginning of each chapter, there are no illustrations, graphs or figures. In the first part there is some discussion of how modern civilization is being threatened by over-consumption, followed by the idea that engaging with nature in all its forms improves our well-being. The second part describes our relations with a range of animals, both wild and domestic. In 'Food and the Land' the author debates the relationship between diet, obesity and ill health. This part also includes an essay on how productivity has been improved in small farms across India, Kenya and West Africa. In the essay entitled 'Rewilding Agriculture', ideas for bringing about the greater integration of agriculture and wildlife are presented. The fourth part deals largely with the forced removal of people from their ancestral lands. Examples given include Chernobyl after the nuclear accident and the Scottish clearances. The fifth and final part starts with a discussion of the role of genes in the environment and concludes with an essay which considers the possibility for ecological recovery. This book is very readable, with a wide range of personal anecdotes and observations. There are extensive annotations on each chapter at the end of the book and a comprehensive list of literary references.

Carol M. Duffus

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Sustainable Energy – Without the Hot Air. By D. J. C. MacKay. Cambridge: IUT (2009), pp. 366. £19.99. ISBN 978-0-9544529-3-3.

Get this important book. Buy it or get it free on the internet at www.withouthotair.com and you are free to use all the material except for the cartoons and those photographs with a named photographer. Why bother? Agriculture is energy-dependent. Much has been written about renewable energy resources and most countries are beginning to embark on policies to address anthropogenic climate change and reap the benefits of sustainable energy. At long last, we have an authoritative, crisply written book that forensically and quantitatively analyses energy production systems of all kinds and energy usage. Myths and unfounded claims are debunked mercilessly. Even though it has a strong UK bias, the data can be readily transposed to address policy choices for any country or trading bloc.

The contents comprise four parts: Numbers, not adjectives (18 chapters including Food and farming); Making a difference (14 chapters); Technical chapters (8 in all); and Useful data. The book is replete with coloured illustrations, pithy – sometimes witty – statements, real data and calculations. A list of web links, an excellent bibliography, a power translation chart, and a carbon translation chart complement the text.

Energy consumption by transport, heating and cooling, lighting, information systems and other gadgets, food, and manufacturing is set alongside actual and potential wind, solar (including biomass), hydroelectric, wave, tide, geothermal and nuclear sustainable-energy production systems. It is the best text book I have read in years.

John R. Hillman

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Distortions to Agricultural Incentives in Latin America. Edited by K. Anderson and A. Valdes. Washington DC : The World Bank (2008), pp. 411, US\$39.95. ISBN 13: 978-0-8213-7513-6.

This book is the product of a global research project of the World Bank aimed at understanding the evolution and impacts of policy interventions affecting the agricultural sector in developing countries. It contains detailed

case studies of eight Latin American countries and is part of a series that also covers Asia and Africa. This work usefully complements the estimates of market distortions provided for developed countries by the OECD and provides a good springboard for comparison of agricultural sector incentives in developed and developing countries.

The eight countries account for nearly 80% of Latin America's agricultural output. For each country the book traces the evolution of agricultural and macroeconomic policy interventions over the last four decades. The core element of the book is a systematic empirical study that provides quantitative indicators of past and present policy interventions in each country using a common methodology for estimation of agricultural incentives. A lucid and accessible explanation of the methodology used is one of the most useful features of the book. Compilation of comparable and consistent annual time series of protection and taxation in the agricultural sector is a key contribution.

Latin American countries have seen major policy shifts over the last four decades, and the empirical work in this book provides a strong evidence-base for assessing the successes/failures of changing policy interventions. It also provides insight into the political economy of policy interventions in developing countries and can inform assessments of prospects of continuing reform in different countries. The book is likely to be an indispensable reference work for researcher as well as the policy maker, providing a template for future studies.

C. S. Srinivasan

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Distortions to Agricultural Incentives in Asia. Edited by K. Anderson and W. Martin. Washington, DC: The World Bank (2009), pp. 573, US\$39.95 (paperback). ISBN 13: 978-0-8213-7662-1.

The book assesses the effects of trade policies on farmer assistance in the agriculture sectors of selected countries in South and South East Asia, highlighting the historical background and context of the trend of agricultural productivity, share of agriculture and industry in gross domestic product. It provides a useful explanation of the effects of trade-related policy interventions through mapping the dynamic linkages of the trade bias index and subsidy indicators like relative rates of assistance (RRA). The trade bias index uses the nominal rate of assistance (NRA) for the exportable and importable components of the specific agricultural products considering the total monetary value of assistance weighted by the share of the sector in gross domestic product. Gross value of products has been estimated by considering farm gate prices. Such a valuation might not, however, fully depict the reality of many South Asian countries, as it will not reflect the existence of mark-ups arising from the price inflating behaviour of various intermediaries in the value chain of production. A rise in the NRA in the exportable component of an agricultural sector might not necessarily mean a larger production and trading of the product due to subsidy leakages arising from inappropriate functioning of the institutions dealing with subsidy targeting and its effective implementation. Domestic factors like export taxes, monthly release mechanisms, state and centre driven pricing regimes for agricultural commodities would also affect the domestic production and exports of agricultural products. One could say that Trade Bias Index and RRA provide indicative associations between level of protection and trade in the absence of regulatory, institutional and other important domestic and global factors.

Anandajit Goswami

Readers may be interested to know about the following publication, which is not reviewed because of its limited relevance to the majority of readers of *Experimental Agriculture*.

Business Management for Tropical Dairy Farmers. By J. Moran. Collingwood, VIC, Australia: CSIRO Publishing (2009), pp. 280, AU\$49.95 (paperback). ISBN 978-0-643-09516-8.