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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