



## FRENCH LEAD ON HEALTHY FOOD - AGAIN

A dramatic shift in farm subsidies by French President Nicolas Sarkozy looks set to bring healthier foods to consumers in France. Now food campaigners are asking when Prime Minister Gordon Brown plans to do the same for UK citizens.

This week the French government announced that from next year it would snatch back 20 per cent of the billions of euros paid in subsidies to big grain producers and give it instead to livestock graziers, hill farmers and organic producers. The surprise move will bring real health benefits to French consumers, who are already among the healthiest and longest-living in Europe.

The small farms in line for the extra cash have one thing in common – they all raise livestock the natural way by grazing them on fresh pasture. Research evidence is now accumulating that meat and dairy foods produced this way are rich in the nutrients which protect against today's most intractable diseases.

These health-boosting nutrients include a range of antioxidants including vitamin E, which protects against diabetes, heart disease and cancer; omega-3 fatty acids, which protect against heart disease; and a substance called CLA, a powerful cancer fighter.

Over the past 20 years levels of these nutrients have fallen in western diets leading to a big increase in degenerative diseases, including type 2 diabetes now reaching epidemic proportions.

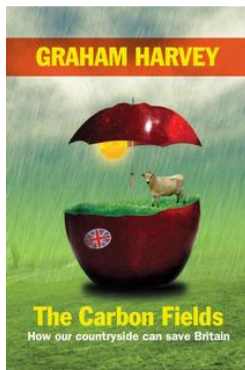
One of the reasons for this loss of nutrients is the growing trend for beef and dairy farmers to take their animals off their natural pastures and feed them on cheap grain in concrete yards. Thanks to EU grain subsidies Britain's surplus of pesticide-ridden cereals is now so big that more than half of it has to be fed to livestock.

This is not only damaging to the animals and the consumers who will eventually eat the foods, it is also harmful to the environment and the health of the planet. The bold French move to strip away some of the cereal subsidies will give a boost to the nation's health, say food campaigners.

Graham Harvey – author of *The Carbon Fields* which spells out the health benefits of pasture-fed foods – has welcomed President Sarkozy's action. He said: "Once more the French, who are the longest living people in Europe, have been prepared to put human health before the profits of big corporations. It's the global pesticide companies who benefit most from subsidies to cereal growers.

"And once more the British government is failing to protect the nation's health by standing up for consumers against powerful interest groups. As Britain faces an epidemic of obesity and diabetes that threatens to overwhelm the NHS, the politicians fail to make the connection with falling food standards.

"The answer's obvious. If you want to live to a ripe old age, the best advice is to move to the other side of the Channel."



### The Carbon Fields

How our countryside can save Britain

ISBN: 978-0-9560707-0-8

- *The Carbon Fields* by Graham Harvey. For review copies or author interviews please contact Will Barnard at Grassroots, Ph. 07866 747688, e-mail [William.barnard@grassrootsfood.co.uk](mailto:William.barnard@grassrootsfood.co.uk)
- Graham Harvey won the BP Natural World Book Prize for *The Killing of the Countryside*.

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