

Info Card 1

Sales of biopesticides rising steeply

The sales of biopesticides (both biochemical, antimicrobe as well as invertebrates) have been rising steadily: in domestic as well as global markets, from 2007 to 2014 sales have jumped from 1 to about 3 billion USD. Nevertheless, they haven't gained a big share in the market yet: in 2011, in fact, they still amounted only to 4.1% of all pesticides being used.

Info Card 2

EWWR

The EWWR (European Week for Waste Reduction) has been held in Europe every year since 2009. This week's activities aim to involve more and more people as well as organizations (from public administrations to private companies) on the theme of waste reduction and disposal. Everybody's contribution is welcome in terms of proposals, initiatives, events or actions related to the theme and to be held during the week.

Info Card 3

Hunger in Italy

Usually, when the word "hunger" comes up in conversation, we are led to think about far away developing countries. Yet, every day in Italy millions of people have to come to terms with lack of food due to their precarious financial situation. According to the National Institute for Statistics (ISTAT), 24.9% of families resident in Italy (about 15 million people) suffer economic hardship and 17.5% declare they can't afford an adequate meal at least every other day.

Info Card 4

'Green' tyres

Extensive scientific research is being carried out on sustainable materials. Researchers from the Fraunhofer Institute of Molecular Biology and Applied Ecology in Munich, Westphalia, have set up the production of tyres using the latex extracted from the roots of taraxacum (dandelion) instead of extracting it from the sharinga tree ("the rubber tree").

Info Card 5

Tindo, the solar bus

Tindo (meaning "sun" in aboriginal language) is the first electric bus powered by solar energy that operates as a free public transport service in Adelaide City, Australia. It is powered by the solar energy collected from the solar panel-covered bus station canopies, where it is recharged. It has a maximum range of 200 km and all the electric functions on it (air-conditioning, wi-fi... etc) are fed by solar energy. It can carry up to 40 people and is completely free.

Info Card 6

Burlington, the city of renewable energy sources

Burlington, the largest city in Vermont (USA) with 42 thousand inhabitants, is the first city in the USA which, since September 2014, has been producing 100% of its energy supply through renewable sources: hydroelectric, wind power and biomass. This project is part of a wider, long-term plan which is aimed at the whole American State of Vermont eventually getting around 90% of its energy supply from renewable sources, by 2050.

Info Card 7

Pollution: alarming situation in Beijing

In the first months of 2014 Beijing and most of Northern China were put again on red alert because of high air pollution levels. In the capital city, in fact, visibility was hardly a few hundred metres because of the smog and the concentration of fine particulates had been for many successive days 25 times as much as the level set as tolerable. Local authorities forbade all open-air school activities and went as far as to put hoardings with a blue sky to try and compensate for the lack of sun and light and thus provide emotional support to the population.

Info Card 8

Earth as seen from the sky

Yann Arthus Bertrand is a French photographer and environmentalist who takes striking aerial photos of the Earth in order to capture the sheer beauty of our Planet, thus hoping to make people aware of how important it is to preserve it. "I do hope that, looking at my photos, you will feel changed and transformed by the beauty of this planet and will start to feel it your own responsibility to give your contribution to the conservation and protection of it. Each one of us can do something. It's up to you to find your own way."

Info Card 9

Energy Park

The first Italian building to have received the prestigious LEED Platinum certification (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is located just outside Milan. This certification is granted to the buildings that are using resources efficiently, reducing electric energy and water consumption, thus minimizing greenhouse gas emissions. In Europe, only other 6 buildings have been granted the LEED certification so far.

Info Card 10

Buying new things

From carpets to computers, from T-shirts to TV sets: producing any kind of goods will have to be seen as leading to carbon dioxide emissions. If we try and make the things that we already own last longer, we will not cause the market to produce new ones. So if in the old days this was a necessity due to lack of money, today it must become a free choice for the good of our Planet.

Info Card 11

Virtual water

'Virtual water' is the amount of water which is needed to produce a certain good or service. To produce 1 Kg of rice, for example, we need 3400 litres of water; for a 150 gr beef steak, 2300 litres of water; for a Medium T-shirt, about 2700 litres; for a microchip, 32 litres and for 100 A4 paper sheets, 1000 litres.

Info Card 12

A good example, not far from home

The United Kingdom economy has doubled since 1985, while their energy consumption has remained unchanged. This means one thing: cars, boilers, light bulbs and household appliances have become more energy efficient. This is proof that to save energy is possible and so Governments should fund programs and research to make it a reality.

Info Card 13

Pile garments from recycled plastic

To protect themselves from cold and in sports activities people like to use pile garments, which are made out of polyester fibre, one of the many petrol by-products. Lately, however, more and more pile producers have started using fibres obtained from the recycling of plastic bottles. This allows, on one hand, to save raw materials and, on the other, to recycle waste from the dump.

Info Card 14

Hydrogen fuel cell cars

In summer 2015 Toyota is launching its first hydrogen fuel cell car on the Italian market. Other car manufacturers have already put their cars on the market or are still testing experimental models. One of the main drawbacks for hydrogen cars is producing hydrogen and the other big problem will be creating a distribution network and hydrogen-equipped filling stations.

Info Card 15

Natural gas and CO2

All fossil fuels produce carbon dioxide but, among them, methane (or natural gas) seems to be producing a lesser amount of it. In fact, while generating the same amount of energy, natural gas is said to produce 30% less CO2 than oil and 45% less than coal. For this reason, from the 1970s up to the present day methane consumption in the world has increased 30 fold.

Info Card 16

How do we use water?

Official government estimates of how water is used worldwide (the figures are expressed as a percentage of average global values) are as follows:

70% agriculture and breeding

22% industries

8% civil use

Practically, we seem to 'eat' more water than we actually 'drink'!

Info Card 17

Enough water?

How much water do you think every single person needs each day as a sufficient quantity? Enough not to suffer from thirst? Or enough to take a nice shower? Experts calculate that in order to satisfy a human being's basic needs, that is to say, drinking, cooking and have a wash, the minimum daily quantity of clean water should amount to at least 20 litres per person. Many people, however, usually have less than 5 litres a day available.

Info Card 18

Population increase

World population has rocketed up from 500 million in 1800 to 7 billion in 2011. In the last 50 years the number of human beings has more than doubled and the exploitation of our resources has reached critical levels: food and water consumption has more than trebled, while fossil fuel consumption has become four times as great.

Info Card 19

Oceans acidification

The increased level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere leads also to a higher level of carbon dioxide dissolved in sea water with the consequent formation of carbonic acid, thus increasing the level of acid in surface sea waters. With a pH usually ranging around 8.2, oceans are naturally alkaline, but recent scientific data indicate that the present readings show lowering pH levels (8.0) and they are still decreasing.

Info Card 20

Insects on your plate

Edible insects may be a sustainable alternative to meat. They are in fact a healthy source of nourishment with a high protein and fat content, though their nutritional value may vary according to species. Just to make an example, the percentage of proteins and fats in crickets is similar to that of many kinds of meat...

Info Card 21

Hybrid cars

Hybrid cars are best valued and effective wherever traffic is particularly congested; in fact, in countries like China and India they can use as much as 54% less fuel than traditional cars. Carbon dioxide emissions from motor vehicles are expected to double by 2050, particularly as a consequence of the rapid growth of the market of vehicles and this will be specially true in countries like China and India. For this reason, if hybrid cars will be successful in these markets, the benefit to be gained in terms of emissions into the atmosphere will be substantial.

Info Card 22

Bottled water

2011 statistics speak clearly: Italy, with 196 litres per inhabitant, proved to be the first country in Europe and the third in the world (right behind Saudi Arabia and Mexico) for the consumption of bottled water. In fact, data show that in the Italian peninsula 6 billion plastic bottles have been drunk.

Info Card 23

How much waste material!

Data processing relating to urban waste disposal in the Italian Emilia Romagna Region in the year 2013 confirms an amount of 650 kg/year/inhabitant, which totals almost 3 million tons for the whole Region!

Info Card 24

WEEE

In Italy an average of 14.9 Kg/person/year of Waste of Electric and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) are produced, but only 4 Kg of it are recycled. In 2012 in the whole world about 49 million tons of WEEE were produced, that is to say 11 times as heavy as the Giza pyramids. It is of the utmost importance that WEEE doesn't get disposed of as indifferentiated waste, since they contain materials which are easily recyclable, such as precious metals that can be reused, but they also contain pollutants as well as toxic waste that could be dangerous for man's health and the environment.