

IssueCard 1

Drinking water to flush the toilet

In rich countries drinking water is being wasted, using it even where it's not necessary. A glaringly obvious proof is its use in the flusher: each time you flush the toilet 10 to 12 litres of water flow down. Many systems have been found to reduce water consumption (double push-button, connection with the washbasin drain) but they don't seem to have met much consensus. What about making them compulsory?

IssueCard 2

Food imports from poor countries

The choice to buy in-season food products, which have been produced locally, certainly helps reduce carbon dioxide emissions, since emissions related to handling the goods are in this case avoided. On the other hand, however, this choice undoubtedly affects some of the poorest countries in the world, who have in their agricultural products exports the chief means of subsistence.

IssueCard 3

Fair Trade food

The organizations which deal with Fair Trade food help the producers from the poorest countries in the world, enabling them to trade their goods at a fair price. At the same time, they guarantee innovative solutions, that are respectful of people's rights and dignity as well as environmentally-friendly. Fair Trade products are often more expensive than similar ones. Do you think this is right?

IssueCard 4

Biofuel

Clean-burning fuels are more eco-sustainable than oil and its by-products, but they bear a hidden extra cost in terms of environment. Their production process, in fact, steals water and soil from fields under cultivation of food products. What criteria are to be used to get our priorities straight? How should priorities be regulated?

IssueCard 5

Mexican Tortillas

Between 2005 and 2011 the price of corn tortillas, part of the staple diet of millions Mexicans, has risen by approximately 70%, setting off a violent protest from the indignant population which forced the Government to peg prices. According to economic experts, more than 30% of this rise has been caused by the increased production of ethanol from corn in the United States.

IssueCard 6

Sea Level Rise

Sea levels worldwide have been rising and the trend has been linked to global warming. Scientific research indicates that in the last 100 years sea level has risen by approximately 17 cm. as confirmed by the inhabitants of coastal cities. However, there seems to be quite a discordance of opinion in the experts' predictions: according to some of them, sea level will rise by 18 cm by 2100; other studies forecast only 1 m's rise.

IssueCard 7

Low-emission, more efficient cars

In order to reduce the impact on the atmosphere, we should use more efficient cars, which means newer cars. So, as far as means of transport are concerned, this appears to penalize the working and middle classes of society, unable to afford new cars. Could car-pooling and car-sharing be the solution?

IssueCard 8

Bottled water or tap water?

It's a pretty complex issue to be addressed. Some populations have no choice: their water supply either is not clean or it is scarce. In developed countries, on the contrary, tap water is as healthy and good as bottled water. Most people, however, are still suspicious of its quality. What should be done to make them change their minds?

IssueCard 9

Economic growth and energy consumption

Available data on British energy consumption indicate that the link between economic growth and the use of fossil fuels (with consequent greenhouse gas emissions) has been broken. In fact, from 1985 up to the present day, the United Kingdom economy has doubled, while energy consumption has remained unchanged. This leads to the question: is it then feasible to save energy without jeopardising growth and welfare?

IssueCard 10

Global climate change: are the forecasts reliable?

Today climatic models seem to have lost reliability since, apparently, they have been unable to predict a lower-than-expected rise in global warming – a kind of “pause” – which has been recorded in the last 10-15 years and is probably due to oceans absorbing heat, the significance of such phenomenon having been not adequately considered. But does this fact entitle us to completely discredit climatic forecasts?

IssueCard 11

Red meat and environmental impact

Red meat has a much greater environmental impact than other kinds of meat or eggs and milk by-products, with the same amount in calories. This is what emerges from a recent study which has highlighted four factors as indicative of environmental cost: soil consumption, water consumption, greenhouse gas emission and use of nitrates in fertilizers. How to take action changing our diet accordingly?

IssueCard 12

Rice that survives underwater

As we know, global warming rises sea level which can then cause floods in the coastal regions. In recent years, floods are reported to have destroyed about 20 million hectare of rice paddies. Thanks to modern genetic engineering techniques, a rice variety has been created that can survive underwater for a fortnight. Do you think it's right to use this new variety or should we go on using the traditional ones?

IssueCard 13

11 billion people ...! What then?

A while ago, the experts had calculated that the world population would reach 9 billion by 2050, and then would grow steady or even start a slight decline. The latest report, however, based on advanced statistical analysis, indicates that population could reach 11 billion by 2100, obviously with dramatic implications.

IssueCard 14

Organic fruit and vegetables are better for your health

A study recently published on the British Journal of Nutrition (July 2014) has pointed out that organic fruit, vegetables and cereal not only have a lower content in pesticides (as one would naturally assume), but they also contain a higher level of antioxidants, which have often been associated with a lower onset risk of cancer as well as other diseases.

IssueCard 15

Strategies for Europe

Presently Europe imports more than half of the energy it needs, which heavily impacts on the systems of accounts of the EU member countries. To drastically reduce the energy debt, we should consume less electric power. But would it be possible to effectively reduce energy consumption and, at the same time, keep the same standard of living, without having to renounce the comforts of modern life?

IssueCard 16

Photographs to awaken public opinion

Some naturalist photographers have devoted their art to the purpose of awakening as many people as possible to environmental issues, aware as they are of the need to make conservation of the natural environment something appealing not only from an economic point of view, but also as part of a cultural heritage. Could it be they're showing us the right tack to take?

IssueCard 17

What kind of development?

Many governments in countries which still have large, pristine, pollution-free natural areas, find themselves now at an important crossroads: on one hand, they receive strong pressures for economic growth; on the other, they may have acquired a new awareness of the real value of their territory. How could we help them make this delicate choice regarding the development of their country?

IssueCard 18

A hungry planet

The last twenty years have seen a slowdown in the growth rate of agricultural productions, particularly rice, corn and wheat. In some areas growth has even come to a standstill. The collapse of the food production systems could pose a major threat to the future of our world.

IssueCard 19

CO2 from our homes

Any time we use energy in our home, to heat up or cool down our rooms, to warm up water, to switch on lights and feed our household appliances and equipment, we release greenhouse gas and, in particular, carbon dioxide.

Many people seem not to care at all and use up energy freely and in no way try to save it. This is bad not only for their electricity bills but, more than that, it is bad for the environment, that does belong to everybody.

IssueCard 20

Carbon footprint

A Carbon Footprint measures the total set of greenhouse gas emissions caused by a person or a State and its impact on the Planet's climate. It is an index that allows to calculate the link between our daily activities and carbon dioxide production. Could its use help people to reach a deeper awareness of the consequences of their behaviours?

IssueCard 21

Pollution in the Po Valley

The European Environment Agency (EEA) has estimated that in the sole Po Valley deaths referable to air pollution have averaged 7000 a year. In fact, 17 out of 30 among the most polluted European cities are said to be located in Italy. Fine particulates and ozone are the pollutants which seem to be causing most health problems.

IssueCard 22

World Population and Water Supply

Some researchers have drawn our attention to the fact that world population is increasing more rapidly than the water supply on our Planet. So, in order to prevent a shortage of drinking water in the future, it will be of the utmost importance not only to devise technological innovations to increase the water supply on the planet, but also to regulate drinking water consumption on a global scale.

IssueCard 23

Pollinators in danger

For years now we've been witnessing to a slow and progressive disappearance of pollinating insects, such as bees. Many factors have come into play: climate change, pathogens, increasing urbanization and destruction of natural habitat. Recently, an important study has demonstrated how this fact is going to lead into a serious crisis (and not just European agricultural production), as proof of the fact that the loss in biodiversity is having an impact both on a local and a global scale.

IssueCard 24

Are electric cars eco-friendly?

The still rather limited diffusion of electric cars may depend on a basic contradiction: to produce one requires more energy than that needed to make a car running on fossil fuel. This means more pollution at the source (during the production phase) and higher prices afterwards (the car is more expensive). However, an international study highlights the beneficial effects on climate that electric vehicles would undoubtedly have, especially in congested city streets.

IssueCard 25

Turn the tap off!

A video on the web shows that who keeps the water running while brushing their teeth, is wasting more than 10 litres of drinking water, which is more than many people can afford to use in one whole month. What can we do to invite people to turn the tap off?