

Walter Jehne for Dummies

By Ellen Snortland

Global warming as a real threat is nearly indisputable. Its causes and repairs are still up for grabs, urgent grabs. Walter Jehne — a microbiologist and ecologist with an interest in Earth systems science, as well as member of the Sustainability Science Team — thinks emission standards goals miss the mark and the timeline. Jehne warns that the date 2030 is more in keeping with how quickly we may run out of options to mend our fragile blue planet.

So-called conventional wisdom, possibly created by pop culture analysis and over-simplification, says that if we lower CO² emissions, we can “fix” global warming by 2100. The concept articulated by Abraham Maslow in 1962, “When the only tool you have is a hammer, it is tempting to treat everything as if it were a nail,” is apt. The hammer: decreasing emissions is still a useful tool; indeed we must lower levels. However, what if the CO² emission goals could be attained by some of the most natural, low cost, high yield implements on the planet? What if we really need not only hammers, but spades, hoes and the arms, backs and will of people to reforest their land with trees that can also feed them?

Reforestation in all areas of the world, with an emphasis on developing nations, could: create much needed relief from extreme weather conditions; get water back into

circulation in the air via increased cloud-cover with the accompanying shift in increasing sky-land radiation patterns; increase employment through new jobs and produce for market as well as create more beauty. It's a reverse revolution from industrial back to agrarian, while we also commit to reducing and enforcing emissions reduction.

Jehne, in a far more sophisticated and scientific style, makes a cogent argument that CO² emissions from deforestation and poor land-use management are sourced from as far back as 1750. The agrarian-to-industrial revolution has created the current dangerous weather patterns we are now trying to alter through only one approach: controlling emissions. Simplistic! Short-sighted! While yes, we need to control emissions, clouds that are basically created by the near miraculous exchange of water, particles and bacteria from our forest to the air above them which creates clouds and rain and the kind of reflection ratios (*albedo*... look it up) that could rebalance very large areas of the planet in a short amount of time.

We thought rain-forests grew where there is rain. Turns out it rains there because of rain-forests after all there are no rain prairies are there?

Joyce Kilmer is famous for the opening line of his poem "Trees": "I think that I shall never see/A poem as lovely as a tree." Indeed, we may come to regard that as "A GLOBAL WARMING CURE as lovely as a tree."