

[The future of food](#) [1]

Written by [Dr Eamonn Butler](#) [2] | Saturday 8 March 2008



There's been a lot written recently about the world's growing demand for food and the issue of food security. Magnus Linklater [wrote](#) [3] about it in the *Times* last week, and of course Michael Jack MP [raised](#) [4] the same subject at our Power Lunch a couple of weeks ago.

Now the new Chief Scientific Adviser to the government, Professor John Beddington, has got in on the act, saying that the middle class are responsible for damaging the planet because they consume more energy-inefficient food such as cheese and meat.

Gimme a break. Where *does* the government dredge up these platitudinous advisers? My colleague Dr Madsen Pirie has already exploded the 'energy intensive food' argument in his book *Freedom 101*. Put simply, livestock can be raised on land that's no good for arable crops ? look at all that mutton and venison wandering Scottish hillsides that would never sustain even a blade of wheat or barley ? so meat and cheese doesn't somehow displace 'energy efficient' crops.

And don't try to make me feel guilty, either. It's not the Western middle classes that are raising the demand for food, it's all the billions in emerging economies who are at last edging out of absolute poverty and starting to consume more food ? a point that Michael Jack made to us.

And good luck to those emerging food consumers, I say. I'd like to see them all better fed, even though it does certainly mean that food prices for the rest of us will go up ? until, of course, we overcome our environmental block against GM and start using it to increase yields, at least.

[blog comments powered by Disqus](#) [6]

Source URL: <http://www.adamsmith.org/blog/tax-and-economy/the-future-of-food>

Links:

[1] <http://www.adamsmith.org/blog/tax-and-economy/the-future-of-food>

[2] <http://www.adamsmith.org/authors/dr-eamonn-butler>

[3] http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/magnus_linklater/article3492123.ece

[4] <http://www.adamsmith.org/blog/environment/power-lunch-with-michael-jack-mp-20080229979>

[5] http://disqus.com/?ref_noscript

[6] <http://disqus.com>