Community responses to Peak oil

Simone Osborn November 2012
Transition

THE TRANSITION HANDBOOK
From oil dependency to local resilience

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Founder of the Transition movement

“If your town is not yet a Transition Town, here is the guidance for making it so. We have little time, and much to accomplish.” — Richard Heinberg, author of "Blackout"
Grass roots action
The Bristol Peak Oil report

4.0 Food
4.1 Summary

Food Key Points
- Bristol's food system is heavily dependent on cheap oil and gas.
- Bristol supermarkets distribute food in black plastic bags, and just-in-time delivery systems are threatened by peak oil.
- Much agriculture is degraded due to over-ploughing and use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.
- Bristol Council has no strategy for increased food self-sufficiency.
- Food security relies on imports from food distribution networks.
- Consumer awareness is challenging for food retailing, but failure to increase the share of locally grown food could result in food insecurity.

4.2 Background

Councils currently have no statutory authority to regulate food production. Consequently, there is no capacity to ensure a sustainable food policy from council departments.

Bristol has some responsibility for food in their brief. For example, local provision to schools and voluntary agencies, distribution, food waste removal, food information and food networks, and planning and management of all elements.

4.3.1. The UK food system is a globalized system. A localized food production and distribution system, which is highly dependent on oil, is distributed by multinational food supply chains. It is well integrated into the market, involving food producers and retailers, and long journeys with short distances.

3.0 Transport and mobility

Oil dependency on the Baltic Sea oil pipeline allows oil to be transported without significant energy expenditure. The energy savings are substantial. However, this is at the cost of 2-3% of the overall energy cost.

Flashback: Bristol experience of peak oil

In the late 1970s, the peak oil debate was heated in Bristol. The city was considered an inland town, and the availability of oil was not a major concern. However, the city's reliance on imported food was a significant issue. The city's food system was heavily dependent on imported food, and the city had no strategy to increase local food production.

Bristol's experience with peak oil taught them the importance of diversifying their food system and reducing their dependence on imported food. The city realized that the oil crisis was a significant threat to their food security and started to look for ways to increase local food production and reduce their dependence on imported food.
Some Bristol responses

Who feeds Bristol?
Towards a resilient food plan

BRISTOL ENERGY

BRISTOL POUND
Our city, our money, our future.

Bristol Green Doors

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