

FAT FOLKS BEWARE!

by Sherwood, Keith and Craig Idso



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In an article entitled "Population adiposity and climate change," which was published in the *International Journal of Epidemiology*, Phil Edwards and Ian Roberts of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine write that "world-wide, over one billion adults are overweight and around 300 million are obese", which state of affairs, they suggest, "has serious implications for health, increasing the risk of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, stroke and some cancers." What seems to concern them even *more*, however, are what they call the "serious implications" that the growing *body mass index* (BMI) of the world's human population have for the *temperature* of the planet.

Performing a rigorous scientific analysis based on Schofield's (1985) equations, the two researchers "estimated the food energy required to maintain basal metabolic rate in two hypothetical adult populations," one of which had a *normal* BMI distribution typical of the United Kingdom in the 1970s, and one of which had an *overweight* BMI distribution such as is expected to prevail throughout the UK in 2010. In addition, they calculated the excess greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the higher fuel energy required for transporting a heavier population.

The results of these exercises indicated that compared with a normal BMI distribution with about 3% of the population being obese, "a population with 40% obese requires 19% more food energy for its total energy expenditure." And they say that "greenhouse gas emissions from food production and car travel due to increases in adiposity in a population of one billion are estimated to be between 0.4 and 1.0 Giga tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents per year," which Powles (2009) says is roughly equivalent to 1 to 2% of the recent emissions from the total human population. In addition, the latter scientist, who hails from the University of Cambridge's Department of Public Health and Primary Care, writes that "even more consequential than the quantity of food consumed is its composition," i.e., whether it is plant- or animal-derived, as he states that even "if we seek only to achieve the conservative objective of avoiding further long-term increases in greenhouse gas emissions from livestock," it would require "more than halving current [animal product] consumption levels in affluent countries.

Based on these several observations, Edwards and Roberts conclude that "increased population adiposity, because of its contribution to climate change from additional food and transport greenhouse gas emissions, should be recognized as an environmental problem." And, as we all know, *problems* – especially *environmental* problems of a *global* nature that are *claimed by climate alarmists* to be caused by *CO₂-induced warming* – absolutely *demand* solutions. Consequently, viewed in this light, their closing comment – i.e., their claim that

their "assertion that increasing population adiposity will result in an increase in greenhouse gas emissions is justifiable" -- becomes rather scary; for it makes one wonder: justifiable for *what*?

Could it ever ultimately come to imply (paraphrasing Randy Newman, in a not-so-funny way) that *Fat People Got No Reason to Live*? Who knows? Powles quotes Reijnders and Soret (2003) as saying that "absolute dietary freedom *could soon* [italics added] become a luxury." And when you believe you're attempting to save something as grandiose as *life on earth as we know it* (or used to know it), almost *any* means can be construed to justify the end.



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