

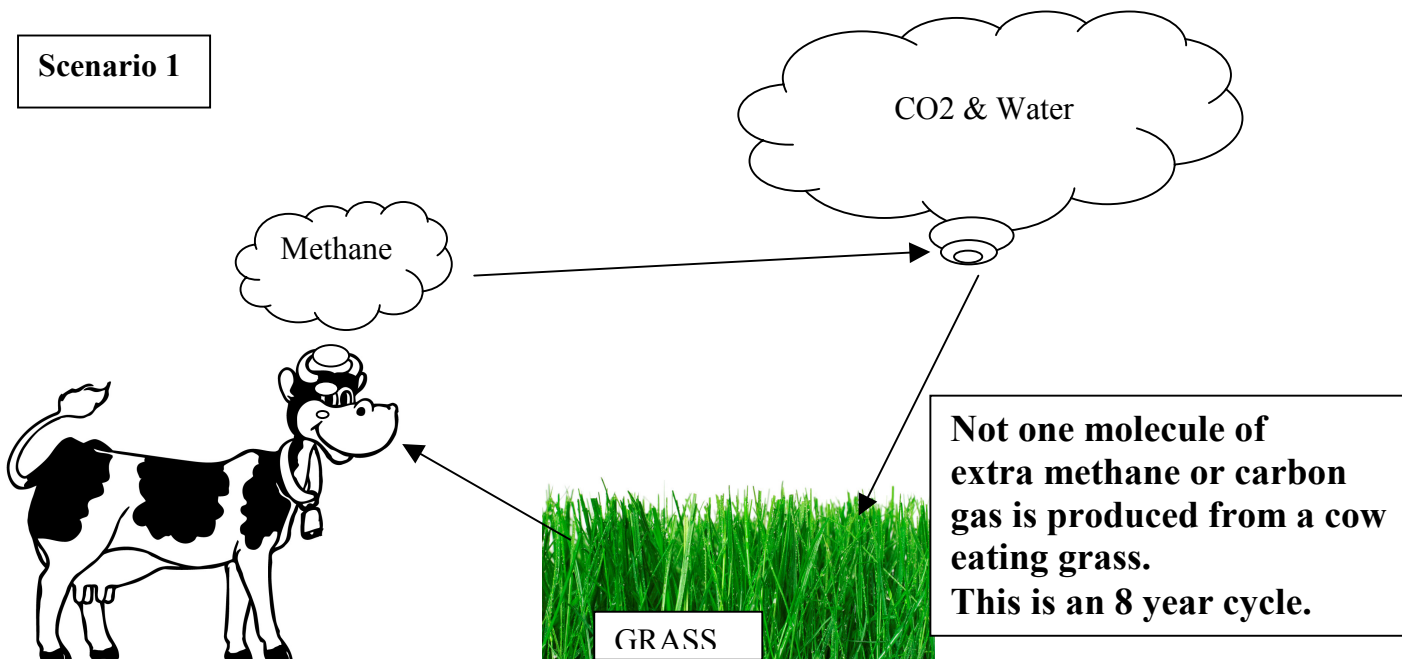
## COWS BELCH METHANE; SO WHAT?

The game in town seems to be to bash the poor old ruminant for threatening the survival of the planet by belching methane into an overloaded and polluted atmosphere that is on the brink of total collapse under the weight of all this carbon. It is reported that carbon has reached the staggering proportion of 0.42 % of the atmosphere. The whole global warming theory is well documented and it revolves around carbon levels in the atmosphere increasing, causing the atmosphere to warm. I could spend the rest of my life shooting holes in this theory because there is so much wrong with it but for this article I will refrain from doing so, as hard as that is.

I will instead focus on the problems associated with the assumption that all methane emissions are the same and that they all result in an increase in carbon in the atmosphere. Agriculture's emissions from belching livestock are quite different to the emissions from car exhaust and gas fired or coal burning power stations. The difference is that agricultural carbon emissions are sustainable and have no impact on the atmosphere because they do not result in an increase of carbon in the atmosphere whatsoever; whereas the other sources of methane emissions do result in an increase to the carbon content of the atmosphere.

To demonstrate the difference I have devised the carbon quiz and invite you to have a go.

## CARBON QUIZZ Can you spot the difference?



In just 8 years methane produced by a cow breaks down to CO<sub>2</sub> & water which grows the grass the cow then eats. The fact that methane causes more warming in the atmosphere than CO<sub>2</sub> is irrelevant because cows do not and can not increase the methane in the atmosphere; they just replenish it.

**Scenario 2**



**Those that say agricultural methane emissions contribute to an increase in greenhouse gasses cannot tell the difference between these two scenarios, but there is!**

How many differences did you get? (Circle appropriate response)

- 1/ Scenario 1 results in no increase in greenhouse gas in the atmosphere while scenario 2 does. Yes/no
- 2/ Cow methane emissions came from carbon and methane already in the atmosphere, while vehicle emissions came from oil under the ground. Yes/no
- 3/ Cow methane emissions are environmentally sustainable while vehicle emissions are not. Yes/no
- 4/ Cows are good for the planet while cars are bad. Yes/no

**Analysis.**

If you circled all four 'yes' then you have a bright future in store. You could be anything you like including rocket scientist, farmer or brain surgeon.

If you did not circle all four 'yes' then your future is quite bleak. You will be limited in what you can do.

**Options include;**

- Environmental scientist with the Ministry of Environment or Ministry of Agriculture(NZ only)
- Any job with sustainability in the job description, senior manger for any organisation with sustainability in it's name
- General manager of any organisation with climate change in it's name
- Prime Minister of a country (NZ only)
- Minister of Agriculture (NZ only)
- If none of those work out you could be the Chairman of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.