

The Whole Version: Carbon credit chronicles

Having an impact on demand, a critical part of the climate equation

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From its beginnings, the Sustainable Community project had as its goal to stimulate demand for carbon credits rather than just expanding the offer side of the equation. Two years ago, I published a text (Having an impact on demand)¹, promoting the idea that stimulating demand for carbon credits was an indispensable and, let's face it, endless, source of growth. Behavioural change, as it were, does not depend on the use of new technologies, but rather, a new awareness of who we are, what we have and what we would like to have and the conciliation between the latter two².

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Consumer demand plays a critical role in our economies by driving growth. By impacting demand for energy, the reduction of waste and people's choices in mobility³, there are direct and positive repercussions on carbon levels and our ability to meet our GHG reduction targets as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals⁴.

A recent European study⁵ looked at consumer's responsibility and how they are swimming in a sea of cognitive dissonance, torn between their hyper awareness of the unprecedented environmental degradation that we are currently facing and their hesitation to change their daily routine. As another example of cognitive dissonance, the study mentioned that people denounce political corruption when they themselves work

¹ <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/d%C3%A9but-2017-agir-sur-la-demande-martin-clermont/>

² <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/d%C3%A9but-2017-agir-sur-la-demande-martin-clermont/>

³ Approche triptyque de Communauté Durable :

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/une-approche-triptyque-comme-vecteur-de-changements-martin-clermont/>

⁴ <https://unfccc.int/fr/atteindre-les-objectifs-du-developpement-durable-grace-a-l-action-climatique>

⁵ <https://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/environnement/201904/06/01-5221165-climat-quel-role-pour-les-consommateurs.php>

on the black market. However, it is obvious that, in the end, we are all in the same boat, it is a common problem that we all must solve even as people continue to pass the buck.

One way to change our ways is through consumption.

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When we talk about significant changes in consumption, it is helpful to identify new ways of consumption in order to understand our final destination. Take the example of meat consumption. Since the end of 2018, markets have been predicting a downturn in the price of meat in 2019, especially beef, for Canadian consumers. This appears to be motivated by consumer desire to choose a more health-friendly ecological option. Demand for meat is predicted to slow down as other proteins like fish, poultry and vegetable proteins, having a smaller ecological footprint than beef, will be favoured. This is a perfect example of behavioural change from consumers, without the need to introduce innovative technologies, having a direct and immediate impact on the offer of meat proteins and expanding that offer to biological meat, local meat and vegetable-based proteins having a meaty taste.

This change in consumption is, naturally, gradual and it is itself a transition period, but it is significant enough to be noticed. At the moment, the average American eats 225 pounds of meat. However, not everyone eats meat. The younger generations have more vegetarians. The change will most likely remain quite gradual. At the same time, food biotechnologies are improving and molecularly lab-grown meat without a carbon footprint, ecological and cruelty-free is appearing on our plates.

Many believe that there should be a strategy on closing down the production line and that we should have a direct impact on the offer side of the equation rather than demand. However, as the global economy is now fully interconnected and integrated, national protectionism or controlling the offer will only have limited results.

Since the beginning of the year, by attempting to practice what I preach, I have integrated new items on my menu: *Beyond the meat burgers* once a week. I am happy to say that I remain open to change, especially ones that are so tasty.