

## Milking Sacred Cows - By Steven Ferry

2007-10-18

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It is somewhat ambitious for an article on hospitality to move beyond the immediate zone of hospitality, but trends outside the industry do impact it, and where conventional wisdom is a bit too solidly in the box, it may not be so good for business.

Take for instance, the issue of global warming and pollution hitting the headlines of late. The worldwide focus is on greenhouse gases (CO<sub>2</sub>), diverting attention from issues such as disposing of petroleum-based plastic trash (that does not break down, whereas soy- and corn-based plastics do), or discovering ways to neutralize radioactive nuclear waste, air pollution, and hundreds of thousands of toxic chemicals in the environment, almost none tested singly let alone in combinations, for their impact on the human body. Just one class of toxins, psychiatric and other pharmaceutical drugs, are already in our drinking water and the food chain, while chemicals exist in almost everything we consume, including most 'organic' foods, and most personal-care products in hotels read like a chemical experiment-which factually they are.

It is therefore worth knowing that global warming is a sacred cow that will yield no milk, Monsanto's best efforts notwithstanding. It has not been proven that CO<sub>2</sub> causes temperatures to rise: the idea is only a hypothesis that the media and a few others are promoting as fact, backed by doomsday images of floods and droughts that do nothing for anyone's morale.

If we examine the simple facts, we find the atmosphere is composed of nitrogen (N<sub>2</sub>, 78%), oxygen (O<sub>2</sub>, 21%), and other significant elements, such as water (H<sub>2</sub>O, 0-7%), argon, and 'greenhouse' gases ozone (O<sub>3</sub>, 0-0.01%) and carbon dioxide (0.01-0.1%). Can such small amounts of these two gases really cause global warming?

More to the point, if the industrial revolution and combustion engines cause climate warming, then why was there a warm period in the Middle Ages that was 5-6 degrees warmer than temperatures today, when Greenland was a Green Land replete with vineyards.

Why, since 1650, has there been an almost a linear increase in temperature of about 1°, Fahrenheit every century, including the 19th and 20th Centuries when the Industrial Revolution and automobiles came to prominence? Indeed, how does one explain temperatures increasing significantly between 1910 and 1940 (5 of the hottest years on record were in the 1930s) and then decreasing between 1940 and 1975-even though CO<sub>2</sub> began to increase in 1940? Or how does one reconcile the fact that CO<sub>2</sub> is much like insulation in an attic: beyond a certain amount, no matter how much one stuffs the attic, the insulation factor is not increased.

What sense can one make out of the sea level around the Maldives (the world's lowest-lying island group) dropping 20-30 cm in the last quarter century due to evaporation, yet the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reporting glacial melt at the poles as a catastrophic global warming event caused by man's pollution, which is causing rising sea levels currently and will result in the flooding of cities and countries around the world. In truth, our planet experiences natural warming and cooling phases, and the current 11,400-year warming period is beginning to wind down.

In truth, scientists do not yet know what causes temperature fluctuations beyond geologic, orbital, and celestial phenomena. For instance, the fact that the sun is at its hottest in the last thousand years, could have some bearing on the current high temperatures. One fact that analysis of two-mile deep ice cores has revealed recently, however, is that wild temperature swings occur in a matter of a couple of decades, not centuries. Our current civilization cycle has been lulled by a good run of stable weather, so planning on that to continue is not a good idea. We capitalize in hospitality on the beauty of the world and nature, but when it comes to controlling it, we are as flies to wanton boys.

Certainly, focusing on CO<sub>2</sub> as the culprit will consume significant funds and attention, but not solve anything other than the need by politicians for an apparent solution to be offered the masses alarmed by a science hijacked by politicians and media hyperbole. The cost of the proposed carbon taxes for each family, should any of the proposed dozen bills (as of August 2007) before congress be passed, will be approximately \$4,000 over the next five years. How, then, will this global-warming fixation impact hospitality? In the short term, higher fuel prices for operators of hotels as well as airlines/transport, driven in part by carbon taxes, perhaps added taxes to fund efforts such as the construction of barriers against putative rising seawater levels, and potential guests with less funds available for vacations and travel.

With premier hospitality venues in low-lying areas and islands, there might be a reluctance to invest, or there might be a drive to make more northerly climes into preferred destinations. The fear of increased monster hurricane activity, for instance, might drive people away from Florida.

But more importantly, it will focus hospitality and travel industry attention on reducing CO<sub>2</sub> instead of addressing real concerns, such as those touched upon above-or for that matter, the more compelling (in terms of atmospheric damage and global warming) cow flatulence, otherwise known as methane gas. Chasing CO<sub>2</sub> reductions makes as much sense as trying to reduce the indigestion of cows, but what if these industries were to demand plastics that decompose, and solutions to the thousands of toxins in our environment that mean even a staple like water has to come in bottles at high mark-ups (when sea water is the most abundant resource on the planet and relatively easily converted to potable water)? What would happen if they demanded the brakes be taken off alternative fuel sources that not only do not pollute, but also do not rely on a finite fuel source such as oil, which can be manipulated in the marketplace and the halls of power? If only 5% of US oil comes from Iraq (Nov 2005), then why do oil prices rise and fall on rumors and uncertainties about Iraq?

Free and clean energy such as alcohol, water, and non-toxic bio fuels have existed for almost a century: today, we have not only solar voltaic electricity, wind and wave power generators, but also vehicles that can run on water/sea water. Oil companies have not been supportive of these disruptive technologies that, for multiple reasons today, are capable (with a bit more funding and development), of replacing existing technologies of energy derived from wood, coal, and oil. Currently, 4% of energy comes from renewable sources in the US and nuclear power is being held back when it (nuclear fusion with Thorium) can provide clean and safe energy with no military uses.

A cheap fuel source would increase the numbers of travelers in the same way cheap cellular connectivity has put a cell phone on the ears of poor farmers in third world countries. Will these cheaper fuel sources be used broadly, thus boosting tourism? Slowly, as the sacred cow of oil is milked to the last drop and the next bountiful resource repainted as scarce to facilitate a monopoly and wealth creation for some. In balance, energy and travel costs will increase as fuel continues to be made 'scarce,' but will drop relatively speaking in decades ahead.

So far, these trends have resulted in changes for hospitality: any hotelier in Florida can testify that insurance rates have risen dramatically in the last two years because insurers have been spooked into using formulas to assess risk based on mega-hurricanes from global warming. Yet 2006 saw no hurricanes make landfall in the US and half way through the 2007 season, a total of one hurricane had clocked in, completely bypassing Florida/the US.

Many other sacred cows exist that take liberties with one's intelligence, but they fall outside the scope of this article. One of interest for its scope that does portend a major shift for hospitality in the fairly near term, including a boom for spas and medical spas/longevity centers in particular, is the subject of this article: within a couple of years, a 'health' monopoly will have been engineered world wide through the agency of Codex Alimentarius, resulting in mass ill-health and ultimately, no doubt, early demises. Those with wealth will be anxious for possible solutions and will be prepared to spend time and money to access them. On the flip side, increasing health-care costs for employees and reduced availability of personnel will create problems for management and HR alike.

### **Riding the Codex Wave**

Codex Alimentarius is Latin for 'laws governing what people may put down their throats'-and by extension, manufacture, sell, discuss, and possess on the subject.

The United Nations tasked the two Codex Alimentarius commissions on food and nutrition to compile standardized laws concerning food for trade purposes back in 1962. The unelected individuals on these two commissions were (and are) supplied by or have ties to pharmaceutical, medical, bio-tech, agribiz and chemical corporations. Because half of all Americans use alternative health solutions, spending \$20 billion in 2005, and because every dollar they spend on these solutions represents \$40 not spent on allopathic medicine (treating disease symptoms with drugs and surgery) and pharmaceutical drugs, the focus of Codex has been on creating standards and thus laws that prevent the manufacture of vitamins, minerals and other nutrients (all of which underpin the preventative, non-allopathic model). In effect, businessmen, not doctors, have engineered a legal sequence on an international scale, that promotes their own businesses by dictating what health options will be available to the citizens of all countries.

The requirements of Codex Alimentarius will come into full force worldwide on 31 December, 2009. Each country involved in a trade dispute under the aegis of the World Trade Organization, will automatically lose its case if it is not compliant with Codex Alimentarius, irrespective of the merits of the case it is disputing. This is forcing every country to align its national/state laws with Codex.

Codex Alimentarius has already resulted in legislation against the manufacture, distribution, and consumption of nutritional supplements in Europe and is currently forcing through legislation that will make illegal any claims concerning nutritional supplements. Similar laws were attempted in the 109th Congress but died with it.

1. HR 3156 Dietary Supplement Access and Awareness Act, which would have permitted the FDA to ban any nutrient which had any degree of risk associated with it, even in the absence of any proven harm from that substance.
2. HR 2485 DSHEA (Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act) - Full Implementation and Enforcement Act of 2005, which would have appropriated \$175M over the next four years for the FDA to enforce more-rigorous regulations on supplement manufacturers than those required of pharmaceuticals.
3. HR 2510 Dietary Supplement Regulatory Implementation Act of 2005 was similar to but worse than HR 2485 above, providing for the adverse event reporting system for supplements, but not drugs, and \$10 million to educate physicians and consumers about dietary supplements.

However, 2007 looks like a better year for those wanting unfettered access to the wallets of potential customers and patients:

1. HR 2900/S.1082 was passed in July 2007, watering down a law that once proposed to end the American monopoly on pharmaceuticals and ban advertising of new drugs, instead granting more power to the FDA to promote pharmaceuticals, increase censorship of nutritional education, and discredit alternatives that threaten drug company profits. The Reagan-Udall Foundation for the FDA is a new entity that places the FDA in charge of drug design, drug patents, drug licenses, and the creation of new marketing entities. This conflict of interest is deepened by the FDA's funding of drug companies, the continued right granted pharmaceuticals to advertise new drugs with unknown risks directly to consumers, and the power by the FDA to remove any dietary supplement from the market at whim.
2. SA 1379, attached to S 1042, creates an adverse-event reporting requirement for supplements while none exists for pharmaceuticals. The bill is currently referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

The grass-roots-propelled DHSEA Act of 1994, which thwarted a similar effort by the FDA and pharmaceuticals to cut off access to alternative health, is the cornerstone of the nutritional field. When finally overturned, the way will be clear for the wholesale closure of manufacturers, distributors, and retail outlets for efficacious nutritional supplements. Then in domino effect, alternative therapy practitioners will mostly go out of business, without access to nutrients for their patients. This can be expected to take place in 2010 and 2011. The only companies able to satisfy the stringent requirements for manufacture will be large pharmaceuticals, who already produce supplements of very low dosage and synthetic ingredients that have no actual nutritional value, but which are patentable and therefore lucrative.

The hundreds of millions of individuals who have been maintaining good health through the alternative health industry will be faced concurrently with food that, by Codex mandate, will be irradiated, genetically modified, and raised/grown with toxic residues from pesticides, fertilizers, antibiotics and other drugs (none of which will be mentioned on the labels because it inconveniently puts off consumers). Already, the passage of the 2006 Agricultural Appropriations Bill included a rider lobbied for by the 'Organic Trade Association' (representing not organic farms but corporations like Kraft, Dole, and Dean Foods), which weakened organic food standards by allowing synthetic food substances in the preparation, processing, and packaging of organic foods. Another key organization/association that has been taken over by big business is the Council for Responsible Nutrition, which in earlier years was key in pushing through DSHEA, but which is now almost exclusively comprised of such as Monsanto, Wyeth, biochemical companies and laboratories, ADM, Bayer, Cargill, even Eastman Kodak.

With no access to non-toxic and nutritious food, individuals will sicken and not be able to recover. They will be forced to spend significant sums (as in \$40 for every dollar they spent before) on the only 'option:' the pharmaceutical/medical industries. Of interest is that no deaths have been reported through use of alternative therapies or nutritional supplements: Ephedra/ephedrin is sometimes cited as the prime example of dietary supplements causing (57) deaths (in 1997), yet pharmaceuticals were responsible for all those deaths with their synthetic version of the ephedra herb. Rather predictably, the FDA targeted the herb, not the synthetics, when it took action over the ephedrine deaths. Likewise, 2.2 million people experienced adverse drug reactions to prescribed medicine (2001) in the US and 783,936 deaths occurred from medical mistakes during that same year. The pharmaceutical/medical industries are actually the leading cause of death in the US, not nutrition-based products and practitioners.

If Codex really were about food safety, as originally mandated and still claimed, the pharmaceuticals would not be the first choice for shepherd to the world population's alimentary canals.

Whether or not one believes the alarming projections made by one doctor, based on figures from the World Health Organization and Food and Agriculture Organization (one billion people dying from simple starvation and two billion from preventative diseases, in good measure in the industrialized nations, as a result of implementing Codex), it is likely that untimely deaths and increased sickness will follow the implementation of Codex Alimentarius-if only because every single medical text book and honest nutritional study ever done has found nutrients to be vital to life, rather than dangerous elements to be considered, and now reclassified by Codex, as drugs requiring regulation and eradication.

Those dying of simple starvation will not impact hospitality too much, being that part of humanity that is already living on the edge and not candidates for tourism or travel. But those suffering from preventable diseases under the allopathic model of slash, burn, nuke, and drug symptoms, will mean fewer employee resources, increased employee absenteeism and health care costs where offered, and ultimately, fewer guests taking vacations and traveling. On the positive side, as mentioned already, it will mean increased business for health and medical spas.

In terms of the food supply, fruits and vegetables grown in nutrient-depleted soil and pumped full of chemicals to look good, factually lack taste-as anyone who has sampled fresh fruit or vegetables in countries with less of a toxin stream in their food supply, can attest, which means chefs will be increasingly challenged to create gustatory masterpieces and so will resort to the neurotoxin monosodium glutamate (and its many faces, such as hydrolyzed/autolyzed anything, 'natural flavors,' etc.) to enhance flavor, as well as piling on the sugar and salt. These issues will increasingly impact higher-end restaurants that might otherwise rely on fresh foods for their actual flavors.

As Benito Mussolini once observed, Fascism should be called corporatism because it is the perfect merger of power between corporations and the state. We see this corporatism (Corporatocracy is the modern term), as a political system in America and Europe, where legislative decision-making and power is given to unelected civic assemblies representing economic, industrial, agrarian, and professional groups. The reach of these groups increased thirty years ago with the inception of the Global Village and its power was magnified in the Global Economy, with international corporations growing stronger than governments and the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and WTO (World Trade Organization) controlling the economies of countries indebted to the World Bank for loans made. This faceless corporatocracy is behind the maneuvering in the health field and has various other facets that will also impact the hospitality industry, but which are outside the scope of this article.

In summary, therefore, considering how best to address these two sacred cows, hospitality players would be best served by not devoting any resources to reducing global warming and CO2 levels. They might be better off focusing on efforts to clean up what man is doing that is impacting the environment, and about which they can do something meaningful.

More immediately, any major player wanting to ride the Codex wave would do well to create or expand an existing division for health and medical spas, teaming up with hospitals and medical providers to offer the kind of treatments that would appeal to a public looking for natural solutions, and which might still be legally possible under Codex Alimentarius. For the rest of the planet, Codex will be a hard pill to swallow, but it will be a legally prescribed pill that may well go a long way to resolving the putative overpopulation on this small planet.

Alternatively, if Codex Alimentarius seems like a cow that is sacred to some but not you personally, then you may want to visit [www.winhs.com](http://www.winhs.com) to find out more about your options while something can still be done about it.

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This article comes from Hotel News Resource

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