

After I woke this morning and grabbed a cornmeal muffin for breakfast, I sat down to discover there was more controversy surrounding biofuels. Does using biofuel necessitate taking food out of the mouths of the hungry? Is it a sustainable solution to our current need for new sources of energy?

The article I read referred to a report from the World Bank that stated the production of biofuels had driven up food prices by 75%. Later in the article, it stated that because Canada produces 70% of our own food, we have not been affected. Regardless of how safe Canadians might feel today, we do need to address the issue. People are being affected now, and they don't earn what we earn.

I grew up on a farm and used to be responsible for collecting the eggs every morning. On the farm, nothing was wasted: we used every inch of land; composted leftovers; tapped trees; conserved water. Waste not, want not.

If we choose to use rich agricultural land to plant low-yield energy crops such as corn, then we are not choosing a sustainable energy source and we are taking a source of food from our food stores.

However, if we harvest the corn and take it to market to feed people and then use the waste to make ethanol, then we are being smart about food and energy production. The same could be done for wheat and other crops that have unused agriculture waste.

If we choose to cut down great swaths of rainforest to plant crops to develop biofuels then we are creating more problems. Those trees are our source of oxygen. They are great healers and we need them.

However, we can produce biofuel using high-yield energy crops such as sugar cane (OK, not in Canada) or switch grass planted on agricultural land that already exists and is not suitable for food crops. This would be a sustainable solution.

I learned a lot growing up on a farm. Should we put all our eggs in one basket and act like biofuel is the answer? No, but produced in a sustainable manner, it is part of the solution. So, let's not throw the baby out with the bath water.

[Biofuel production boosts food prices by 75%, report suggests](#)