

## *Happy Earth Day!*

*I would like to send my sincere gratitude to all of you who have worked so hard over the past year to help work towards a more sustainable future.*

*Sincerely,  
Liz*

## CREATING EFFECTIVE RESOURCES

Every business has an impact on the environment. Today's challenge is to empower a business to lessen that impact and, at the same time, plan for the predicted shift in resource availability, and business and societal pressures. Within an organization, this task often lies with a central corporate social responsibility (CSR) team. However, this team will rely on other departments to implement strategic programs and initiatives.

A CSR team's success is measured by how effective its support and resources are to business units. This may be translating regulatory and technical information into a language that can be used in daily business transactions or establishing and tracking key performance indicators to assess progress over time.

Understanding how another department's priorities align with CSR department strategy and vice versa is critical in creating a lasting and effective partnership. Additionally, recognizing the challenges and boundaries of each department averts frustration and a perceived lack of usefulness, and possibly, loss of credibility of the CSR team. Engaging key departments early in any strategy and program development process will lead to a more positive and successful outcome.

Contact Liz for examples of her solid success in developing useful resources.

## SPOTLIGHT ISSUE: COMPETITION BETWEEN FOOD AND BIOFUELS

The pressure on agriculture land has received a lot of attention with the recent high cost and scarcity of food. Commodity markets have led governments placing restrictions on exports leading to further unrest and price rises. Wheat prices, a global benchmark, have risen 92 percent in the past 12 months (Financial Times, April 18, 2008).

This story discusses the role that biofuels has played in creating the current situation. Some of the price increases have been attributed to the mounting use of biofuels and its impact on agricultural land use. The expansion of corn planting in the U.S. has decreased soy plantings by 19% and cotton by 29% in 2007, although it appears that some farmers will plant more soy next year due to recent price increases.

Government policies can be the driver for these changes. The European Commission and many member states have proposed or installed incentives aimed at promoting sustainable biofuels. The European Commission's goal is that by 2020, renewable fuels would account for 20% of all energy with a 20% reduction in GHG emissions.

In developing countries the competition between food and fuel crops is more direct as soy, palm and other oils are now sold as fuel, limiting supplies for cooking. The limited supplies and higher prices can be devastating to families barely surviving on subsistence incomes.

*(continued on page 2)*

# COMPLIANCE AS SUSTAINABILITY'S FOUNDATION

With all the attention on “going green”, one must not forget – or neglect – basic compliance requirements. Nothing will diminish an organization’s credibility as quickly as breaking the law, causing a death or releasing large quantities of hazardous substances. This is evident by looking back just a few years to a 2005 British Petroleum accident in Texas that killed 15 workers and injured 180 others, that was followed by a 200,000-gallon pipeline spill in Prudhoe Bay in 2006 (costing BP US\$20 million in fines).

Liz’s career started by cleaning up hazardous waste sites, creating oil spill prevention plans and soil remediation plans in Hawaii. She then went on to develop Gap Inc.’s environmental program that addresses hazardous waste management, transportation of dangerous goods, mold, indoor air quality, asbestos, hazardous material business plans and more.

Today, Liz is able to offer her clients any environmental, health or safety service through a network of affiliates around the world. Since she directs all of the work, clients can limit their involvement and still know that they will receive the high quality service and advice for which Liz is known. Please contact Liz if you would like to learn more about these services.



## FOOD VERSUS BIOFUELS

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Palm oil is a commodity that is widely used both for food and a popular source of biodiesel. According to US Department of Agriculture, global palm oil production increased 10% between 2006 and 2007. Eighty-six percent of global palm oil is produced in Malaysia and Indonesia. Yet, street vendors in Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia, struggle to find enough cooking oil to prepare their food products, such as roti canai. Likewise, poor families that depend on oil to cook their meals are adjusting to higher oil prices by substituting lower priced food for meat or choosing foods that do not require oil to cook. On a global scale, China’s need for fuel and cooking oil has led to them importing over 5.2 million tons along with doubling soybean oil imports to 2.9 million tons in 2007.

While the sudden rush to biofuels has contributed to a shift in food stability and has prompted ecosystem destruction, it is important to remember that there is a finite amount of petroleum-based oil and that other sources of fuel will be needed as economies in developing countries continue to grow. Additionally, the increased use of biofuels can provide income to rural communities in developing countries.

Biofuels, if developed correctly, can be part of the solution to global warming and fuel independence, especially as technology and infrastructures advance. This could not only boost the global economy but could provide local sources of fuel that rural communities around the world can use in their daily routines. There are efforts underway to explore new sources of biofuels, advance technologies, and promote better practices that will produce higher yields and cause less damage to the environment. However, we must ensure we don’t cause undue, irreversible damage before understanding how advanced technologies can be applied on a mass scale. Supporting credible initiatives and responsible businesses are two ways we can help today.

*Liz is on the Implementation Working Group Expert Panel for Roundtable for Sustainable Biofuels.*

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**IN THE NEXT ISSUE:**

- SOCIAL IMPACTS IN AGRICULTURE
  - UNDERSTANDING SUPPLY CHAINS
  - MORE HELPFUL TIPS ON ENGAGING BUSINESS PARTNERS
- .....

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