

You are now entering an Oxygen Enrichment Zone ... a farm.

What an interesting and positive twist to global greenhouse gas concerns...and the Kyoto Accord. It is a powerful statement about agriculture and its environmental role and contribution. The power of the statement first comes from the scientific truth: that through photosynthesis, carbon dioxide is fixed and oxygen is released; and secondly, from the optimism it states. Agriculture's leaders and practitioners...the researchers and farmers...operate and prosper according to their measure of optimism and their adherence to scientific truth.

The message underlying this thought, 'You are now entering an Oxygen Enrichment Zone', is that good agriculture means a healthy and vibrant environment. Who would have thought that agriculture's message to urban dwellers could be delivered with such brevity and clarity? This truism certainly puts to flight the environmentalist's castigating message of progressive agriculture as a polluting and environment-destroying activity.

Let's think about agriculture and how over the years, with improved availability of inputs, technology, and management, it has benefited the world we live in. Progressive agriculture reduces the need to farm ... or allows reclamation of ... environmentally fragile landscapes which provide habitat for wildlife and sustains biodiversity. Progressive agriculture uses water efficiently, thereby reducing soil erosion and further stabilizing the environment. Progressive agriculture builds and restores the soil's fertility and tilth, or soil quality, which is vital to sustain our food supply. The sum total of progressive agriculture: appropriate use of the world's resources to improve crop yields—which fixes more carbon dioxide and releases more oxygen—which sustains people and the quality of the air we breathe.

Progressive agriculture—You are now entering an Oxygen Enrichment Zone. And, with thanks to farmers and researchers from around the globe, let me say this: You are making *this world* a better place.

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