

Ma and Pa solutions to global warming

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The prairies offer opportunities for capitalizing on environmentally friendly farming practices and potentially useful agricultural waste to produce jobs, economic growth, commercial opportunities, and renewable energy sources, according to a perspective article published in the current issue of the *International Journal of Private Law*.

Ronald Griffin, Professor of Law at Washburn University, Topeka, Kansas, asks what can leaders do for a desperate and aging population in an environment faced with global warming to re-engage a region that blankets eight states.

The Great Plains are dotted with oil patches, public utilities, farms, ranches, feed lots, meat-packing plants, medium-size cities, military bases and tiny towns feeding on agricultural activity, explains Griffin. Hidden in this vast region are major resources yet to be tapped aside from the great agricultural assets. He cites marketable sod, fertilizers, bio-methane, and renewable electricity generation as answers to his question. Artificial wetlands also offer sites for the sequestration of the [greenhouse gas carbon dioxide](#). Projects associated with trapping heat, fuel resources and greenhouse gas capture could all contribute to efforts to ward off debilitating climate change.

"When the climate sours, farm economies clank and civilisation burps, people abandon their homesteads and trek somewhere to find jobs and opportunities to improve their lot," says Griffin. "Climate change inspires some of this." But there is an alternative that does not simply hanker for the agricultural "good-old days" which actually never existed,

"We must make business climate conscious and climate consciousness profitable," he adds.

Environmental change, energy shortages, and [economic downturn](#) are not discrete challenges, there is a connectivity between all three aspects of the threats facing the world today, asserts Griffin. Addressing any of these three problems without facing up to the others will not provide a lasting solution and could make matters worse. In fact the US is facing a single crisis brought on by an overall design defect in the modern industrial machine, he adds.

Farmers can siphon stuff from nature's life cycle better than anybody. Exploiting this life skill captures the prairie's potential. It generates food for us, harnesses renewable energy, and addresses our concerns about rising carbon dioxide levels.

More information: "A prairie perspective on global warming and climate change" in Int. J. Private Law, 2009, 2, 426-444

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