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VITAL SIGNS, Volume 22

TIP SHEET

Worldwatch Institute's Vital Signs exposes latest global peaks of production and consumption, as well as associated impacts

From coal to cars to coffee, consumption levels are breaking records. According to the Worldwatch Institute's latest report, *Vital Signs, Volume 22: The Trends That Are Shaping Our Future*, the acceleration of resource depletion, pollution, and climate change may come with underappreciated social and environmental costs (www.worldwatch.org).

- **Fish Consumption:** Aquaculture production has increased about 10-fold since 1984; today, almost half of the fish that people eat is farmed.
- **Rail Transport:** China has built the world's largest network of high-speed rail, accounting for 40 percent of high-speed travel in 2013.
- **Plastic Waste:** In the United States, only 9 percent of the plastic used was recycled in 2012; the rest makes up nearly 13 percent of the solid waste stream.
- **Coffee:** Coffee production is near record levels today, although prices remain volatile.
- **Hunger:** While global hunger is decreasing, 1 in 9 people still do not get enough to eat.
- **Renewable Energy:** Wind and solar energy are the fastest growing electricity technologies worldwide. Between 2000 and 2012, wind power grew nearly 16-fold and solar jumped 49-fold.
- **Coal Consumption:** The coal supply is getting "dirtier" as markets grow for coal with a lower energy content. The average heat content of coal produced in the United States dropped from 29 megajoules per kilogram in 2005 to about 23 megajoules in 2012.
- **Cotton Impacts:** Producing a pair of jeans takes 10,850 liters of water and a t-shirt takes 2,720 liters.
- **Food Trade:** About one-quarter of the community of nations—51 countries—imported more than half of their grain in 2013.

Vital Signs, Volume 22 presents these and other global trends and analyses of our planet and civilization. The book uses straightforward language and easy-to-read graphs to present each indicator. *Vital Signs* is created as a guide to inform governments, businesses, teachers, and concerned citizens everywhere to make the changes needed to build a sustainable world.

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