

# Global warming debate heats up

by Brian Ó Murchú

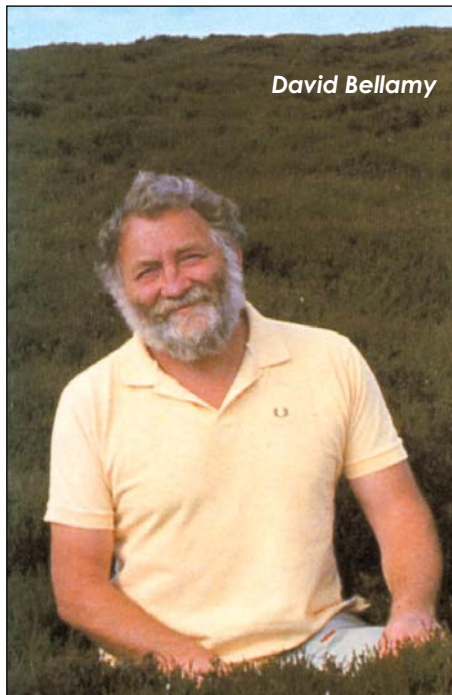
The global warming debate took an interesting twist in recent months with opposing claims by some of the worlds leading environmentalists. To the amazement of many, one of the worlds leading environmental gurus, Dr. James Lovelock, has spoken out in favour of nuclear power as 'the only green solution'. Dr. Lovelock's suggestion is based on the controversial proposition that the earth is locked in a cycle of heat gain of positive 'feedback' from greenhouse gasses which trigger other environmental factors which accelerate global warming. According to Dr. Lovelock 'we have no time to experiment with visionary energy sources; civilisation is in imminent danger'. The solution according to Dr. Lovelock is to massively expand nuclear power as the world's main energy source.

Dr. Lovelock's call caused disquiet in the international environmental movement in whose circles the 84 year old radical thinker, to date has been considered something of a hero. The leaders of both Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth rejected his call. The disquiet has been partially quelled by the publication of a recent report by the International Atomic Agency (IAEA) - the international body set up to promote atomic energy - which stated that 'nuclear power cannot solve global warming'.

## Bellamy labels global warming 'the world's greatest con'.

The environmental movement recently experienced a second major controversy when celebrated environmentalist and well known television presenter, Dr. David Bellamy, poured scorn on the proposition that CO<sup>2</sup> emissions are the main cause of global warming. According to Dr. Bellamy 'global warming is the world's greatest con'. In a recent article Dr. Bellamy launched a scathing attack on what he branded 'the scam of global warming', claiming that there is no evidence that CO<sup>2</sup> emissions - or any of man's behaviours - have caused temperatures to rise across the planet. Instead he argues, 'global warming is the result of an entirely natural scientific pattern and may even be a good thing'.

Respected as one of the worlds leading botanists, Bellamy is quoted as saying that 'it is scientifically proven that 99% of the worlds greenhouse emissions come from natural sources over which we have no effect or control. 'Yet millions are being spent which have no effect whatsoever on global warming. It is a fact that it is



David Bellamy

increases in temperature which are responsible for increases in CO<sup>2</sup> levels - not the other way round - which is what the public is repeatedly told.'

'It is ridiculous to say that man is responsible for global warming. It has been going on for a very long time and it is the result of changes in temperature since the last glacial termination. These are the facts not fantasy. Our temperature has been changing since long before industry and cars arrived on the scene. We have since had periods of severe winters and blistering hot summers'. Instead of following the Kyoto Agreement, which

will cost billions to implement, Dr. Bellamy argues that the money should be spent on providing fresh water and sanitation to the most deprived areas of the globe. Companies which wilfully destroy rainforests and are major polluters should be fined he says. But he is eager to stop what he sees as the hysterical and unfounded claims that man's actions could ultimately destroy the planet. 'This argument is the biggest scam that has hit the world - yet it seems to form the foundation of policy,' he said.

## Ireland's Policy on Global Warming

Dr. Bellamy's views and those of other 'skeptics' are at variance with the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). International action to prevent dangerous 'anthropogenic' (i.e. manmade) interference with the climate system through the UN Framework convention on Climate Change, and its Kyoto Protocol, is supported by Ireland and the EU. This policy of supporting the IPCC has been adopted by Ireland's Wexford based Environmental Planning Agency, on the basis of a consultant's report which recommends this course of action.

Under this agreement Ireland has committed to reducing its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to 13% above 1990 levels is to be met by the 2008 - 20012 period. Recent rapid economic development means that national GHG emissions during 2002 were 29% higher than 1990 levels.

**SHRINKING ICE: Polar bears use winter sea ice as a platform for catching seals. With global warming, the Artic Ocean's ice cover is diminishing, making it more difficult for polar bears to stock up on food during this crucial time of year**

