

## The Feasta Lecture 2009

**Allan Savory:**

# Keeping Cattle: cause or cure for climate crisis?



2.30 pm Saturday, November 7th, JM Synge Lecture Theatre, Arts Block, Trinity College, Dublin

According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, raising livestock contributes 18% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions in CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent terms, if the forest clearance and pasture degradation to which it leads are included. This is a similar amount to the world's transport sector. Livestock are the source of 9% of human-induced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, 37% of its methane emissions and, when the growing of feed crops is included, 65% of its nitrous oxide emissions.

In Ireland, about 13% of the warming effect of the annual release of greenhouse gases comes from the methane produced by the national livestock herd. The government thinks it has to choose between cutting livestock numbers and cutting cars.

**Allan Savory** will argue that while livestock may be part of the problem, they can also be an important part of the solution. He has demonstrated time and again in Africa, Australia and North and South America that, properly managed, they are essential to land restoration. With the right techniques, plant growth is lusher, the water table is higher, wildlife thrives, soil carbon increases and, surprisingly, perhaps four times as many cattle can be kept.

Savory, the **2003 winner of the Australian Banksia Environmental Foundation prize**, is a Zimbabwean biologist and farmer. He was a member of the Rhodesian Parliament and had to go into exile after opposing the policies of Ian Smith. He had previously declared that if he had been born a black Rhodesian he would have been a guerrilla fighter.

Presented by **Feasta, the Foundation for the Economics of Sustainability** in partnership with the **Carbon Cycles and Sinks Network** and the **Department of Botany, Trinity College Dublin**.



Admission €10, but €5 to members of the sponsoring organisations and the unwaged. Enquiries to [climate@feasta.org](mailto:climate@feasta.org) or to (098) 25313 or (01) 661 9572



*This river (above) in Zimbabwe used to flow year-round. Then overgrazing by wandering livestock bared much of the soil in the surrounding area. Today the river flows only as flash floods following heavy rains. Biodiversity loss is severe, livestock are starving, and most wildlife has disappeared.*

*This shot (below) of a nearby river was taken on the same day. It used to have similar problems but now it always has water and flows most of the year. Drought is rare, biodiversity is increasing, and wildlife has reappeared in large numbers.*

