A Disclaimer:

I want to keep my word with you. I know you understand that I receive interesting and timely news items from friends all over the world. Most of these items appear to have prophetic relevance. Others are of particular interest in the field of Science, Health & Nutrition, Devotional themes and some touches of Humor.

With a bit of hesitation, I am forwarding some of these items to friends like you via email. My concern is this: some persons who will receive or read the items I choose to forward will assume that I endorse, approve or believe every "iota," and that I am endorsing the author or source. This simply is not true! As you read, you must be discerning, choosy, discriminating and use common sense. If you are going to quote someone, quote the source -- I am not the source, I am the reporter . . . --CW

-CW Says, "Pay ATTENTION!  Buy things now you will use later (food and toiletries). Why put money in the bank to earn 1-2% when your necessities are going up at double-digit rates?"

Wal-Mart US CEO To America: "Prepare For Serious Inflation"
By: Tyler Durden / Zero Hedge.com / March 31, 2011

"To those who think that buying food in the corner deli is becoming a luxury, we have five words: you ain't seen nuthin' yet. U.S. consumers face 'serious' inflation in the months ahead for clothing, food and other products, the head of Wal-Mart's U.S. operations warned Wednesday talking to USA Today.

"Inflation is 'going to be serious,' Wal-Mart U.S. CEO Bill Simon said during a meeting with USA TODAY's editorial board. 'We're seeing cost increases starting to come through.'"
Garden As If Your Life Depended On It, Because It Does
There are at least five reasons why more of us should take up the spade, make some compost, and start gardening with a vengeance.
By: Ellen LaConte / AlterNet.com / March 29, 2011

"Spring has sprung -- at least south of the northern tier of states where snow still has a ban on it -- and the grass has 'riz. And so has the price of most foods, which is particularly devastating just now when so many Americans are unemployed, underemployed. . .

"In some American towns, and not just impoverished backwaters, as many as 30 percent of residents can't afford to feed themselves and their families sufficiently, let alone nutritiously.

"In some cases this round of price hikes on everything from cereal and steak to fresh veggies and bread -- and even the flour that can usually be bought cheaply to make it -- will be temporary. But over the long term the systems that have provided most Americans with a diversity, quantity and quality of foods envied by the rest of the world are not going to be as reliable as they were.

"What's for Supper Down the Road?"

The Cycle of Ministry
A duty that is ours this side of the Kingdom

People involved in full-time ministry are occasionally given the opportunity to contemplate what the world will be like when their services are no longer needed. Think
about it: a time is coming when there shall be no need for a large portion of jobs in public service. No doctors, police officers, firefighters, attorneys or ... evangelists. The Bible speaks of a time when no one will have to teach another about our Heavenly Father, for we shall all know Him.

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Wal-Mart US CEO To America: "Prepare For Serious Inflation"

By Tyler Durden
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To those who think that buying food in the corner deli is becoming a luxury, we have five words: you ain't seen nuthin' yet. U.S. consumers face "serious" inflation in the months ahead for clothing, food and other products, the head of Wal-Mart's U.S. operations warned Wednesday talking to USA Today [1]. And if Wal-Mart which is at the very bottom of commoditized consumer retail, and at the very peak of avoiding reexporting of US inflation by way of China is concerned, it may be time to panic, or at least cancel those plane tickets to Zimbabwe, which is soon coming to us.

The world's largest retailer is working with suppliers to minimize the effect of cost increases and believes its low-cost business model will position it better than its competitors.

Still, inflation is "going to be serious," Wal-Mart U.S. CEO Bill Simon said during a meeting with USA TODAY's editorial board. "We're seeing cost increases starting to come
Add to this the shock that was today's grains report [2], and the summer is about to seem like straight out of Harare.

Farmers will struggle to replenish rapidly shrinking U.S. grain stocks this year, despite plans to sow the most land to corn since World War Two and near-record acreage to soybeans, two U.S. government reports showed on Thursday.

Chicago corn prices surged their daily limit, while soybeans and wheat jumped more than 3 percent as traders looked past higher-than-expected figures in the Department of Agriculture's annual planting survey to focus on inventories, which fell much more than forecast.

The report underscored the fact that U.S. farmers are now reaching the limits of arable land in the world's biggest crop exporter, with increased corn sowing coming at the expense of soybeans and cotton. The spring wheat crop, while among the biggest in decades, could yet shrink.

Here is why some grain traders made millions today:

This year's spring planting season in the world's biggest crop exporter is being watched more closely than ever by countries fearful that further increases in already record-high food prices could stoke unrest.

An analysis of the data based on the acreage estimates and historical yields suggested that the corn harvest could be the largest ever and soybeans the third-largest.

But that would still leave corn inventories at the end of the 2011/12 season at the equivalent of just three-weeks' supply, and soybeans would dwindle to scarcely 10 days' cover. Analysts say prices must rise high enough to reduce demand.
"This turns us back to having to ration the corn," said Charlie Sernatinger, analyst at ABN Amro.

May corn jumped 30 cents to $6.93-1/4 a bushel, hitting the daily exchange limit; options trading suggested further gains to more than $7.15, near the post-2008 peak of $7.35 hit on March 4. Soybeans jumped to over $14.18 and wheat recouped part of its 20 percent slump since mid-February.

As we expected over the weekend, the commodity correction is over, and absent another nuclear explosion (which still will be priced in within minutes) commodities have only one way to from here.

**Consumer Prices**

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Garden As If Your LifeDepended On It, Because It Does
By Ellen LaConte, AlterNet
Posted on March 29, 2011, Printed on April 11, 2011
http://www.alternet.org/story/150428/garden_as_if_your_life_dependede_on_it%2C_because_it_does

Spring has sprung -- at least south of the northern tier of states where snow still has a ban on it -- and the grass has 'riz. And so has the price of most foods, which is particularly devastating just now when so many Americans are unemployed, underemployed, retired or retiring, on declining or fixed incomes and are having to choose between paying their mortgages, credit card bills, car payments, and medical and utility bills and eating enough and healthily. Many are eating more fast food, prepared foods, junk food -- all of which are also becoming more expensive -- or less food.

In some American towns, and not just impoverished backwaters, as many as 30 percent of residents can't afford to feed themselves and their families sufficiently, let alone nutritiously. Here in the Piedmont Triad of North Carolina where I live it's 25 percent. Across the country one out of six of the elderly suffers from malnutrition and hunger. And the number of children served one or two of their heartiest, healthiest meals by their schools grows annually as the number of them living at poverty levels tops 20 percent. Thirty-seven million Americans rely on food banks that now routinely sport half-empty shelves and report near-empty bank accounts. And this is a prosperous nation!

In some cases this round of price hikes on everything from cereal and steak to fresh veggies and bread -- and even the flour that can usually be bought cheaply to make it -- will be temporary. But over the long term the systems that have provided most Americans with a diversity, quantity and quality of foods envied by the rest of the world are not going to be as reliable as they were.

What's for Supper Down the Road?

As they move through the next few decades Americans can expect:

- The price of conventionally produced food to rise and not come down again;
- Prices to rollercoaster so that budgeting is unpredictable;
- Some foods to become very expensive compared to what we're used to;
- And other foods, beginning with some of the multiple versions of the same thing made by the same company to garner a bigger market share and more shelf space, to gradually become unavailable.

Tremors in food supply chains and pricing will make gardening look like a lot more than a hobby, a seasonal workout, a practical way to fill your pantry with your summer favorites, or a physically, spiritually and mentally healing activity, or all four. Gardening and small-scale and collective farming, especially of staple crops and the ones that could stave off malnutrition, could become as important as bringing home the bacon, both the piggy and the dollar kind. Why?
Why Is Gardening So Important Now?

There are at least five reasons why more of us should take up spade, rake and hoe, make compost and raise good soil and garden beds with a vengeance, starting this spring and with an eye toward forever.

1) Peak oil. Most petroleum experts agree that we shot past peak oil in the U.S. around 1971. Lest you've missed the raging, that's the point at which more than half the readily, affordably retrievable oil in reserves has been used up, what remains is more expensive to retrieve, and the dregs are irretrievable. We've shot or are about to shoot past peak worldwide, estimates of when ranging from 2007 to 2013, with many oil company execs agreeing to at least the latter. There are no new cheap-easy oil fields coming on line. Any new fields you hear about or new methods, like tar sands drilling are expensive, water guzzling, dangerous, environmentally disastrous and unlikely to produce more than a few years worth of oil, and that a decade or more down the line. That means abundant, cheap oil is about to be history. What difference does that make?

For one thing, there is no replacement for oil that can do all that oil has done as cheaply and universally as oil has done it. I offer an exercise in *Life Rules*, "The ABC's of Peak Oil" which helps readers imaginatively subtract from their lives everything that depends in one way or another on cheap easy oil. It doesn't leave much. (See Beth Terry's Web site, for example, for what subtracting plastics may entail.)

The global economy that presently supplies us with our food, runs on cheap oil and lots of it. It runs slower and less predictably on expensive oil that's hard to get because it's located in hard-to-reach or high-risk conflict-ridden zones. Cheap, abundant food on the shelves of grocery and big box stores and food banks, on our tables and in our bellies depends on cheap abundant oil for fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides, and to power farm machinery and transport food from fields to processors and packagers and then to purveyors and consumers, around the world. Past peak, that system's going to have the half-life of the strontium 90 that's escaping the Fukushimi Dai-ichi reactor: 29 years, or thereabouts. One good global crisis, and not that long.

2) Peak soil & space. A couple of links between peak oil and peak soil: First, it matters that one of the proposed alternatives to oil is biofuels. Acreage around the world is being converted from production of corn, wheat and soy for human and animal consumption -- i.e. food -- to production of ethanol and biofuels to put in trucks and cars and ... which makes remaining corn, et al., more expensive. Some energy economy geniuses are proposing that Afghans, for example, convert the fields of opium poppies that are their primary agricultural export, not to growing grains or legumes or other staple foods, but to biofuel, which would, not coincidentally, make the gasoline that goes in American military equipment much cheaper and provide Afghans with a profitable market item rather than food.

According to a 2009 *National Geographic* staff report, "The corn used to make a 25-gallon tank of ethanol would feed one person for a year." Tell that to Archer-Daniels-Midland, Al Gore's deep-pockets friend and mega-ethanol and corn products producer. Second, the huge oil-gluttonous machinery that has made factory farming possible has compacted soils, literally crushing the life out of them.

Arable land in the developing or so-called Third World has been at a premium since time
immemorial, thanks to geographic location and/or persistent plundering by empires old and new. Revolutions in North Africa and the Middle East are occurring not just to obtain more democratic governments but also to obtain more food and more affordable food. Revolutionaries are barking up a tree that's seen better days.

In the United States and elsewhere in the developed, read "First" world, arable land has reached peak production. All those petroleum-based products that fueled the Green Revolution of the last century, also produce so many crops, constantly, with support from toxic chemicals and without concern for the microbes that make soil a live, self-regenerating system, that most American farmland -- if its farmers didn't go organic a while back -- is comprised of dead soils. Peak oil makes a repeat of the petroleum-driven 20th century Green Revolution impossible, which is good for soil and other living things, not so much for food prices and supplies.

After peak, in soil like in oil, comes descent. Adding insult to injury, every year farmers lose thousands of acres of arable land to urban and suburban sprawl and more tons of topsoil than they produce of grain and other field crops to attrition. Half the Earth's original trove of topsoil, like that which once permitted the American Midwest to feed the world, has been lost to wind and erosion. Millions of years in the making, it has been depleted and degraded by industrialized agriculture in only a couple of centuries. China's soils ride easterly winds across the Pacific to settle out on cars and rooftops in California while the American Bread Basket's soils are building deltas and dead zones at the mouth of the Mississippi. Like oil, that soil isn't coming back. We can only build it, help it to build itself and wait.

3) **Monoculture.** We can cut to the chase on this one. The food we eat is produced on industrial-strength, fossil-fuel-driven super farms. Those farms practice monoculture: the planting one crop, often of one genetic strain of that crop, at a time and sometimes year after year over vast landscapes of plowed field. When thousands of acres of farmland are sown with the same genetic strain of grain, uncongenial bout of weather, disease or pest to which that strain is susceptible can wipe out the whole crop.

At present the Ug99 fungus, called stem rust, which emerged a decade ago in Africa, could wipe out more than 80 percent of the world's wheat crops as it spreads, according to a 2009 article in the *L. A. Times*. Recent studies follow its appearance in other countries downwind of eastern Africa where it originated, including Yemen and Iran (where revolutionaries are already protesting rising prices and shortages), which opens the possibility of its emergence further downwind in Central and Eastern Asia. The race is on to breed resistant plants before it reaches Canada or the U.S. But it can take a decade or more to create a universally adaptable new genetic line that is resistant to a new disease like stem rust that can travel much faster than that. The current spike in the price of wheat is due in part to Ug99 which might properly be renamed "Ugh."

4) **Climate instability.** Bad -- uncongenial -- weather has lately devastated crops in the upper Midwest, Florida, Mexico, Russia, China, Australia, parts of Africa and elsewhere. Many climate scientists believe we've passed the equivalent of peak friendly and familiar weather, too. And while increasing heat will bedevil harvests, intense cold, downpours and flooding, drought and destructive storm systems will make farming an increasingly hellish occupation if profit is what's being farmed for.

The transitional climate will be unpredictable from season to season and will produce more extremes of weather and weather-related disasters, which means farmers will not be able to
assume much about growing seasons, rainfall patterns and getting crops through to harvest. If the past is precedent, the transition from the climate we've been used to for 10,000 years to whatever stable climate emerges out of climate chaos next, could take decades, centuries or even millennia. Especially if we keep messing with it. When a whole nation's or region's staple crops, especially grains, are lost or on-again-off-again, everything down the line from the crops themselves become more expensive, from meat, poultry and dairy to every kind of processed food. I.e., the food we shop for as if supermarkets were actually where food comes from.

5) The roller-coaster economy. This isn't the place for me to offer my explanation for the probability of global economic collapse. (More on that here.) No pundits, talking-heads or economic analysts (well, very few) deny there are rough economic times ahead. Even many of the cautious among them acknowledge that we may be looking at five or six years of high unemployment and many of the lost jobs won't be coming back. The less cautious, like me, predict the collapse of the whole fossil-fueled, funny-money, inequitable, overly complicated global economic system in the lifetimes of anyone under 50. Well, at the rate we're going in all the wrong directions politically and economically, I hazard the guess, anyone under 80.

Clearly, depending on the present system to provide us with most or all of our food reliably or long-term, is unwise in the extreme. Which is how we get back to why we need to garden as if our lives depended on it. Bringing food production processes and systems closer to home is going to prove vital to our survival. We need to take producing our own and each other's food as seriously as we've taken producing a money income because growing numbers of us won't have enough money to buy food in the conventional ways and there will be less of it to buy. So what's our recourse?

Gardening Like Everybody's Business

Under the influence and auspices of the prevailing economy, most Americans have forgotten how to provide for themselves. We've become accustomed to earning money with which we buy provisions. That process is about to have the legs kicked out from under it. Instead of earning money (or its funny-money kin like credit cards) to buy the things we need, we'll need to start providing more of those things for ourselves and each other locally and (bio)regionally. Gardening -- and small-scale farming -- while they will need to be undertaken in a businesslike fashion will be less about doing business than about everyone's having something to eat and more people being busy providing it. And while not everyone will be able to garden or farm, we are all able to get up close and personal with those who do.

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The Cycle of Ministry

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People involved in full-time ministry are occasionally given the opportunity to contemplate what the world will be like when their services are no longer needed. Think about it: a time is coming when there shall be no need for a large portion of jobs in public service. No doctors, police officers, firefighters, attorneys or … evangelists. The Bible speaks of a time when no one will have to teach another about our Heavenly Father, for we shall all know Him.

It appears that none shall have an intellectual advantage over another in the matter of “knowing God.” No list of degrees or string of letters after our names will deem any one of us more qualified than another to speak of the things of God. In the earth made new we can be sure that the things which can be known and comprehended about God, will indeed be known—by all.

Right now our world is so full of confusion, bloodshed, ladder-climbing, jealousy and—not so much unbelief—but uncertainty about what to actually believe in. Who can keep count of the variations of religion that are added to the constantly growing list? When a seeker wants to find truth, where shall they go? Well, of course, that’s a broad question. And one may ask, “Truth about What?” While all truth is eternal, some truths take a while to ripen in the mind. And some truths, though important, are not as essential as others. Knowing the precise measurements of the universe might be completely unnecessary, if you have no plan or possibility to one day actually check the math out—with your own eyes. Right?

On a regular basis, though not as often as we would like, we receive shipments of thousands of books that take up temporary residence in our warehouse, books that ultimately belong in the hands of fellow travelers of Planet Earth. As we make plans to take thousands more books to give away during Mardi Gras in New Orleans, we are reminded of the ongoing need for both workers—and tools. Keep up the good work, and Thank You for giving us the opportunity to also help you in your efforts.

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