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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## Lingohack

### Using cow waste to fight climate change

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#### The story...

Using cow waste to fight climate change

#### Learn language to describe...

Soil quality

#### Need-to-know language

**erosion** – the gradual damage of something by wind, rain or waves

**degradation** – process of changing into a worse condition

**dung** – animal excrement

**pasture** – an area of land covered in grass for farm animals to eat

**depleted** – reduced in size, quantity or quality from what it was before

#### Answer this...

How much of the world's population is affected by soil degradation?

#### Watch the video online

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/lingohack/ep-190501>

#### Transcript

Soil **erosion** - a double problem. Here in the east of England, this isn't smog in the air, it's soil on a hot, windy day. Losing soil like this lowers our ability to grow crops. It also releases carbon trapped in the earth and that contributes to climate change.

Soil **degradation** is a problem, said to affect almost half the world's people. Look at this tsunami of dust last year in Phoenix, Arizona. It's the result of a spectacular storm. For most farmers, soil loss is a creeping problem that's only noticed too late.

## Joanna Clark, Reading University

Soils are really important for climate change as well because they store a lot of carbon. There's three times more carbon stored in soil than there actually is in the atmosphere. So you imagine if all that carbon was released from the soil into the atmosphere, we'd have... This is the runaway climate change that people are concerned about.

So what to do? Well, we know cows' burps are a problem for climate change, but their **dung** also helps put carbon back into the soil. So, this mobile dairy in the south of England may prove part of a solution. It means cows spread their dung across the fields, not leave it in the farmyard. That way nutrients and carbon from the **pasture** return to the soil.

Here's the evidence. This field with its light stony soil is **depleted** from crops grown with chemical fertilisers: see the much darker carbon-rich soil in the far ploughed field previously fertilised by cows.

### Did you get it?

How much of the world's population is affected by soil degradation?

Soil degradation is said to affect almost half the world's people.