TRANSCRIPT OF “FILE ON 4” – “FUELLING THE FUTURE?”

CURRENT AFFAIRS GROUP

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ACTUALITY AT ENSUS PLANT

MAN: This whole site used to be an ICI site.

MAN 2: You’ve left all your phones inside, yeah?

COX: In the shadow of the rusting Redcar steelworks is a gleaming vision of the future. Wow, so this, it’s a massive store. How big is this?

MAN: This can probably hold about 7,000 tons, which seems an awful lot, but actually it’s a week’s production. So making sure you get your exports and your trucks …

COX: The Ensus plant in Teesside makes bioethanol from wheat. The aim is to make our cars greener and to cut carbon emissions.

MAN: It’s just like a very, very big distillery. The best way of describing it, we’re the equivalent of making a billion bottles of vodka a year.
COX: What a lovely thought that is.
The commercial director, Grant Pearson, has been here since it opened back in 2010. He helped raise the £350 million from banks and private equity firms to build the plant, and when it opened it was a time of optimism.

PEARSON: I think at that time the Government in the UK and across Europe were very, very keen on decarbonising transport, and they thought biofuels and bioethanol would play a major part in doing that, and therefore the expectation is that it would grow very quickly and, you know, by now it should be at least double the demand that we’re currently at.

COX: The bioethanol that you’re producing here, what’s it used for?

PEARSON: The bioethanol that we produce here is blended with petrol to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions from all petrol cars. So if you go in and fill up your tank with petrol at the moment, 95% of it is fossil petrol, but 5% of it is renewable ethanol.

COX: Transport now produces more carbon emissions than any other sector – even heavy industry - so the Government has to act.

ACTUALITY AT ENSUS PLANT

MAN: The smell that you can smell is purely the smell from the wheat. We’re very close to the trucks tipping into the silos here, so it’s really just the wheat you can smell.

COX: There are lots of targets it has to meet to cut greenhouse gases. The most important is to reduce emissions by 80% by 2050. But there are many other targets along the way. Back in 2015, the Department for Transport recommended doubling the amount of ethanol in petrol - going from 5% to 10% - in what’s known as E10 fuel. But it took them years to start a formal consultation, which closed last month. Also this
year they set a target to double the use of sustainable fuels by 2020. But as for E10, it still hasn’t been introduced.

What difference would that make in terms of carbon emissions and reducing those?

PEARSON: Well, the best way I can describe it is, it would be the equivalent of taking off the road 700,000 petrol cars.

COX: So that seems a no brainer then?

PEARSON: Well, it does, especially when you put it along the sides that it would actually improve air quality, because it has lower particulates and lower carcinogens, which is very important, given the challenges we have in our urban and city environments. And it would also support a significant number of jobs in the north east of England. And until that gets closer, we’re always going to find an industry that is struggling.

COX: How has that affected you, not having the demand that you thought was going to be there?

PEARSON: Since we started in 2010, the Ensus plant has had three periods where it’s been offline for, for the challenge that that demand wasn’t there, so yes it’s affected us quite considerably.

COX: How important do you think renewables are? I mean, obviously not just for you here, but to the area, to the North East?

PEARSON: The North East has been a, a major industrial area for the UK which has fallen on hard times over the last 20 years. The site we’re on now has lots of empty spaces where chemical industries, which had been very important to our economy in the past, have closed down or moved offshore, and the renewables sector is one that can clearly replace those, so I think it has a very important part to play.
COX: The north of England is where half of Britain’s renewable energy is generated, and the North East is a key part of this. So we are going on a journey across the region to find out whether these new industries can meet the big and ambitious targets the UK has for reducing carbon emissions.

ACTUALITY AT PETROL STATION, CAR DOOR SHUTTING

COX: When you come to fill up your car, most people do what I am, which is put in unleaded 95, and what that means is that 5% of that fuel is ethanol, which is what they make at the plant, and the plan was to increase this to 10%, to introduce what’s called E10 fuel. That’s why Ensus was built, because they thought there was going to be a greater demand. Now that hasn’t happened, which is why they’ve had to shut down at times and why there just isn’t the demand here, and the impact of that has been felt really keenly further down the coast. I’m going to head now a couple of hours south to Hull.

ACTUALITY GETTING IN CAR

COX: How long have you been farming here?

WELLS: All my life. My grandfather came here in 1927 and we’ve been here ever since.

COX: Almost a century since his family arrived here, Keith Wells is still farming the chalky soil of the Wolds.

WELLS: We’re right on the edge of the boundary between East Yorkshire and North Yorkshire.

COX: And a real sense here, when you look, here you’re producing wheat that was going for biofuels, you’ve got wind turbines around us, big solar panels here that are producing electricity, so it’s a real little renewables hub, isn’t it?
WELLS: Oh yeah, yes there is, yeah. Yeah, there’s all sorts of things going on and it’s all been done on the demands of Government wanting things to be done differently.

ACTUALITY WITH FARM MACHINERY

COX: Out in the freshly ploughed fields, they are sowing winter wheat – not for food, but he had hoped for use at another bioethanol plant – it’s the UK’s biggest – in Hull, run by a company called Vivergo. But last month it shut down, with the loss of 100 jobs. But there were also knock on effects for the 900 farms who supplied wheat to the plant and the others in the supply chain.

WELLS: There’s thousands of us. I mean, there’s a million tons of wheat been going into that plant every year and I think we’re all sort of been taken aback by where is it going to go, why the Government can’t step in and help things along a little bit? We don’t need to go to 10% inclusion rate from 5. If we did it slowly over maybe the next four or five years, you know, 1% a year - it would give the right signals to companies like Vivergo. We’ve had no response from the Government at all and it isn’t just the hundreds of people who work at the plant and everything else. It impacts on the whole community. Not just our community, but further afield as well.

ACTUALITY OF MOWER

COX: The nearest village is Paul, where Andy is mowing his lawn. When I went, it was the last week of production and he could see the cooling towers of Vivergo from his front garden - and his employers invested in the plant.

ANDY: You see the grain lorries going in there. When it’s on full tilt there’s three stacks going now. They’ve been on … you see them three like that are pluming out now? The three stacks are theirs, that’s Vivergo, so they’ve been pluming out on full tilt since they started up again, so obviously they must be creating like a stockpile. I say, I have a connection, I know people that work there as well. I mean, we go on there as contractors.
COX: It must be a pain, because when they’ve got jobs you would have thought it’s a sort of modern …

ANDY: Yeah, it’s like, it’s a job for life, isn’t it? You’re going to go biofuel because solid fuels are running out, aren’t they? It’s like green energy, isn’t it – wind? There’s loads of wind now. That’s like the future.

MUSIC

COX: Vivergo wouldn’t talk to us as they said their focus was on the staff who were losing their jobs, but they have said the Government’s failure over the past decade to introduce E10 had undermined their ability to operate. Even though Vivergo was part of the Northern Powerhouse, this £350 million investment barely lasted six years.

ACTUALITY IN CAR

COX: A few miles up the road is Vivergo’s headquarters. There were still staff working there when I met the local Labour MP, Emma Hardy, outside.

ACTUALITY AT VIVERGO

HARDY: No, you’re pointing in the wrong direction.

COX: Am I pointing in the wrong direction?

HARDY: Hull is that way … [LAUGH]

COX: What great local knowledge.

HARDY: Yeah, Hull is that way. I mean, obviously you can see the River Humber, so we’re really near the River Humber, so follow the river that way …
COX: When the Department for Transport recommended bringing in E10 back in 2015, many thought new legislation would follow to introduce the fuel. But that didn’t happen, which critics say led to Vivergo’s closure.

HARDY: Well, my first reaction was obviously extreme disappointment and concern for the people who are going to be losing their jobs, but also quite angry. I’m quite angry because it would have been a relatively easy thing for the Government to solve and to keep this open. It’s part of our plans for regeneration and development and to have it sort of shut only a few years later because the Government were incapable of passing some legislation which they had already agreed to and would have been unopposed in Government, it just makes me feel incredibly angry.

COX: How big a deal was it when Vivergo opened?

HARDY: Well it was a huge deal. I mean, round here at the moment we’re calling ourselves the Energy Estuary - we’re all about environmentally friendly energy production. I mean, that’s what we’re marketing ourselves in this region as being, sort of the green porthole. That’s going to be our future industry, future jobs for the area. So this is a major blow.

COX: I wonder what message it sends to investors with Vivergo closing down?

HARDY: Well, I think the message it sends to investors is the very worrying message that you can’t trust what the Government promises it’s going to do.

COX: The Department for Transport ran a consultation on E10 over the summer and said they were carefully considering the responses before deciding on future policy. One thing they will have heard is that for cars built before 2000, it could cause problems. There were concerns that it would disproportionately affect poorer drivers with older cars. Dr Jeremy Tomkinson is an expert in biofuels and Chief Executive of the Bioeconomy Consultants, NNFCC. He has looked into which drivers of older cars would be affected by the new fuel.
TOMKINSON: There are a very small and diminishing number of disadvantaged motorists who have older cars who can’t use E10, but we’ve done quite a number of studies now and it’s very clear that the vast majority of these are classic car owners actually who have got no problem affording a fraction pence more per litre. But I’m afraid that’s not how it’s been painted. I’m afraid the pushback we’ve had is it’s about the under privileged voter who may be pushed out because of this E10. Now, I mean, in my view I think it’s just they simply don’t care. There’s a lack of will, political will towards climate change and this is just a perfect example of it.

ACTUALITY OF CAR REVVING

COX: So are the classic car drivers as relaxed about this as he suggests? Time to hit the road again. I head to a car park in North Yorkshire.

ACTUALITY WITH MG DRIVERS

MAN: … it’ll be the crankshaft, the front. The rear seals …

COX: Every week, owners of vintage MGs meet here for a chat and a look under the bonnet.

ACTUALITY IN MG

COX: And your belt on.

WOOD: Yeah, I’ll let you get comfortable.

ACTUALITY OF ENGINE STARTING

COX: Tony Wood used to run a garage and owns three MGs. So what is this we’re in, Tony – what model?

WOOD: It’s an MGB Roadster of 1970 with a 1.8 B series engine, British Leyland B series engine.
COX: And if they brought in that E10 fuel, what effect - if any - do you think it could have on it?

WOOD: Well, of course the jury is still out on that, because nobody really knows, but we’ve been running E5 for a number of years and there were stories when E5 came in of the sorts of effects it would have on your fuel hoses, but in real terms E5 has not proved to be much of a problem because most cars have already had their fuel lines changed at some point or another for more modern materials.

COX: So if the concern with bringing in E10 was the effect on old cars, it sounds like that doesn’t really stack up.

WOOD: Well, in my opinion it’s probably less of an issue than it has been made out to be.

ACTUALITY OF CARS DRIVING AWAY

COX: So all the cars are driving away now – MGs from the 30s through to the 70s - and that was a bit of a surprise. I thought this group of classic car enthusiasts would be really opposed to E10, that it was going to increase costs for them, but as you heard, Tony owns a few MGs, said it's not going to be a problem.

MUSIC

COX: Would it make much of a difference to the all-important carbon emission targets? Dr Jem Woods is a researcher at the Centre for Environmental Policy at Imperial College, London.

WOODS: I think the answer to that is a simple yes. It gives industry a very simple target, and we’re not generating enough momentum in delivery of renewables across the board at the scales that we need them. And bioenergy, we’re going to need a substantial amount of bioenergy in the future. Unless we push this system now, we’re not going to learn the right lessons.
COX: Is there a clear strategy coming from Government across renewables generally?

WOODS: There’s certainly a lot of huff and puff in this area. I’m not convinced yet that societally and therefore the politicians have a really clear plan about where we’re going.

COX: So he’s clear E10 could significantly bring down emissions from transport. Why hasn’t it happened? I asked Claire Perry, the Energy Minister, who spoke to me on the phone from the Tory Party Conference in Birmingham.

PERRY: We need to make sure, if we introduce a new form of energy, of fuel, we actually have a supply chain and a competitive market to deliver it, and so we know we can do this, we know the technology is there, we want to make sure if we start supporting a large scale roll out of it, we actually can ensure that there’s a supply chain,

COX: We’ve just had the biggest bioethanol plant in the country that has closed down with the loss of a hundred jobs and they say it was because they thought the Government was going to introduce E10 fuel and you haven’t.

PERRY: Well, I’m obviously sorry to hear that, but if we hadn’t been clear before my time on the timing of this, then clearly that’s not acceptable, but what we’ve said is we’re going to consult on the introduction, and we are currently consulting, because we have got to make sure, if we are providing new forms of fuel, the last thing you want is to pull up to a forecourt, having been told this fuel is available and either get ripped off because we haven’t got enough suppliers or, worse, not be able to source it at all.

COX: That plant cost £350 million. It hasn’t even been running for 10 years and it has closed. Another big one in the UK on Teesside is struggling because of a lack of E10, which means there’s not enough demand for the bioethanol that they’re producing. That’s almost £1 billion invested and the Government hasn’t met its promises - that’s not a good sign, is it?
PERRY: Well, I agree and actually the most important thing is that we have investor confidence, because we know that the taxpayers and consumers are not going to pay for this whole transition themselves. We know there’s a lot of private sector investment that wants to come in and I guess that the message there is that we have got to be clear in communicating timings, to make sure if investors are putting money into plants, that they know when the market is likely to develop.

MUSIC

COX: How much confidence is there among those investors? Last year, investment in green energy in the UK fell by more than 50%. The centre left think tank, the Institute for Public Policy Research, has studied energy strategy in the north of England. I asked the director of IPPR North, Sarah Longlands, if we should be concerned about the drop in investment.

LONGLANDS: I think it is worrying, because it suggests that the market isn’t really committed to the, to the sector longer term and it suggests that perhaps it’s sort of taken fright a little bit by the Government’s confused stance on this agenda. And I think the Government probably needs to sort of try and clarify their position a little bit on it and send some more positive signals to the market, that they are committed to renewables and that they think that the long term carbon targets for the UK are achievable and should be met. Because otherwise, well we know from past experience that, where public commitment and investment goes, the market will often follow. So when you start to see the market reducing its commitment, reducing its spend, it suggests that there is a role there for Government to take a clear stance.

COX: And is the concern that you’d heard from companies about their future investments, because obviously they’re looking to plan for the next five, ten years, presumably?

LONGLANDS: Yes, I mean, there are lots of new technologies and new ideas starting to emerge. You need, in that kind of environment, you need to support innovation and entrepreneurship to try and get those new ideas to market and I think that’s the concern at the minute, that that kind of lifeblood of small businesses doing interesting
LONGLANDS cont: things, and in low carbon energy, may be being kind of curtailed by the uncertainty around Brexit, the mixed signals from Government and the lack of investment, if you like, to go with that. You’ve got a sector here which is potentially really important, really exciting, really interesting, but the real innovators in it aren’t being given the oxygen they need to be able to really try and make the most of it.

ACTUALITY IN BLYTH

COX: Those innovators have been attracted to the blowy Northumberland coastal town of Blyth, where I head next. This was home to coal and shipbuilding, and where the offshore wind revolution started.

WYATT: They were the UK’s first offshore wind turbines – two machines, 2 megawatts in capacity, probably the sort of size you were putting onshore at the time, round about the year 2000. And just beyond them actually you can see, just see the tips of some blades going around.

COX: Oh yeah.

WYATT: They are 6 megawatt machines, so three times as big. They’re located around 10 kilometres or so offshore.

COX: Dr Stephen Wyatt is director of Catapult - the Offshore Renewable Energy Research Centre. And as the industry has grown, he explains, so has the size of the blades.

WYATT: So this is currently the world’s longest wind turbine blade at 88.4 metres.

COX: Inside a building the size of an aircraft hangar, we are watching a huge turbine blade being put through its paces.

WYATT: What we’re doing here is, we are trying to replicate the conditions this blade will ultimately see offshore, so we will be moving this in multiple
WYATT cont: trying to put around 20 years of life onto this blade over the period of a few months, and then we will also give it a static pool to give it some extreme loading, to see how it stacks up. So this is a prototype blade. There may be changes the manufacturer will want to make before it goes into production, and our job is to help them probe those areas.

COX: Now this is, did you say 88 metres? They’re going to get bigger. I mean, is that the biggest we’re going to get?

WYATT: So one of the success stories of offshore wind has been reducing costs, and a key lever for that has been going up in turbine size. So today, yes the world’s longest blade is 88 metres. We see no reason why the industry is going to stop there, and so as these turbines go up and up in capacity, the blades are going to get longer. At some point, we’ll no doubt have to switch to perhaps multiple rotor turbines, because we can’t go up infinitum, but at the moment we don’t see the industry stopping.

MUSIC

COX: These huge blades will power the biggest wind farm in the world, currently being built off the coast of Grimsby by the Danish firm, Orsted. Two things made it possible - wind and Whitehall.

WRIGHT: The UK is attractive for two main reasons. The first is geography and then the second thing you need has been support from Governments.

COX: That support - or subsidy at the moment - guarantees they are paid £57 for every megawatt hour of electricity they produce. And there will be the option of new wind farm subsidies being offered every two years for the next decade. It has led firms like Orsted to invest heavily in the UK. Matthew Wright is their managing director.

WRIGHT: Governments of all colours actually supporting offshore wind through various regimes to provide support to get projects built and that has allowed us to drive down the cost, improve the economics of the projects to the point where today they are competitive with other forms of generation.
COX: How important has that been, having that Government support?

WRIGHT: Hugely important. We simply wouldn’t be here without Government support. Like all new technologies, when you start off they are expensive compared to traditional, let’s say traditional forms of generation in this case, and you need to deploy the technology to get what is called the experience curve effects, - you know, effectively, if you do things over and over, you get better at them, you reduce the cost, and also to iron out the bugs, if you like, understand better how to design, build, construct, operate projects, drive out the costs through economies of scales. So without the support of successive Governments in the UK, we wouldn’t have been to the point where now we have got a competitive form of generation that can be deployed at a massive scale.

COX: But while offshore expands, it’s not the same story for onshore wind farms. Changes to planning laws means it’s pretty impossible to build them in England and Wales. The independent Committee on Climate Change was set up to monitor how the UK is doing on its greenhouse gas targets. It has warned of big gaps in the Government’s plans to meet the future, more challenging targets for carbon emissions. To reach them, experts we spoke to, like Gareth Miller, say we will need more onshore wind power and solar or photovoltaic power. He runs the company Cornwall Insight, which provides research and analysis to energy companies and investors.

MILLER: To simply shut out the two undeniably cheapest technologies, in the shape of onshore wind and PV solar, from being built to their maximum capacity in the UK seems to be very, very strange indeed.

COX: Do we need more onshore wind and expansion of onshore wind if we are going to meet our carbon emission targets going forward ten, twenty, thirty years?

MILLER: It will be incredibly difficult without it and also there is a question of how serious the Government is when it says it wants to decarbonise the power sector at the lowest cost to the consumer in a world where they are currently shutting out the cheapest technologies to make that happen. In a world where subsidy isn’t providing an entry
MILLER cont: signal to renewable generators and certainly to the investors that may be investing in those generators, then the development community, this entrepreneurial community of businesses that have been taking projects through the relatively risky process of getting planning permission in grid connection, simply may choose to stop that activity, because previously in the subsidy driven model of investment, there was always a pay off at the end of it; you knew, so long as you’d got your planning permission, your grid, there was a route for getting support and to raise finance to build your project. Now, certainly for onshore wind, PV solar and biomass, that route to market doesn’t exist and therefore I think we will see a significant slowdown, if we haven’t already.

COX: That slowdown has already happened in solar.

ACTUALITY OF TEACHING

TRAINER: So what we’ve got here then is we’ve got a pressurised system and a drainback system. Two types, which are probably the most common in domestic houses in the UK. So this one in here we’ve got is the drainback system …

COX: And you can see this a few hundred yards away from the optimism of the offshore wind testing centre in Blyth at Narec Distributed Energy, where they train engineers in how to fit solar panels.

TRAINER: So this vessel here, when the panel’s not in use, it might be because it’s too cold outside or it’s stored up to temperature – the water will actually drain back to this vessel.

COX: These courses used to be popular. Like all renewables, there was a subsidy for generating solar power, known as the feed-in tariff, and there was another tariff paid for exporting surplus electricity to the national grid. This drove the expansion of solar panels on roofs and big solar farms. But in 2015, the tariff for generating solar power was slashed by two-thirds for homeowners and also for large solar farms. Tom Bradley, who’s a senior project engineer, explains how devastating this was for the industry.
BRADLEY: The domestic market now has gone back to the levels it was at before 2010, before the feed-in tariff came in. I mean, a lot of very good companies have gone bust, a lot of very good companies have shrunk. I mean, we can see it here, because currently we’re offering funded training to people through European Social Fund, so they don’t have to pay anything, they only have the time off tools. Even if it’s effectively free, people are not going on the courses.

COX: And next April the remaining tariff for exporting solar electricity onto the grid is also being scrapped, which he says will be a further blow for investors in solar power.

BRADLEY: Any electricity they export, they have to give it away for free to the energy companies. So solar has gone from being something that was subsidised though financial incentives, now to something where people with solar on their homes are expected to give it away for free, which no other energy generator is expected to give their electricity away for free, which ruins the financial case.

COX: What’s the knock on effect, do you think, that will be of getting rid of that tariff, where you’re paid to feed electricity into the grid?

BRADLEY: I think we’ve already seen the domestic solar market collapse and I think it will be the final end of the domestic solar market in the UK, which in turn will have big impacts on jobs, so you’re looking at thousands and thousands of job losses across the country, which is very, it is very hard to see these job losses. It’s not like a big steelworks in Redcar, for example. These are like small jobs of like s/mall companies across the UK, of maybe a sole trader or maybe a company of three people, so it’s hard to see all these job losses, but they are happening. And it means that we will have less renewable generation, so it will have an impact on carbon emissions.

COX: One recent survey found over 40% of UK solar installers were considering quitting the industry. To survive, British companies have been forced to look overseas, to countries where there are still subsidies for solar generators.

MUSIC
LEGGETT: We must never forget that every single form of energy needs subsidies at some point.

COX: Dr Jeremy Leggett is the founder of Solar Century, one of the UK’s biggest solar energy firms, working with big foreign companies like Ikea and Nissan to expand the use of solar.

LEGGETT: Well, if we were just reliant on the UK, I mean, it’s a theoretical question, of course, because we couldn’t have survived, and the fact that we have been able to build healthy businesses overseas and generate profits overseas, allows us to stay in play in the UK. And of course, we’re still in play with big players, who are intent on doing very well when the market takes off again - the likes of Ikea and Nissan, you know, it’s a survivor’s game.

COX: They have survived by expanding abroad and operate in 14 different countries, from Spain to Chile. But the UK market has shrunk and he predicts that it’s going to get worse with the last tariff being scrapped next year.

LEGGETT: If I needed any more persuading that we were dealing with hostile forces who basically, over many years, have taken every opportunity to set us back while promoting the cause of more expensive nuclear and more expensive shale gas, then this is it.

COX: So come April, if you have solar panels, you’re producing extra electricity, you’re going to give it away to the grid effectively?

LEGGETT: Yeah, and the big energy companies will take it and say thank you very much and mark it up strongly and make a huge profit. You know, I live in hopes that the Government’s going to retreat from this because, of all the things they’ve done to harm our industry over the years, this is arguably the worst, and I predict they will face a storm of protests between now and April - and I hope they’ll retreat. But the prize for the Government in a country, you know, desperate for jobs would have been to build a domestic industry and that’s, you know, not going to happen, because so many big British companies have been driven to bankruptcy or a state of massive contraction.
COX: So when that expansion happens, what will it be – overseas firms who are mostly dealing with that?

LEGGETT: Yes, large, very well resourced overseas firms will increasingly come in. And of course, there will be British jobs but, you know, the lost opportunity will have been to build a really healthy constituency of British companies.

COX: The Energy Minister, Clare Perry, has heard these arguments first hand. So will she think again about the cuts to solar tariffs?

PERRY: You know, I meet a lot with the solar industry and I’m aware of their concerns but, you know, ultimately what we did with the feed-in tariff was spend an awful lot of taxpayers’ money supporting very very small scale schemes, and I remember well a conversation in my constituency with a lady who said she had just covered her house in solar panels, and I said, well that’s brilliant, what’s happened to your energy bills? She said oh no, I’ve done it because my accountants told me I can get 12% return from doing this. That is not a sensible way to spend taxpayers’ money, forgive me, you know, I just don’t think that’s the way to go. I am consulting and looking at how we bring forward a possible successor to these tariffs. I am aware of a lot of the arguments around that.

COX: The independent Committee on Climate Change said you might miss some of your later emissions targets because there are gaps between our emissions and the levels set by later carbon budgets. So what are you going to do to close those gaps?

PERRY: People sort of talk about meeting our carbon budgets as if there’s this pressure, as if there is this high cost, low growth choice that we have to make, and actually it’s quite the opposite. This is a driver of post Brexit growth for the UK. It’s something where we do lead the world in many areas and therefore we are at, I think from memory, 97% and 95% of where we need to be to meet those carbon budgets that end in 10 and 15 years, but the pace, the rate of acceleration is increasing and now clean growth is one of the four pillars of the UK’s industrial strategy; it is front and centre of how we see our post Brexit economy developing.
ACTUALITY IN FARM GRAIN STORE

COX: But there won’t be any help for the farmers who supplied the Vivergo plant. Inside his grain store, Keith Wells has wheat piled 3 metres high that was supposed to be used for bioethanol. Now he needs to find a new buyer and can’t understand the Government’s thinking.

WELLS: I feel more let down by our Government. They’re the ones who’ve created this market, created a product that we can use and utilise for everybody’s benefit, and they’ve just washed their hands of it. I don’t know, they just seem as though they’re not interested, and what the reason for that is I don’t know, because at some point they’re going to get interested again and then think, what are we going to do? And if the wheat isn’t there and the plant’s not there to produce the ethanol, where we go from there I don’t know.

COX: And what was striking was when we told the Energy Minister, Claire Perry, about the closure of Vivergo, she didn’t know that a £400 million investment was being shelved.

We did meet a lot of anger in Hull – farmers, suppliers, all working in this new industry.

PERRY: I am going to go away and look at this and I will meet them and talk about, because actually I think particularly for agricultural machinery and construction machinery, there is a real need to develop some lower emission diesel and all the fuel for these heavy good vehicles, so I need to look at that.

COX: Britain has been seen as one of the leaders in green energy, with ambitious plans for renewable power. Labour said if they were elected they would create 400,000 new jobs in this sector. But last week, the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued a stark warning to policymakers. Its report claimed the world is ‘completely off track’ in trying to keep rising global temperatures under the target of 1.5 degrees Celsius. Dr Jem Woods from Imperial College, London agrees that all of the work being done to meet the UK’s targets just doesn’t go far enough.
WOODS: We now know that even what seemed like an almost impossibly stretching target of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050 is not going to be anything like good enough and so we have to think very fast about what sort of systems - not only think, but do very fast - about the kinds of systems that we need to be deploying over the next five years, ten years, twenty years – not the next fifty years. And at the moment, we’ve locked ourselves into, into a set of processes that in my view are really delaying meaningful implementation of the types of technologies and systems that will allow us and our children to have any kind of meaningfully good future.

MUSIC