

Lesson ideas for geography teachers to share: A holistic management myth

Go to

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpTHi7O66pl>

It is important for students to appreciate that there is public debate about how best to tackle climate change. Sometimes they will hear completely opposing arguments and extreme views, like the one put forward below.

In London in 2014 a Zimbabwean ecologist and livestock farmer called Allan Savory held a Ted Talk advocating 'holistic management' of arid areas to prevent desertification. Against scientific thinking he essentially called for *more* livestock, not less, to tackle climate change. His claims have been strongly rebutted as baseless and lacking empirical evidence.

Answer the following questions on his controversial suggestion to desertification.

1. What are the 3 big challenges?
2. What's the main cause?
3. What did Allan Savory do in Zimbabwe?
4. What did he say about grazing animals?
5. How is water linked to carbon?
6. What's the 'only one option left' for climatologists and ecologists to address climate change and desertification?
7. What have researchers done in Patagonia to combat desertification?
8. What does climate change and desertification cause?
9. What wild carbon calculations are estimated by Savory to finish?

Suggested further work

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/georgemonbiot/2014/aug/04/eat-more-meat-and-save-the-world-the-latest-implausible-farming-miracle>

1. In his retort to Allan Savory's claim that the 'algal crust is the cancer of desertification' George Monbiot explains this is a falsehood. What was this algal crust actually found to be?
2. In response to Savory's claim that his approach can reverse the build-up of atmospheric carbon, which RealClimate say 'is simply not reasonable' – and scientifically impossible, what does grazing livestock actually do to carbon storage?