



## Shepherd or Shoot Goats in the Name of Climate Change

By Steve Goreham

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O'Hare airport will finally get its goats. The Department of Aviation of the City of Chicago has [awarded](#) a contract to a private firm to provide 25 goats to munch vegetation at the city's airport. These "green lawn mowers" will help reduce carbon dioxide emissions to sustain the planet.

Last fall, when the project was bid, Amy Malick, head of sustainability at the Department of Aviation, [commented](#) on the planned use of goats in hard-to-mow areas, "They may have steep slopes, very hard to get to with heavy machinery, and those machines also emit pollution. They're burning fossil fuel. So as a sustainability initiative we're looking to bring in animals that do not have emissions associated with them, at least to the same extent that heavy machinery would."

A shepherd will herd the goats across 120 acres at four different sites on airport property. The 25 fuzzy critters are expected to clear vegetation each day from a square at least sixteen feet on a side.

Chicago is not the first city to employ animals to reduce airport vegetation. Sheep are [used](#) at the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport and goats are used at San Francisco International. Seattle-Tacoma International Airport deployed goats as early as 2008, but [stopped](#) because "it was not cost effective." How can a guy with a lawn mower be as cost effective as a herd of goats?

A single one-way Boeing 747 flight from Chicago to London [emits](#) about 200 tons of carbon dioxide, or about 5,000 times the annual emissions from a gasoline-powered lawn [mower](#) of a homeowner. It appears that emissions savings from O'Hare goats will be relatively small. But what about methane emissions from the herd?

On the other side of the world, about 10,000 miles from Chicago, the government of Australia has a different solution for global warming. More than a million wild camels, called "feral" camels, roam the outback of Australia. They munch up the foliage and emit methane, a potent greenhouse gas, from both the nose end and the tail end. Each camel [produces](#) more than one ton of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent emissions per year. Feral goats are also part of this severe climate problem.



The Australian Feral Camel  
(Image by Jjron)

But the enlightened Australian government passed the Carbon Farming Initiative Act in December of 2011. The [act](#) calls for "The reduction of methane emissions through the management, in a humane manner, of feral goats, feral deer, feral pigs, or feral camels." "Management" companies are now flying over the outback, shooting goats and camels from helicopters, and earning carbon credits. Maybe the Aussies should use goats instead of lawn mowers at airports?

So goats are both grazed and shot to reduce those evil carbon dioxide emissions. It's all part of this mad, mad, mad world of Climatism.

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