



# The ULS Report™

Helping people Use Less Stuff™ by conserving resources and reducing waste.

## What Are YOU Doing to Use Less Stuff?

By Robert Lilienfeld, Editor

I get asked this question all the time, and rightly so. I'm working hard to put my money where my mouth is and to walk the walk – and making pretty good progress!

ULS has always stressed that reducing energy consumption is the single best strategy for increasing environmental and economic sustainability. This effort also has the potential to deliver enormous political and social benefits.

With this in mind, I focused this summer on the biggest piece of low hanging fruit in the ULS basket: reducing the amount of gasoline used by my family.

The first thing we did was trade in our Honda Pilot. This was not an easy decision given our collie, two cats, 3 kids and their friends. Also, because my wife frequently has to haul stuff around for business, we still needed a vehicle that has a reasonable amount of cargo space.



Enter the tiny Honda Fit, which has a lot of room for a little car. We're getting about 34 MPG versus 20 MPG for the Pilot. Driving 15,000 miles per year, the difference translates to reduced fuel consumption of about 310 gallons. At today's gas price of \$2.65/gallon, that's a savings of \$825 and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 6,200 pounds, or 3.1 tons. (For reference, burning a gallon of gas creates 20 pounds of carbon dioxide.)

With warmer weather, I've also switched from driving a car to riding a motor scooter. My 250cc Honda Reflex can carry two adults and a bag of groceries, cruise at 65 MPH and sip gasoline at the rate of 60 MPG!

I will put about 3,000 miles on the scooter this year, consuming 50 gallons of gas, versus the 150 gallons I would consume in my other vehicle. The savings of 100 gallons also saves \$265 and 2000 pounds (1 ton) of greenhouse gas emissions.



So, my family's annual savings from these two changes is 410 gallons of gas, \$1,090, and 8,200 pounds (4.1 tons) of carbon dioxide. There are roughly 100 million households in the United States. You do the math. Staggering, isn't it?

Here are a couple of other things we've done this summer to reduce waste:

- Opened windows and used ceiling fans rather than turning on the AC.
- Only watered the lawn when absolutely necessary.
- Refilled empty water bottles rather than reaching for new ones.
- Borrowed and loaned tools, rather than buying them.
- Barbecued with our neighbors (and new friends). Why fire up 2 grills when there's plenty of room on one?



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## THE LIGHTER SIDE OF DVDS

The last time you purchased or rented a DVD, did it seem just a bit lighter to you? AGI Polymatrix, a division of MeadWestvaco Consumer Packaging Group and one of the largest producers of DVD cases, has re-worked and re-tooled its operations to take about 26% of the plastic out of its cases, earning it the right to put the ULS certification logo on its cases and its customers' labels.



On a per unit basis, the weight reduction equals about a 16 gram savings, which is a bit more than half an ounce. Not a big deal, you say? Annually, over 3 billion DVDs are sold in the U.S., which means the amount of polypropylene saved is potentially 6.6 million pounds, or 3,300 tons!

*If your product or package can show a 20% reduction in waste generation or energy consumption vs. either its previous incarnation or industry standards,, it is probably eligible for ULS certification. You can learn more at [www.use-less-stuff.com](http://www.use-less-stuff.com).*

### Moo-ving in the Right Direction

Got gas? Cows do, and lots of it. In fact, research shows that most of the environmental impacts associated with dairy product and beef production occur down on the farm and relate to the prodigious amounts of methane emitted from both ends by Elsie and her kin.

The first program in North America to naturally decrease global warming gases caused by cows' burps (enteric

emissions) was recently announced by Stonyfield Farm, the world's leading organic yogurt company.

The pilot program works by feeding cows a diet high in natural omega-3 sources such as alfalfa, flax and grasses. This results in an increase in the milk's omega-3 content and decrease in the levels of saturated fats. (An unexpected benefit of the program is that it also significantly increases the nutritional value of the milk.)



Through intensive, ongoing analysis of the feed and the cow's milk, the pilot program re-balances the cow's main stomach or "rumen." This results in a reduction of the waste by-product methane, a greenhouse gas, which cows emit mainly through burping.

### Coming Attractions...

Our next issue, which will focus on packaging, is going to be a doozy! We'll be introducing two very exciting programs: Our web-based environmental impact calculator, and the expansion of ULS Day to ULS Week. We will also be describing a new initiative we're helping to launch that's designed to improve the quality of environmental marketing claims and reduce "greenwashing."

## The ULS Report™



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