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I have deliberately stayed out of this debate but a couple of recent things have got me really angry. Claims by some groups that the scientific community is solidly behind man made climatic warming are not true. At least not where I come from. A few facts do not add up and they have yet to be explained fully. I don't believe man made warming does not exist. Is what we see a natural event? I am just not sure.

Warming of the climate is shown by adjusted facts presented by NIWA. Figure 1 for example shows the trend in New Zealand from the NIWA climate database. This is from the official national dataset which includes the long term yearly averages for 7 sites. These are at Auckland, Masterton, Wellington, Hokatika, Nelson, Lincoln and Dunedin. The graph shows a steady but variable increase in temperatures over time. I have to say even this adjusted data is not very compelling. However some people suggest recent temperatures show a cooling trend and NIWA have been questioned over adjusting the data. Unadjusted data shows no warming. You be the judge. Go to <http://cliflo.niwa.cri.nz/> and get the data yourself or a do Google search on "climategate in New Zealand". I have looked at the unadjusted NIWA data and I have to say I agree that there is no evidence of climatic warming. From what I know of electronic versus manual recording, electronically recorded temperature data is higher than manual records. Is it any wonder an increase in values has been recorded?

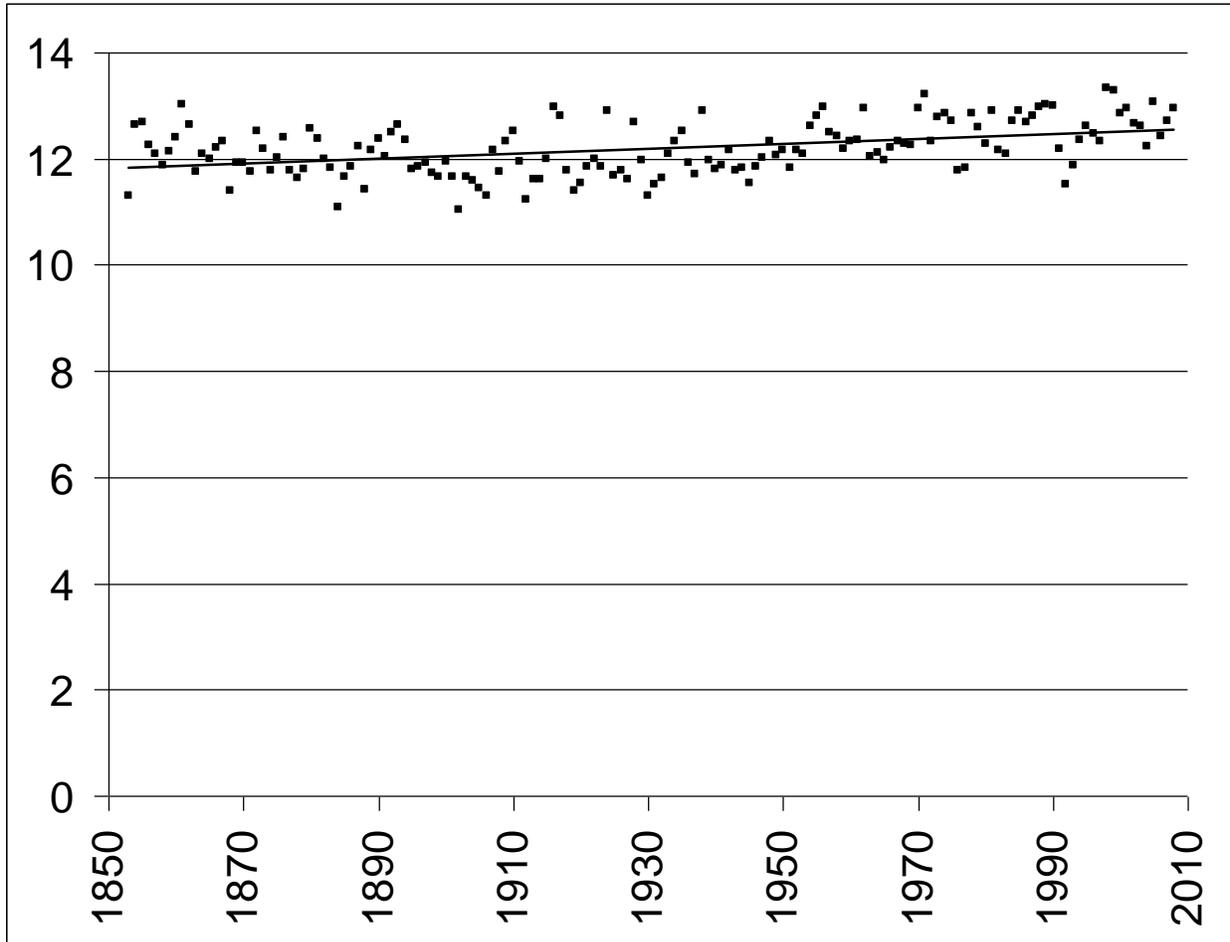


Figure 1 : Average annual temperature for 7 sites in New Zealand

A couple of things to ponder. Firstly, why is Mars warming as well?

On one side <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2007/02/070228-mars-warming.html>

On the other side <http://www.realclimate.org/index.php/archives/2005/10/global-warming-on-mars/>

Even this fact is contentious. Experts on both sides trade claim and counter claim. I have a good grower friend who can explain this. An ex is a has been and a spurt is just a drip under pressure. Cheers Bill. Glad all went well.

Secondly, how did Hannibal cross the alps with elephants? Perhaps Europe had no glaciers during that time blocking the way. The measurement of glacier recession as an indicator of how warm we are getting seems to ignore recent records. It is unreasonable to suggest that the climate will always be like today. The record preserved in the Antarctic ice demonstrates that. The earth has experienced many warm periods and ice ages in the past and will continue to have them in the future.



A few years ago I was privileged to listen to the late Augie Auer speak on climatic warming at a Pipfruit NZ conference. He was very dismissive of the whole man made climatic warming science and claimed it was very poor. On the other hand our national climate body, NIWA, claims man made climatic warming is with us and we should be worried. Caught between these apparent experts I'm not sure what to believe.

I suspect climate warming will be a hard sell in Europe and the USA after the winter they have just had. Record snowfalls and a very cold, long winter. Any claim that the earth is getting warmer will be met with scorn by the public. In a recent survey, 70% of people were skeptical of man made climate warming. Perhaps people like Greenpeace will need a new message.

All that aside, the human race as a group is consuming more than the earth can provide. Agriculture and horticulture have big challenges ahead during the next few decades. Something has to give. Population ecology has some interesting predictions about the fate of a species with no population control from natural predators.

Further reading

Air Con by Ian Wishart

Poles Apart by Gareth Morgan

Ian Wishart points out the huge amount of research funding on offer and the people supporting man made climatic warming have twisted the facts to suit their cause as evidenced by recent email releases and the NIWA adjustment of historical climate records. Gareth Morgan on the other hand spent a huge amount of money exploring the issues involved. He eventually came to the conclusion that it is probably man made but our political system will prevent action. Confused? I am.