

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Environment and Energy portfolio

Question No: 134
Hearing: Additional Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 2
Program: Science
Topic: Plant growth
Hansard Page:
Question Date: 8 March 2017
Question Type: Written

Senator Roberts asked:

Would an increase in CO₂ from 0.04% to 0.1% (400ppm to 1000ppm) significantly increase plant growth?
How then is coal unclean?

Answer:

Elevated levels of carbon dioxide may increase the growth rates of some plants.

However the nitrogen content of certain crops and plants grown under elevated levels of carbon dioxide can be reduced, thereby reducing the levels of protein. Reduced nitrogen and protein content in crops like wheat and rice has a detrimental effect on the nutritional value of these globally important staple foods.