News & Views item - July 2006

Is Chocolate Power the Answer? (July 7, 2006)

While former Telstra boss nuclear phyicist Ziggy Switkowski and his panel are sweating on the rights and wrongs of nuclear power for Australia, they might take a sideways glance at a "Random Sample" from the July 7 issue of the journal *Science*.

> *The news last week that Cadbury, the U.K.'s leading chocolate manufacturer, is sending 250 tons of chocolate to the landfill due to salmonella contamination has caused dismay among chocoholics and scientists alike. "The volume is shocking: equivalent to 33 double-decker buses," says Gavin Harper, an environment and architecture student at the University of East London, U.K.*
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> *In a paper he'll present next week at a "sustainable science" symposium in Wales, Harper has calculated that if the chocolate were burned for energy, it could provide 5500 gigajoules (1,530,000 kilowatt-hours)--enough to power a town of 90,000 people for a week. "Chocolate is biomass," says Gaynor Hartnell of the Renewable Energy Association in London. "It is also very calorific, so burning seems a sensible idea."*

So, Ziggy, how many gigajoules are required to produce n kilowatt-hours of chocolate produced power compared to that required for uranium based power?

And of course a comparison of waste and/or surplus disposal must be must be considered.

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