

Smelling the coffee

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As the [FT noted](#) in its Lex column yesterday:

First chocolate, now coffee — the supply of modern life's necessities is being squeezed by a changing climate. Extreme temperatures and droughts in south-east Asia, home to the world's second- and third-largest producers of coffee beans, have led to lower harvests.

But given that this was the FT they went on to note:

Falling bean supply has implications not just for our daily lives but also for company earnings.

Blow the impact on those growing the beans and the disruption to their lives: what matters is falling corporate earnings, not global heating and the impact it has on working people.

That said it did note that those impacts are not likely to improve, albeit still within the context of corporate earnings. As they noted, a heatwave in Vietnam, the world's second-largest bean producer, has cut production thereby maybe 20%, with much the same happening in Indonesia, which is also a major producer. Coffee prices are up 50% as a result. And this is likely to continue. Despite the price increases, climate change is making coffee too unreliable a crop to grow in south-east Asia, and farmers are pulling out.

I have never hidden the fact that if I have any form of addiction (and I really don't think I have), then coffee is the closest thing that I get to it. I consume more than my fair share of the world's coffee beans per day, I am sure.

At present, the price of coffee has not changed enough to really impact my consumption, but that does not mean that it might not at sometime in the future.

I often wonder when it will be, and what it will be, that brings home the reality of the change in consumption patterns that climate change is going to demand of us. I really

do not know. But, what I'm sure about is that this will happen.

What I also know is that in a great many ways, this cannot happen soon enough: we need to really appreciate precisely what we are doing to our planet to understand the necessity of change. Rationally, we should already be there. Emotionally, we are not, so that we pretend nothing is happening. The sooner that we can close that gap so that we can let go of what is no longer possible, and imagine what might be, the better off we will all be in the long term.