



Climate Change and Chicken Little

I N T R O D U C T I O N

There's a famous old story you might remember about a chicken named Chicken Little—a chicken who got scared about something that, in the end, turned out to be nothing but an acorn.

As the story goes, Chicken Little is working in her garden one day when something falls from the sky and lands on her head. Chicken Little, thinking the sky is falling, hurries off to the palace to warn the king.

Chicken Little meets some friends on her way to the palace and tells them that they are in terrible danger. One by one, her friends



become as scared as Chicken Little. None of them had actually been hit on the head by a falling piece of sky, but Chicken Little was scared, so they felt scared too.

When Chicken Little and her friends finally arrive at the palace, the wise king listens to their warning. He smiles after Chicken Little finishes telling her story, reaches out his hand, and gently takes a tiny acorn out of the feathers on Chicken Little's head. He reminds the friends that only rain falls from the sky and they have no reason to fear. It's just an acorn. The sky's *not* falling!

Like all good stories, this one has a moral—we need to check out the facts before getting scared about things. If Chicken Little had taken the time to look for herself, she would have found the acorn and realized that the sky was not falling. And Chicken Little's friends also learned an important lesson: *Don't believe everything you're told.*

You have probably heard that global warming is a big issue for the world. Some people think we, like Chicken Little, should panic about it. They argue our planet is in danger and we must find a way to save it before it's too late. They believe the earth is warming because of human actions, and that humans like you and me should be forced to

stop those actions. Like Chicken Little, they tell their story to anyone who will listen.

You may have heard that burning fossil fuels, such as coal, oil, and gas, will pollute the air until it brings us to the end of humankind. You may have heard that glaciers are melting and mammals, fish, and birds are dying. You may have heard that we might see more hurricanes, big storms, and drought. Nearly every heat wave, hail storm, or weather disturbance is blamed on global warming. So many people now believe these claims that it can be uncomfortable to question them.

Are these people right? Is global warming *really* happening? If it is, did we cause it? More importantly, is global warming a small problem like the acorn in the story, or is it a huge global crisis? Let's look at the facts for ourselves and figure out what's really going on.

