**Details of the Chinese One Child Policy**

The Chinese government’s one child policy began in 1978 to lower the population in China. In very general terms it means that parents can only have one child. Most people in the UK know about this very unusual policy because it is at the extreme end of a range of policies used around the world by some governments to influence their people to either lower or raise the birth rate. However, if we look more closely, we can see that there are exceptions to the policy which not everyone knows about!

This Brainbox gives you more detail about what has been happening in China. We have to keep in mind that the accuracy of facts and statistics cannot be certain due to Chinese secrecy and the huge size of the population involved.

* Most people think the whole of China is involved. In fact the Chinese government states that only 35.9% of China's population is involved to the one-child restriction. The people involved are mainly the urban (city) populations in China; although Hong Kong and Macau and all foreigners in China are not involved.
* Couples living in rural (countryside) areas, ethnic minority communities and parents without any brothers or sisters themselves do not have to follow the policy. In most rural areas, families are allowed to apply to have a second child if the first is a girl, or if it has some form of disability, as long as the second child is born 3 or 4 years after the first.
* In two wealthy southern provinces of Guangdong and Hainan, rural couples are allowed two children.
* The one child policy was dropped in areas when a disaster killed children in the family like the Sichuan Earthquake in 2008 when schools collapsed killing large numbers of pupils.
* In 2010, the Chinese government reviewed the policy and published a statement that the policy will continue to at least 2015. However in March 2011 there was some government discussion about allowing all couples who have a good reason to apply to have a second child.

**Migration in the UK**

We may feel that Europe might not be a particularly attractive place to migrate to and get a job in at the moment - after all, the region is in economic crisis. There are very high levels of unemployment and some countries such as Greece, Italy and Spain need multi-billion Euro financial support.

However, this is not how it seems to the young people of the poor and conflict-infected countries of sub-Saharan Africa like Somalia and nations like Afghanistan in south Asia. They sometimes risk all they have, including their lives, to attempt the illegal migration into the EU, either northwards across the Mediterranean or into the European Union across the land border from Turkey (not yet in the EU) into Greece. Once inside Greece they hope to move on more easily to the richer EU countries in the north and west like Germany or the UK.

These are the problems:

* Turkey is not in the EU so the Greek/Turkish border is in reality the border of the EU. Once inside the EU the migrants think they can move to any EU country more easily. The border in the Evros region is the main entry point into the EU for migrants from Asia. In January 2012, the largest group of migrants who crossed into Greece came from Afghanistan, followed by the nationals of Pakistan and Bangladesh. Migrants from North Africa are the second largest group, Algerians and Moroccans being the most numerous. Most are men but women and families with children are also involved.
* There are many gangs and some of the unemployed communities either side of the border are willing to help illegal migrants across for money.
* The border has natural hazards such as the sea and the Evros River that claim many lives. Some graveyards in both countries are filling up with migrant fatalities.

A team of hundreds of border guards made up of men from other EU countries, are part of an EU organization called FRONTEX. They have reinforced Greek police forces at an open section of the country's border with Turkey. Illegal immigrants are arrested in their thousands each month by this operation but many get through undetected too. More try to get through in summer than in winter but those who have tried during the winter months have sometimes lost fingers, toes or their lives to frostbite.

Migrants who are caught in Greece are sent to the Greek capital of Athens. There, the illegal immigrants are kept in detention centres until a decision is made on how to deport them back to their own country. There are so many immigrants (55,000 in 2011) that Greece can only provide very basic centres. So life is harsh for the migrants and not the new life they’d hoped for. Greece is having great difficulty in managing and paying for this huge and apparently never-ending flow of illegal arrivals. Greece complains that they are not helped enough by the rest of the EU who will not allow the migrants to be passed on further into the EU.

**Stuck in a rut**

The links between weather and our food supply are about to get much more important!

At holiday time , most of us just worry about how much sunny weather we can have but this year’s weather extremes are about to have a much more serious impact on global food supply and how much we have to pay for our food.

In Britain, a cold spring, drought and then a month of floods has really messed up the growing seasons of crops to the point that all crops, including fodder crops (hay, silage and grain for animal feed) are likely to be extremely expensive next year because of low supply.

Across the world the weather has been equally unhelpful to farmers and food supply.

* The huge regions of wheat farms in mid-west USA have experienced the worst drought for 50 years. A 12% reduction in production is being predicted.
* South America now produces huge quantities of soy bean and many South American regions have had too little rainfall this year for a good harvest to be expected. Maize and soy bean are used as animal feed across the world so the low harvest is driving up the prices of beef and other animal products as well.
* Russian wheat regions have also been hit by flash floods and it is possible that they will stop exporting to other countries, so they can make sure their home market has enough grain. Global prices will rise as a result.
* China is buying up and (some market analysts believe) stockpiling grain. That means they are storing it in large quantities as an insurance against future shortages. There is also an ever- growing demand for non-food bio-fuel crops and both these trends will raise the price of grain for food.
* We will see the prices of home-produced and international food rise in the next months. However, we and countries like us in the western world, spend on average only around 15% of our family income on food.

In poorer countries, like those in Africa, sometimes 75% of a family’s income can be required to pay for food so any change, however small, will have a disastrous affect on the people in these countries. In past years (2088 and 2010) high prices have led to food riots and also huge appeals for famine disaster aid. It looks probable that these will also become more common in the next 12 months.