

What a gas!

We know that we live in tough times and the taxman is doing everything to get his hands on what money we have left, but something smells

In Spain (and some other EU countries) registration tax is levied on most vehicles whether new or being imported. The tax used to be based upon the vehicle's value, cylinder capacity and fuel type- nice and simple. This changed in 2008 when the CC was exchanged for taxation based upon the CO2 emissions

Now if you believe in global warming this was understandable in order to reduce the harmful emissions spewed into the atmosphere and penalise those that emit the most. So if we can accept that reducing harmful gasses is beneficial to us all it is also plain that we are forced to do so through our pockets and this is where I become a little cynical; take a look at these situations

Let's not make it simple

The introduction in Spain of a gas based tax was heralded just before it came into force leaving little time for those about to purchase or re-register a car to do anything about it. This meant that for some time taxation was higher in most cases than it had been; a nice little earner

The source of data for the CO2's was readily accessible via websites but over the last few weeks a stink has been created by Trafico who doubted the veracity of some of the figures produced; they will now only accept information published by the ministry, manufacturers or the registration document. Getting hold of information from the allowable sources is not always simple or free. I asked at the ITV station why this is happening; the response was one word, "dinero"

On yer bike!

For motorbikes the situation goes from barmy to bizarre. Bikes are taxed in the same way as cars but when the CO2 emission criteria was introduced no bike manufacturer produced CO2 figures! This meant that all bikes were taxed at the maximum level. Gradually the figures were produced and taxation properly applied, but then came this little belter!

I had two Harley-Davidson's pass through the ITV on the same day; the station looked the detail up on Harley's website and entered the CO2 for one of the bikes which allowed taxation in the lower category, but not the other. When I queried this I was told that a mistake had been made and the CO2 should not have been added; the manufacturers' website was not a recognised source!

Admittedly I was dealing with an engineer who invented the word "jobsworth" but he advised me that according to Trafico he is no longer obliged to enter the CO2 level, only the CO for bikes. I replied that Trafico may not want the CO2, but the Hacienda (tax office) does. "No they don't" he responded. My years of living amongst the

Spanish finally paid off when with my eyes on fire and chest puffed out my rebuff started with “Hombre!!” He eventually yielded when I subsequently produced a letter from Harley-Davidson

My specialist gestor queried with Trafico this sudden need for CO, but not CO2 for bikes only to be told that it was one and the same thing. Oh dear, surely it's elemental?

A penny per pint?

We all remember the furore over CFC's from our fridges so you have to hand it to the tax man for this great piece of spin. Apparently the refrigerant in our air conditioning units is also dangerous so an environment tax has been slapped on the purchase of new units -brilliant!

It is claimed that the methane gases emitted by cows causes significant harm to the planet, so what next a milk tax?

As always we will have to live with whatever is thrown at us; find a way to provide the lowest cost for our customers and just await the next curved ball. Very taxing

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