

The Kansas City Food Circle

UPDATE

Fall, 1997

When Will They Ever Learn

We already knew that 25% of supermarket chickens were contaminated with salmonella. Now we find out (*KC Star*) that 70-90% of these chickens are contaminated with the dangerous bacteria, campylobacter. Antibiotics used to treat this infection appear to be losing effectiveness. One scientist stated, "Since 1995, with the licensing of fluoroquinolones for use in chickens, levels of drug resistant campylobacter in humans has gone up dramatically." The FDA has been asked by Bayer Pharmaceuticals, which makes this antibiotic, to permit the use of more of the antibiotics in animals. Public health authorities counsel people to take numerous precautions in handling and cooking chickens. (That's right. ... blame us for getting sick.)



Food Preparation, 1998

From *Parade Magazine*, a scientist, from the Pan American Health Organization states, "As trade between nations increases, food poisoning will increase everywhere." The reporter observes crops in Mexico being irrigated with river water laced with raw sewage. Like ... this is supposed to be inevitable, and nothing can be done except wash your produce in bleach! Under existing rules any serious attempt to protect ourselves will be struck down by the World Trade Organization as a barrier to trade. President Clinton says, "Trust Me" with renewed Fast Track trade agreement approval, privileges.

And New! from Frankenstein Foods, Inc.....irradiation of meat and vegetables with nuclear waste. Ionizing radiation splits molecules apart and thus kills bacteria. It can also split apart molecules in the food itself. These ions come back together in random ways to form new substances. The synthetic food industry is excited about this because they can raise animals for slaughter in, say, Bangladesh, irradiate the meat, put it on the shelf for a few years until the price goes up, and then ship it to us. No thanks.

Much of the foregoing can be explained by the entry of thousands of MBA's, dressed in \$800 suits, into farming over the past three decades and the domination of our government and academia by the high priests of free trade.

Compost = healthy plants.

For the first time scientists have demonstrated that beneficial microorganisms in compost induce disease resistance in plants. (We knew it all the time!) Certain organisms act 'as an inoculum, similar to a smallpox scratch. Thus by growing plants in compost the plant's natural defenses can be ready when the enemy arrives. Source *Acres USA*.

Designer eggs

Recently research has been found that eggs can be a rich source of omega-3, a fatty acid essential for brain growth and development and believed to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, arthritis, high blood pressure, tumor growth and diabetes. Don't look for it in factory eggs, though. The chickens themselves require a diet that contains omega-3, as it once did when they were allowed to graze freely on wild greens. The *New York Times* story goes on to describe the organic, free range egg farm of George Bass in Hubbardston, Mass.

His chickens are fed a diet rich in soybeans and green vegetables. His eggs taste better and contain as much as four times the omega-3 as factory eggs.

Corporate Hog Industry Renews Invasion of Midwest

Hoof and mouth disease led to the killing of 3 million pigs in Taiwan, the biggest supplier of pork to Japan. North Carolina slapped a two year moratorium on new hog factories in response to a growing chorus of anger against foul odors and water pollution. The combination of these two events has caused factory pork producers to renew their invasion into almost all of the Midwestern states and the high plains. Despite lower water tables and lower human population density, people out here still don't want these factories. Seward County (Liberal), Kansas became the latest county to soundly defeat corporate hogs (72 28) despite door to door campaigning by corporate executives. The pork industry just doesn't, get it. They continue to cram more and more hapless animals into smaller spaces (34,000 adults in just 7 acres of buildings in Nebraska) generating more arid more waste. *You can help stop this unsustainable technology by not buying pork, ham and bacon in the supermarket.* Several KC Food Circle farmers can supply humanely-raised pork.

McDonald's Pyrrhic Victory

Fast food giant McDonald's won the libel battle in England but appears' to be losing the public relations war. McDonald's sued two protestors in London who had handed out leaflets accusing the chain of various misdeeds. After a 7 year court battle' the judge ruled that the company was not to blame for starvation in the Third World, the destruction of rainforests or for knowingly selling food that might damage their customers' health. However, the judge agreed that McDonalds was responsible for animal cruelty, exploiting children through its ad campaigns and paying its workers in Britain poorly.' While the weight of the ruling' favored' McDonald's, they have decided not to press for legal costs or damages from the defendants.

The judge concluded that McDonald's was "culpably responsible for cruel practices in the rearing and slaughter of some of the animals which are used to produce their food."¹¹ In particular, he found the confinement and slaughter of chickens and the confinement of sows to be cruel. This ruling in a legal setting could become very important in the battle against factory farms. While the judge rejected the protesters' assertion that McDonald's food is unhealthy, he agreed that some of the company's promotional materials citing its foods' positive nutritional benefit "did not match the reality of products high in fats and salt. Sources: *LA Times* and *KC Star*. For more information consult the U.S. McLibel Support Campaign at P.O. Box 62, Craftsbury, Vt. 058 2 6-006 2 or website, <http://www.mcspotlight.org>

Big victory in labeling dairy products

Ben & Jerry's Homemade, Inc. along with natural and organic producers, Stonyfield Farm, Inc., Whole Foods Market and Organic Valley Coop, won the right to label their products as free of hormones. Ben and Jerry's can distribute products nationwide that carry the statement, "We Oppose Recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone." The company is opposed to treating cows with hormones because studies show it may increase the risk of udder infection, necessitating the use of antibiotics; because the potential effects on humans are "poorly understood;" and because it puts small farmers at a disadvantage to large, industrial dairy farms. The FDA opposed such labeling. Source: *KG Star*.

Toxic Fertilizer

The *Seattle Times* reported in July that toxic heavy metals, chemicals' and radioactive wastes are being recycled as fertilizer and spread over farmers' fields nationwide, and there's no federal law requiring that these ingredients be listed. The issue came to light when local farmers in the state of Washington became concerned about poor yields and sickly cattle: Federal and state governments encourage the recycling, which saves money for industry and conserves space in hazardous-waste landfills. Source: *KC Star*.

Poultry Plants shut by Dioxin

Four poultry plants were shut down in Arkansas after federal inspectors found that' dioxin-contaminated feed had been used by farmers producing chicken, eggs and catfish. The contamination was traced to a clay anti-clumping additive that a Mississippi mine provided to two Arkansas soybean meal makers. Source: *KC Kansan*.

Hidden Costs of Industrial Agriculture, part 2.

The EPA will spend more than \$100 million cleaning up methyl parathion illegally sprayed in hundreds of homes in Chicago, Pascagoula, Mississippi and in other Southern and Midwestern states. The extremely toxic' methyl parathion is used to spray cotton. Unlicensed sprayers exported it from Mississippi over the past ten years. Source: *K C. Star*.

Trans Fatty Acids tied to Breast Cancer

A recent study of nearly 700 postmenopausal European women found that those whose bodies contained the highest levels of trans fatty acids were 40% more likely to develop breast cancer. The combination of high trans-fatty acids and low levels of polyunsaturated fatty acids yielded a three and one half times risk factor. Trans-fatty acids (among the stars of the synthetic food industry) are prominently used in many processed and fast foods, margarine and some vegetable oils. Trans-fatty acids do not occur naturally in food. (Surprise!) They are formed when vegetable oils are partly hydrogenated. Previous studies have linked trans-fatty acids to increased risk of heart disease.

Locally Grown Organic Dry Beans Available

Lee and Cindy Quaintance of Soaring Eagle Farms in Edgerton,' Ks. have harvested their first dry beans. This first year was an experiment to see what kind of beans would grow well and whether they could be dried economically. They have a limited quantity of five kinds: pinto, navy, black, small red beans and black-eyed peas for sale in 5 pound lots.

Though Lee and Cindy came up with the idea, the Food Circle encouraged the project as part of our long term goal of extending the availability of locally grown, organic foods beyond the normal growing season. Beans are also one of the most versatile and nutritious of foods for all, and an important source of protein in vegetarian diets. If you'd like to help the experiment succeed please call Lee and Cindy at 89'3-6797 or e-mail them at soaringeaglefarms@juno.com

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