

The Cow & Her Milk: Tasty or Risky

Twenty times in the Old Testament the promise was given that God's chosen people would ultimately enter a land flowing with milk and honey. The fertile environment of Canaan was anticipated with eagerness, for there every nutritious agricultural product, both for man and animals could be supported. This goal was realized, flourishing under the magnificence of Israel's greatest kings, David and Solomon. The animals were healthy because their food was good. Blessings accrued to those who followed the promised plan of God in strict detail.

Now we live in a different age. The greed of mankind has commercialized the agri-business to the place where home gardens are a necessity. "The Lord desires His people to move into the country where they can settle in the land and raise their own fruits and vegetables, and where their children can be brought in direct contact with the works of God in nature. Take your families away from the cities, is my message." Medical Ministry, 11.

We could study with profit the moral advantages, social advantages and spiritual benefits of country living today. Let us look for a moment at the physical enhancements we can have from home grown natural foods. Looking at God's plan for the children of Israel we see that our Creator wanted each one to enjoy the work of their own hands. Building and living in their own hand-crafted house, eating and enjoying the fruits and vegetables of their own garden was God's plan for His human family, ordained on earth as the foretaste of the heavenly land.

Almost a hundred years ago these nutritional benefits of vegetarian food were given for Seventh-day Adventists to share with their friends and neighbors around the world. "Flesh was never the best food; but its use is now doubly objectionable, since disease in animals is so rapidly increasing." Ministry of Healing, 313 (1905). "Animals are becoming more and more diseased, and it will not be long until animal food will be discarded by many besides Seventh-day Adventists. Foods that are healthful and sustaining are to be prepared, so that men and women will not need to eat meat." Testimonies, Vol. 7, 124 (1902). "The light given me is that it will not be very long before we shall have to give up using any animal food. Even milk will have to be discarded. Disease is accumulating rapidly." Australasian Union Conference Record, July 28, 1889.

I could share many similar references, but today let us study the subject in the light of modern science. The winter of 1996 brought to the subject of animal disease an international cry of alarm. Mad Cow Disease, discovered in England in 1986, then exported to countries around the world, became the topic of international concern. Caused by a protein, which can not be cultured, this transmissible agent, called a prion, can cause many serious diseases. Most such syndromes attack the central nervous system, brain and spinal cord. Three "Mad Cow" equivalents have been documented in humans: Kuru, Gerstmann-Straussler syndrome (GSS) and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD). All three of these diseases can be transmitted to laboratory animals by inoculation. They have been found in chimpanzees, monkeys, rodents and seem to all have a common cause, namely a prion. There is a similar disease in sheep called scrapie. Libyan Jews living in Israel have acquired the human form, CJD, after eating lightly cooked sheep brain, or other delicacies such as sheep eyeballs. Primitive societies in the South Sea islands have transmitted Kuru through ritual cannibalism. Now we know that this disease can cross major species.

The most probable cause of Mad Cow Disease, scientifically called Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), involves the abominable feeding practice, using scrapie-infected sheep meat and bone meal in cattle feed. The United Kingdom, in November of 1989, passed a ban on the human consumption of bovine offal. These include brain, spinal cord, thymus, spleen, tonsils and intestines. More recently a ban on feeding all bovine by-products to pet and farm animals was imposed after the successful experimental transmission of BSE to a pig. There was a Siamese cat from Bristol, England who developed symptoms of BSE after eating pet food made from a beef carcass. Mac, the hapless feline, died of a spongiform brain lesion which we could call the "mad cat disease." BSE is a killer. The Mad Cow Disease has killed more than 161,663 cattle since it was discovered in 1985!

Dr. Virgil Hulse, a physician, veterinarian, and research scientist, has just published a book outlining these dangers (Mad Cow and Milk Gate). One of the worst is the feeding of unusable bits of cow and sheep back to the animals in the form of protein supplements. Most farmers did not realize what they were feeding their animals as the pellets are marketed primarily as animal protein supplement. Similar supplements are also given to cattle in the form of ground up chicken feathers, with inevitable contamination as is evident in any slaughterhouse or poultry factory. The American agri-business is just as guilty of these practices as in England, supported by vehement denials of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that there could be any risk to human health. Interestingly, as I write this article a news note comes through the AMA weekly physician's paper that the FDA has decided to ban this practice, phasing it out by the end of 1996. But our government may be "closing the barn door after the horse has already escaped."

Cows and sheep and other ruminants are all by nature vegetarians. Thus it is biologically unnatural to feed a cow any substance derived from dead animals. First, these herbivorous creatures become carnivores, and later they are cannibals. Finally, they end up on the dinner table of the unsuspecting consumer. The meat from a dead cow with its bones, blood meal and soy bean is mixed up into pellets, advertised in dairy magazines with colorful pictures promoted to increase the cows milk production, thus making them "super cows." Common sense should tell us that this practice is a bad idea.

Last summer it was my privilege to speak on the subject at two camp meetings in Europe. On a plane flight back from Stockholm to London I met a fascinating couple. Breakfast was being served on British Airlines. The gentleman politely asked the stewardess if the meat on his tray was beef. She replied with customary British tact, "No, it is not. We do not serve beef."

The gentleman retorted, "Is that the policy of your airline?"

Replied the stewardess, "No it is not our policy. We just do not do it!"

One more question, he asked, "why?"

She replied, "Because no one would eat it; and we don't like to waste food!"

So I had my bran muffin, fruit and granola while the gentleman ate his slice of pork. After the trays were collected I turned to this man and engaged him in conversation. Both the business man and his wife were international consultants to the dairy industry, experts from California who had just spent a week on a British farm. The news they shared was interesting and not likely to appear in the London Times.

When it became obvious that Mad Cow Disease had caused the deaths of several young people and was clearly transmissible to humans, the British beef industry was in a quandary. Should they incinerate all 11 million British cattle, start over and try to regain their international credibility? The thought was frightening to the future of agri-business in the United Kingdom.

What I learned from these friends on British Air fascinated me. This compromise was reached. Three million cows, namely the ones who had consumed animal products likely to be tainted with BSE are slated for cremation. This enormous multitude of cows now waiting on "death row" can not be processed in a few weeks. There are less than a dozen incinerators (crematoriums) for cows in the United Kingdom. So these cows stay on the farms with a bounty on their head in which the government will pay the farmer as the cow goes to its final ashes. What to do in the meantime? The cows have to be fed. And, to earn their keep the cows are milked. Into the food chain goes the milk of condemned animals who, given enough time, are likely to develop BSE.

Normally cows trust man, but man became their worst nightmare. Cows have become our primary recycling agents in this twisted society. We feed cows orange skins, almond husks, dead sheep and chicken manure. Yes, cows eat dead sheep and dead cows! This unconscious cow cannibalism is supplemented by the feathers from chickens and turkeys, ground up and mixed up with the sheep and cows to become cow

food. Fortunately, they don't know what they are eating or they would really get mad. Sold to the dairy men as dairy supplement that contains special bypass protein called PNP, protected natural protein, this is used to get more milk from the dairy cow. Traditionally a single cow would produce twenty gallons of milk a day. Today the average is more than three times that much.

We wonder why there is not more BSE-like disease in the United States. But there is in America an epidemic of "downer cow syndrome" which could be a mutated strain of Mad Cow Disease. Our country has hundreds of downer cows each year and no means for routinely diagnosing their cause. Many physicians, veterinarians and other scientists have warned the government of this BSE "time bomb" about to go off in our country. The BSE scientists in England have virtually all given up eating beef. If a human eats an infected beef carcass he has a 50% chance of developing Mad Cow Disease, called Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. This sad affliction causes loss of memory, grinding headaches, tripping and stumbling as the nerves of the victim's legs give out. The muscles grow slack and flabby with loss of coordination and lethal psychotic stupor. Finally, they develop blindness and ultimately death. The average life expectancy from the onset of this disease is four months. That's why we call BSE a time bomb.

The times in which we live call for a return to the original diet: fruits, grains, nuts and vegetables. I believe it is also time to advise our friends and neighbors to choose alternatives to milk. Avoid, too, the consumption of eggs; and, in short, make the diet completely vegetarian without recourse to any animal products at all. There are some wonderful recipes that can enable an average cook and homemaker to prepare healthful nut and seed based milks. I include a few, and we can offer many more in our recipe books and cards. All one needs is a blender, a little time, and some ingenuity. Commercial products are also available with milks based on the soybean, rice and other grains. Solait, Better Than Milk, Eden Soy and Rice Dream are just a few of the products available. Soy based cheeses are also easy to prepare and constitute excellent substitutes for any recipe that would use dairy based cheese. The risks are too great to wait much longer. In soy based milks you will obtain more magnesium, an excellent grade of protein, and completely avoid the risk of lactose intolerance with its annoying symptoms of abdominal cramps, gas and diarrhea. 75% of adults of Afro-American descent and as many as 40-50% of whites and Orientals lack some or all of the lactase enzyme. These therefore have an intolerance to milk.

Galactose, another sugar in cow's milk, is normally transformed into glucose, even by the baby. Some infants, however have lactose intolerance manifested by the failure to thrive, a development of cataracts and other symptoms. These babies usually do very well on soy milk. Bed wetting in children can be improved when milk is removed from the diet. Constipation is relieved, particularly in the elderly. Colic in babies is relieved when mothers breast feed their infants or use a soy formula.

But most important is the reduced cholesterol, the elimination of oxidized cholesterol, and the lowered risk of arteriosclerosis or hardening of the arteries. Powdered milk, powdered eggs, whey, smoked fish, meat or cheeses all contain oxidized cholesterol, a very toxic substance to the blood vessels. Cholesterol is found only in animal products. It is best not to eat any cholesterol containing food at all.

Of immediate concern, however, is the risk of cancer, now common in beef cows, dairies and other domestic food animals. Pasteurization offers no protection against many viruses including hoof and mouth disease, lymphosarcoma virus and the prions that cause transmissible spongiform encephalopathies. These prions are so resistant that they survive radiation, formaldehyde and heating to 300 degrees Centigrade (700 degrees Fahrenheit)! Disease in animals has increased rapidly. The use of milk is becoming too unsafe for me to use it on my cereal.

We have just begun to discuss the reasons for vegetarianism. The life you save might be your own. May the Lord give health to His earthly friends as we live through the last days.

MAKING YOUR OWN MILK

Almond Milk

3/4 cup almonds, blanched

3 1/4 cups water

2 Tbs. honey

1/4 tsp. salt

1 tsp. vanilla

1/4 cup Soyagen

Blend almonds with small amount of water first, then add remaining water and ingredients. Whiz until smooth. Strain, chill and serve.

Cashew Milk

Blend:

1 cup cashew meal

1 cup hot water

Add:

1/4 tsp. salt

1 tsp. vanilla

3 Tbs. honey

3 cups water

Blend until smooth. Chill and serve.

Rice Milk

2/3 cup hot cooked rice

1/3 cup cashew meal

1 tsp. vanilla

1/2 tsp. salt

1-2 Tbs. honey

3 cups hot water

Blend until smooth. Chill and serve.

Oatmeal Milk

2 cups cooked oatmeal

4 cups water

1/2 tsp. salt

1 ripe banana

1 tsp. vanilla

2 Tbs. honey

Blend until smooth. Chill and serve.

Sesame Milk

1 cup sesame seeds, light

1/4 tsp. salt

2 cups water

1/4 cup honey

Bring sesame seeds and water to a boil. Simmer ten minutes. Add remaining ingredients. Blend until smooth. Chill and serve.