



# GERSON™ HEALING NEWSLETTER

Volume 14, Number 1

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## Happy New Year!

**Special Features:**

### Seeds of Discontent

Genetically Engineered Foods  
and Consumer Right-to-Know

By Aisha Ikramuddin

Mendel's hybrid pea was one thing: it was all pea. A tomato spiked with flounder genes is something else.

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### More Trouble for Meat Eaters

Findings of Carcinogens  
in Cooked Meat

By Charlotte Gerson

Although HCA's (heterocyclic amine's) have been known to exist since 1989, there are presently no federal guidelines on their potency and no understanding of their levels in the average American diet.

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## JAMA Addresses Alternative Medicine

Is the AMA Finally Catching On?

By Howard Straus

Part 1 of 2

One of the latest issues of *The Journal of the American Medical Association* (*JAMA*, November 11, 1998) devoted itself completely to alternative medicine. Its cover picture was not the lovely abstract or representational art usually shown, but instead, it featured two black and white woodcuts of medieval medical practices. This choice of artwork alone stated *JAMA's* position that, "alternative medicine is a return to the days of medical ignorance and superstition." Even so, this has proven to be the most popular issue of *JAMA* ever printed, and should serve as a powerful message regarding the enormous interest in alternative medicine from professionals and lay persons alike.

#### Reluctance to Fund OAM

When it was first founded, the Office of Alternative Medicine (OAM) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) required congressional intervention to force the NIH to grant it initial funding, and was proportioned to receive only \$4 million of the NIH's \$10.4 billion annual budget. Just looking at the attitude of the NIH it's clear to see that much more than budget shortages have limited interest and funding for alternative medicine studies in the past. There has been great reluctance on the part of allopathic practitioners to admit that anything else is worthwhile, and what is worse, a willingness to enforce

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# GERSON HEALING NEWSLETTER

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## Alternative Medicine...

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their opinions with all means available, from legal and financial suppression to large scale advertising and negative publicity campaigns.

### Allopathic Failure

There is rampant denial among conventional practitioners as to how widespread the use of alternative medicine is, and even more regarding the root causes of the phenomenon. Physicians try to convince themselves that the use of alternative medicine is a "fad" or "craze", and not a trend in medicine that is here to stay. Perhaps the allopathic doctors are acutely aware of why more people are turning to alternative medicine, and perhaps that is why they avoid asking why patients are turning from conventional medicine. In a letter to *JAMA*, Edward Lord Baldwin, member of the Parliamentary Group for Alternative and Complementary Medicine in the British House of Lords, writes, "Conspicuously absent [from Dr. Austin's study on reasons patients use alternative therapy] is any question along the lines of 'Has conventional treatment worked for you?'" We suspect allopathic physicians are afraid to ask that question, in the face of massive, well-documented failures of their methods when applied to almost every degenerative disease. Could they in fact be aware of the fears people have in taking powerful and dangerous pharmaceutical drugs, to say nothing of the constantly rising

cost of treatments and drugs?

### Conventional Medicine's Misperception

The conventional medical world will have to recognize it is the demonstrable failure and outrageous expense of conventional medicine that has caused people, mostly college-educated and well-to-do, to look for more effective, more empowering, less intimidating and certainly less expensive means of alleviating their illnesses. It would be responsible of our governmental protectors and the physicians making negative statements about herbs, to put some effort and money into testing their real effectiveness. These are often remedies that have been in use for hundreds, even thousands of years by millions of people. It is incredible to assume that all traditional, natural remedies are ineffective, although that is the message being conveyed by conventional medicine advocates. Taking into account that the active ingredients in most pharmaceutical drugs are made from, or at least based on substances found in plants, roots and other natural products, negative statements from drug companies and conventional doctors should be nothing less than incriminating.

### Patients' Motivations

Only the briefest notice is taken of patients' motivations for walking away from conventional medicine. *Time* magazine writes, "What's behind this sudden revival of thousand-year-old remedies? At root, it's the fears and desires of 80 million aging baby boomers who are eager to seize con-

rol of their medical destinies. The coldness and remoteness of conventional medicine and red-tape tangled managed care" have discouraged half of all Americans from trusting only allopathic physicians. "Doctors are becoming more and more inaccessible" says Leda Jean Van Stedum, 45." (*Time*, Nov. 23, 1998). The powerful driving force behind the 47% rise in visits to alternative practitioners over the past eight years cannot be ignored. Conventional medicine has tried being dismissive, they have tried stepping up propaganda and they have tried using scare tactics to reduce the growth of market share that alternative therapies hold - They have failed!

### Allopathic Methods "Experimental"

*JAMA* writers label their own attempts to treat cancer as experimental or they call them, clinical trials, while dubbing alternative methods 'unproven.' One very good example of this is chemotherapy. Though widely used, chemotherapy has not been subjected to the medical establishments de-facto test procedure, the double-blind study. While chemotherapy is one of few options conventional medicine allows in the treatment of cancer, it would be labeled as 'unproven' if it were an alternative treatment, as it has not undergone double-blind studies. The treatment of cancer through surgery would likewise be labeled 'unproven.' Extraordinarily expensive bone marrow transplants (still considered 'experimental') are nonetheless widely used in conventional medical treatment. It is time physicians stop using this double standard and approach alternative medicine with open minds and a willingness to discover what is best for their patients.

### Blindness to Documented Dangers of Allopathic Methods

Article after article in *JAMA*, finds medical professionals citing "concerns" over the possible ill effects of using natural remedies, with a flurry of unsubstantiated anecdotes. Yet, in imitation of the alternative practitioners they scorn, these doctors can show few, if any, statistics or studies to support their negative attitudes. On the other hand, the ill effects of conven-

tional pharmaceuticals are well known, and in most cases are far more serious and damaging than those even being suggested to result from herbal remedies. A recent study found that over 100,000 people die annually from the effects of properly prescribed, correctly administered pharmaceutical drugs in the U.S. alone, possibly making it the third leading cause of death. [This figure is actually exceeded by the estimated 180,000 annual deaths in hospitals caused by medical negligence.] Even unsupervised, self-dosing of goldenseal, echinacea and St. John's wort cannot come close to matching those fatal numbers. In fact, it is precisely the lack of debilitating side effects that has fueled much of the rise in popularity of herbal remedies. Patients do not fear herbs nearly as much as they fear pharmaceuticals and their unavoidable side effects.

#### A comparison of language used in biased media reports

Referring to Alternative:	Referring to Allopathic:
Quacks	Doctors/Researchers
May not be harmful	Safe and effective
Dangerous injury	Side effect
Potion	Medication
Gobble remedies	Take prescribed drugs
Plant extract	Pill
Strange plants	Trusted brands
Unproven	Experimental

#### Financial Incentive

Prevention is becoming exceedingly important to today's more informed, health-care consumer, and allopathic medicine is having a hard time coming to terms. For an industry that believes in treating symptoms while ignoring the prevention of disease, this new challenger promotes prevention as a means of eradicating symptoms and disease. In conventional minds, the sicker the patient is, the more there is to do to them. The greater the illness, the more willing they will be to surrender their judgment and money to the physician, the industry and to the drug companies. Treating symptoms without addressing the whole cause of the disease, is nothing more than blowing out the

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# Seeds of Discontent

## Genetically Engineered Foods and Consumer Right-to-Know

By Aisha Ikramuddin

Reprinted with permission from *The Green Guide*, #60, October 1998, published by *Mothers & Others for a Livable Planet*, a non-profit consumer education organization focusing on the environment. Information on joining *Mothers & Others*, as well as a list of publications, may be obtained by contacting:

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The Austrian monk Gregor Mendel might have been horrified to discover that his 1866 work on hybridization has led to the rise of biotechnology, which lets humans do what nature cannot: splice manipulated genes from one species into another. Mendel's hybrid pea was one thing. It was all pea. A tomato spiked with flounder genes is something else. "Combining genes from widely different organisms, such as corn and cows, introduces elements of uncertainty and risk that we have never encountered before," says biologist Jane Rissler, Ph.D., of the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS).

Nevertheless, by now you and your family have probably eaten genetically modified foods unknowingly, because they're not labeled as such. Often, they're ingredients in processed foods. In May 1997, tests conducted by Genetic ID for *The New York Times* revealed that many foods from corn chips to baby formulas contained "transgenic" soy or corn (see GG #41). Some 60% of all processed foods contain soy or corn derivatives, such as soy protein, lecithin (soy), dextrose (corn), and soy or corn oil. In 1998, an estimated 38% of U.S. soybean acreage was planted with Roundup Ready™ soy, engineered to survive otherwise fatal doses of the herbicide Roundup. And 32% of this year's corn crop has been engi-

neered to emit toxins from *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt), a soil bacteria normally sprayed to control insects. Bt cotton and potatoes, disease-resistant squash, and thick-skinned tomatoes were also planted. And, an estimated 10% of U.S. dairies inject cows with rBGH, a genetically engineered growth hormone that swells milk production.

The proponents of transgenic foods claim that, by increasing yields and reducing farmer costs, biotechnology will feed Earth's ever-burgeoning population - estimated to increase by three billion people, to 9.4 billion, by 2050. But many scientists, environmentalists and consumers fear that biotechnology could have a devastating impact on the environment and put human health at risk. They also warn that our food system is increasingly monopolized by corporate agrochemical giants. Monsanto, Novartis, Dow and DuPont are buying up agricultural companies, patenting seeds, and bioengineering plants with a "Terminator Gene" so they can't reproduce - and farmers can't save seeds to plant the next year. Farmers are even contractually obligated by Monsanto to use Roundup on Roundup Ready crops.

"Many consumers oppose the transfer of control over our food system," says Joan Gussow, Ed.D., nutritionist and member of the National Organic Standards Board. "The only way the public can preserve a democratic food system, with alternatives, is through labeling." A February 1997 survey by Swiss biotech giant Novartis found that 93% of Americans want all genetically engineered foods to be labeled. However, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) refuses to require labeling, except where exposure to common allergens occur.

(Continued on next page)

### Technology vs. Nature

Flounder genes can protect tomatoes from frost damage, while genes from certain bacteria and viruses can delay their ripening and rotting. What's wrong with that? Nothing, say the biotech industry and the FDA, who claim that genetic engineering is no different than hybridization, which relies on sexual reproduction, such as cross-pollination, between members of the same or closely related species. But biotechnology pushes genetic material across natural boundaries between species, and genetic material is modified before the transfer. "The more rearranging and changing you do to a gene, the more likely you'll get unexpected effects," says Dr. Rissler. This living genetic material in modified organisms can spread and mutate when released in the field. "Once agrochemical companies put genetically engineered foods out, there is no going back," warns Dr. Gussow.

### Pesticide Overkill

At present, biotechnology primarily focuses on herbicide tolerance and insect and disease resistance. One obvious environmental problem: Roundup Ready crops will increase the use of Roundup, which earns Monsanto about 40% of its revenues. Although Monsanto calls Roundup, or glyphosate, safe, it is the third most commonly reported source of pesticide-related illness among California farm workers. It can drift up to 800 yards from the site of application, exposing people, animals and other plants. Another herbicide, bromoxynil, was approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in May 1998 for use on bio-engineered resistant cotton, although the chemical carries a cancer risk nearly double that allowed by the Food Quality Protection Act.

Transgenic Bt crops may also ultimately result in greater use of toxic pesticides. Bt sprays, which pose no danger to humans, have been used by organic and integrated pest management (IPM) farmers for years. Theoretically, Bt toxin within the plant itself could reduce the need for pesti-

cides. But researchers at the University of Arizona, Tucson, discovered that diamondback moths resist Bt toxin after repetitive exposure, such as occurs when feeding on Bt plants.

Eight types of insects have already adapted to Bt in the field or in laboratory tests. If Bt becomes ineffective, organic farmers will suffer. "Organic farmers are set to lose in the Bt war - other farmers have pesticide alternatives," says Jim Potts, program director of the National Family Farm Coalition. "In the long term, what we expect to see is that farmers will need to use heavier doses of pesticides," says Charles Margulis of Greenpeace.

Worse yet, transgenic Bt crops harm beneficial insects, unlike Bt sprays, which are harmless to these non-target varieties. When beneficial lacewings were fed corn borers reared on Bt corn, their mortality rate more than doubled, a 1998 Swiss study in the *Journal of Environmental Epidemiology* found. The Scottish Crop Research Institute has demonstrated that ladybirds fed aphids raised on transgenic potatoes do not live as long as, and produce one-third fewer eggs than, ladybirds which eat regular aphids.

### Gene Flow & Super Weeds

Dr. Rissler and others warn that gene flow, or the way genes drift from crops into the wild on wind- and insect-borne transgenic pollen, may create hardier "super weeds." Transgenic canola can pass on its herbicide tolerance to nearby weedy relatives, such as wild mustard, in as little as two generations of interbreeding, scientists at Riso National Laboratory in Denmark found in 1996. Herbicide tolerance genes in canola can also be transferred to wild radish, according to French scientists at the National Institute of Agronomic Research. And, University of Chicago researchers reported in the September 3, 1998 issue of *Nature* that genetically-altered, self-pollinating mustard plants were more likely to breed with wild relatives than hybrid plants.

As super weeds develop, Roundup, bromoxynil and other herbicides may be rendered useless. Super-weeds may invade fragile ecosystems, as kudzu

has done in the United States. Genes for cold resistance or drought tolerance, "caught" from transgenic crops, may help weeds establish themselves in previously inhospitable areas.

Gene flow has great potential to wreak havoc on bio-diversity. "Gene transfer can affect the genetic diversity of a plant's wild relatives," says Dr. Rissler. For example, if genetically altered corn breeds with its wild relatives in Mexico, where corn originated, the altered gene may become dominant and the number of varieties may decline. The decimation of a widely-planted corn hybrid by a new strain of corn leaf blight in 1970 was only overcome by hybridizing with other varieties carrying alternate genes. Next time we might not be so lucky.

### Health Risks

Though transgenic foods may result in increased food pesticide residues, they have not, in and of themselves, proven dangerous to humans. But consumer advocates and some scientists fear that not enough is known about genetic science to be certain that such foods don't pose risks. For instance, many transgenic plants use antibiotic-resistant genes as "markers" that help bioengineers identify which host organisms have been successfully modified. These genes are continuously expressed, increasing the risk of transfer of antibiotic resistance to bacteria.

People with rare food allergies may be put at risk. A 1996 University of Nebraska study found that soybeans spliced with Brazil nut genes caused reactions in people allergic to Brazil nuts, confirming a hypothesis that allergenicity is a trait that can be transferred. Because transgenic foods may contain rare proteins never before found in food, some individuals may have adverse reactions to them.

### Fighting for the Right to Know

Raising the above concerns, the Alliance for Bio-integrity (ABI) filed a lawsuit in May 1998 seeking to compel the FDA to label and conduct safety tests of all transgenic foods. "The Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act clearly requires that the safety of food additives be established before they are

marketed and requires that all material facts about foods be disclosed," says Steven Druker, executive director of ABI, a coalition of scientists, religious leaders, health professionals, consumers and chefs. The lawsuit also contends that freedom of religion is denied without adequate labeling of genetically modified foods. Dietary restrictions observed by Jews, Muslims, Hindus and others may be violated through consumption of foods containing hidden genes from, say, pigs or shellfish.

Until recently, labeling has been an uphill battle in the U.S., ever since Monsanto began marketing rBGH (See GG #36). But in August 1997, Ben & Jerry's and other companies won the right to label their products rBGH-free under the terms of a legal settlement. And Vermont passed a new rBGH labeling law in April 1998.

In Europe, overwhelming consumer demand led the 15-country European Union to require labeling of genetically altered foods. But pressure from U.S. government and industry, including a Monsanto advertising blitz in France and Switzerland in the summer of 1998, may have led to a watering-down [of the rules]. The EU labeling requirements, which took effect in September, exempt additives, such as soy oil and lecithin, claiming that processing may make modified genetic material undetectable.

A certification process may help. Genetically Natural Certification, formed by Genetic ID and International Certification Services, will soon be labeling transgenic-free foods - including foods using additives - as "certified genetically natural." Along with testing, certification will require that foods be tracked from seed to final product, according to Bill Witherspoon, president and CEO. "The purpose of certification is to allow consumers to make their own choice," he says.

Last spring, nearly 200,000 consumers wrote letters opposing the U.S. Department of Agriculture's attempt to permit transgenic foods to be called organic under the National

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# More Trouble for Meat Eaters

## Findings of Carcinogens in Cooked Meat

By Charlotte Gerson

In the course of the last twenty years or so, many authors have written about the damage meat eating causes to the human metabolism. Some who come to mind are John Robbins, reporting his research in *Diet for a New America* (Stillpoint Publishing, 1987), Ross Horne, giving an excellent reason for being vegetarian in *The Health Revolution*, (Published by Happy Landings Pty. Ltd., copyright 1984 - available from the Gerson Institute) and even the world-famous Dr. Spöck, who reversed himself in 1991 from his 1946 recommendation that children eat meat and drink milk, by recommending a vegetarian diet. In spite of the uproar that came from some 'experts', the American Dietetic Association released a statement saying "research shows a carefully planned vegetarian diet can be nutritionally adequate and healthful for children from infants to teenagers", as quoted in *Vegetarian Voice*, Vol. 23, No.1, 1998.

In the same issue of *Vegetarian Voice*, another News Brief carries the heading, "Meat Even More Unsafe on Grill; Veggies Fine." The article speaks of a type of carcinogen called heterocyclic amine (HCA), formed within beef, poultry and fish when

cooked at temperatures of 200 degrees C (392 degrees F) or greater. HCAs are not present in raw meat. They are formed when free amino acids (protein building blocks), creatine (found in muscle tissue) and sugar (glucose, found in all meats) react under a duration of high temperature to form mutagenic heterocyclic amines. Vegetables do not contain nearly enough of any of these combined substances to form the harmful levels of HCA meats do. Tests involving the cooking of protein-rich foods like beans, cheese and even shrimp produced negligible results. Higher levels of HCA are present when meat is fried, broiled or barbecued, where temperatures are highest, while much lower activity is found in meats when stewed, boiled or poached. One study found that increasing cooking temperature from 200 degrees C (392 degrees F) to 250 degrees C (482 degrees F) led to nearly 300% increases in HCA levels. Stewing, boiling or poaching meats, when temperatures are often lower than 100 degrees C (212 degrees F) create significantly lower levels of HCA activity.

Although not focused on cancer,  
(Continued on next page)

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# Patient Follow-up

Celia Collins

By Celia Collins



Introduction by Charlotte Gerson

In our Gerson Healing Newsletter of March/April 1998 (Vol. 13, No. 2) we published the story of Celia Collins. Celia had been diagnosed with breast cancer and liver metastases, a diagnosis that rarely allows for more than 6 months of survival. However, six months after she started the Gerson Therapy, her liver scan showed no more tumors and she was recovering. We did not consider 6 months enough time to truly heal, even though all her tumors were gone. It is now 18 months since Celia began her Gerson Therapy and we have her latest report:

The Gerson Therapy WORKS! I am a living, breathing example of that fact. On November 6, 1998, I passed the one and-a-half year mark of being on the therapy. I am convinced that if I had taken the conventional path, some time in the next few months I would receive the dreaded news: The cancer is back, we are sooooo sorry but there is just nothing more to be done. I thank my spirit for speaking to me and telling me about The Gerson Therapy, as I am instead cancer-free without radiation or chemotherapy for breast cancer.

There are several keys to my success. One is the diet itself. The balance that it affords and the deep cleansing it accomplishes is remarkable. Who could imagine that so much healing power lies in the food we eat? Certainly most of the rest of the world is still ignorant of this, but it is true. Whenever I have deviated from the prescribed regimen even slightly, my body reacts and tells me to follow the formula, as there I find the balance needed to heal. Of course it is therefore necessary to be still with oneself and to listen to what the body has to say, this being another important key to the healing process.

All this special food preparation and all the listening take time. So things came to a point when I gave up to the fact I had to devote my self and my time to my healing. I had to let go of my old habits, my old stresses, and my old everyday, to be with this healing process deeply and in the now. After all, having cancer is no 'business as usual' occurrence, but a choice between life and death. After some getting used to I was able to use this time as an opportunity for self-discovery and rest.

Through this healing process, I am learning about the beauty and balance that exists in all things and in all beings and am learning to live in that place.

My husband Brandon and I are grateful that our daughter Lisa has come to live with us and help with the therapy. She is just one of the gifts having cancer has brought. My family's support (and my Puppets!!) is what gives me the courage to do what I have to do to heal myself. I will be doing several Marionette Shows this Christmas Season, ...yeah for the chance to go on living in this beautiful world!

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someone you care about.

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bi-monthly *Healing Newsletter's*  
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## Meat Eaters...

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Dr. Francis M. Pottenger conducted a study of cooked meats and nutrition. His book titled, *Pottenger's Cats, A Study in Nutrition*, (published by the Price-Pottenger Foundation, Copyright 1983 - available from the Gerson Institute) documents a study on how cats' health deteriorates through a matter of only four generations when fed exclusively on cooked/heated milk or meat. Pasteurization, wherein milk is not brought to the boiling point, also caused nutritional damage. Even meat that was not cooked at particularly high temperatures was shown to have compromised nutritional value. Dr. Pottenger does not report whether any of the cats fed 'heat-damaged' foods also developed cancer.

Although levels of HCAs in meat vary, and are sometimes very low, it is unknown exactly how much of the chemical is required to cause cancer. Although HCAs have been known to exist since 1989, there are presently no federal guidelines on their potency and no understanding of their levels in the average American diet. Scientists claim not to have enough clinical data to stand behind their current findings, however, studies have found links between well-cooked meat consumption and stomach cancer, as well as certain lymphoma and even breast cancer. Very recent studies have made firm links between meat and milk eaters and prostate cancer. A recent Senate hearing found that meat eating causes ten times the rate of colon cancer. Perhaps the biggest downer for meat eaters is that under-cooked meat happens to cause a majority of food poisoning cases in humans. While fish are known to have the lowest levels of HCAs, vegetables, even when grilled, have almost none!

Organic Standards (NOS). "We need to create a positive synergy between the backlash against the NOS and the broader consumer right-to-know movement," says Ronnie Cummins, executive director of The Campaign for Food Safety. Without truthful labeling, the potential for a transformation of world agriculture and ecosystems is imminent. By asserting our right to know and voting with our pocketbooks, American consumers can ensure a food system that provides real choice.

### What You Can Do

- Write the FDA and your congressional representatives to demand mandatory safety tests for and labeling of transgenic foods: Michael Friedman, Lead Deputy Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration, Fishers Lane, Room 1471, Rockville, MD 20857.
- Write to EPA demanding stringent resistance management plans for BI crops. For more info, contact UCS, 202/332-0900, [www.ucsusa.org](http://www.ucsusa.org)  
— Goldman, Asst. Administrator, EPA Office of Pollution Prevention & Toxic Substances, 401 MSt. SW, Washington, DC 20460
- Choose 100% certified organic foods and cotton. Processed organic foods may contain transgenic ingredients. The Green Guide will continue to track the National Organic Standards.
- Encourage your grocery stores to stock products that don't contain transgenic foods. Write or call manufacturers of your favorite products requesting that they use only ingredients that have not been bio-engineered, and label them.

### Resources

- Alliance for Bio-integrity, 515/472-5554, [www.bio-integrity.org](http://www.bio-integrity.org).
- The Campaign for Food Safety, 218/226-4164, [www.purefood.org](http://www.purefood.org).
- Mothers for Natural Law, 515/472-2809, [www.safe-food.org](http://www.safe-food.org), is seeking one million signatures demanding the labeling of genetically engineered foods.
- *Eat Your Genes* by Stephen Nottingham (St. Martin's Press, 1998, \$17.95).

# Drugs on Tap?

## Discovering the Age of ECOceuticals

By Susan DeSimone

A group of European scientists were monitoring a lake in Switzerland for pesticide contamination when they stumbled upon an alarming discovery. They detected a compound resembling mecoprop, an herbicide they had in fact been looking for, but it wasn't an exact match. Initial suspicions were that the contaminant was mecoprop in an early stage of degradation, but upon closer examination they concluded the chemical was actually clofibrac acid, a widely used cholesterol-lowering drug.

This finding prompted the scientists to search for traces of the drug elsewhere. Surprisingly, "they found it everywhere, from rural mountain lakes to rivers flowing through densely populated areas," according to a March 1998 report by Janet Raloff in *Science News Online* (3/21/98). Since this drug is not manufactured in Switzerland, Hans-Rudolph Buser, one of the chemists conducting the study, drew the logical conclusion that such widespread presence of this drug could not be attributed to an industrial accident but to residues found in human wastes.

The breakdown of drugs by the body varies with each individual in accordance with the type of drug ingested, but studies show that up to 90% of a pharmaceutical may be excreted in its original form. Sometimes "partially degraded drugs are converted back into their active form through chemical reactions with the environment," writes Janet Raloff in her article entitled, "Drugged Waters."

In addition to clofibrac acid, a research team in Berlin discovered other drugs in drinking water: drugs used to regulate concentrations of lipids in the blood (such as phenazone and fenofibrate), as well as analgesics (including ibuprofen and diclofenac). "Other researchers have detected chemotherapy drugs, antibiotics, and hormones in bodies of water that

supply drinking water," reports Raloff.

One German chemist conducting studies for a municipal water research laboratory in Wiesbaden, "detected 30 of the 60 common pharmaceuticals for which he tested," states Raloff. "These included lipid-lowering drugs, antibiotics, analgesics, antiseptics, and beta-blocker heart drugs. He even found residues of drugs to control epilepsy and [those] that serve as contrast agents for diagnostic x-rays."

Although concentrations of drugs found in water supplies are low, their potential toxicity is unknown. Virtually no studies have been conducted to assess the impact these contaminants have on humans, wildlife or ecosystems. Clearly, research in this area is urgently needed.

The discovery of antibiotics in German wastewater raised a few eyebrows among scientists here in the United States. One such scientist, Stuart Levy, director of the Center for Adaptation Genetics and Drug Resistance at Tufts University, believes that "these antibiotics may be present at levels of consequence to bacteria - levels that could not only alter the ecology of the environment but also give rise to antibiotic resistance." (This past year the Center for Disease Control has issued warnings to doctors urging them to prescribe antibiotics only when absolutely necessary. Doctors are in a panic because they are finding many bacteria have become resistant to drugs, and most attribute this to the over-prescribing of antibiotics).

It is safe to assume that trace residues of drugs could be found in water supplies here in the United States, but, surprise, surprise, no one is really looking into it. Neither the FDA nor the EPA are responsible for directly monitoring water supplies.

Drugs must be regulated by health departments who have very little knowledge on how to protect

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ecosystems and water supplies. Health departments are not apt to view pharmaceuticals as being a potential source of pollution, since the concentration of drugs in our water supply is so low. "Until recently," says Raloff, "most drugs in public water supplies would have been undetectable."

Before a drug can be approved for manufacturing, pharmaceutical companies must present regulators with a model of projected concentrations of the drug in public water supplies, as well as predicting its possible impact on wildlife. This assessment is then presented to the FDA.

The FDA however, as of July 1997, has decided such studies need not be quite so extensive. Daniel C. Kearns of the FDA explained that excreted drugs "are probably not having a significant environmental effect, so unless modeling data suggest a drug's concentrations would reach 1 ppb (parts per billion), a manufacturer no longer must submit an environmental assessment." [Note: The scientists in Berlin found levels of clofibrate acid in

ground water at concentrations of up to 4 ppb].

Models have been used in the past as a substitute for monitoring the impact of drugs on eco-systems, since the technology needed to detect low levels was not available, but "chemists today routinely detect parts per trillion (ppt) of many waterborne pollutants," states Ms. Raloff.

It is no surprise that the FDA fails to make use of this wonderful technology. According to the *Science News Report*: "When asked whether the FDA requires any monitoring of water supplies to see whether concentrations in the real world match the predictions of drug manufacturers' models, Kearns said 'no.'"

Hopefully the FDA will start paying attention to studies being conducted by Shane Snyder of Michigan State University. He has been analyzing Las Vegas wastewater that flows into Lake Mead. His findings revealed a level of estrogen in the water that is causing some male fish to produce an egg-making protein that is normally seen only in reproductive females. "Though estradiol, the primary, natural female sex hormone, appears to be

the major estrogenic compound in this water, there is evidence that a synthetic hormone in birth control pills may also be a contributor," writes Raloff. Snyder is still investigating.

Another scientist, Halling-Serensen of the Royal Danish School of Pharmacy in Copenhagen, has been busy studying the toxic impact of waterborne antibiotics on marine life, including algae and crustaceans. "By quantifying the potential ecological effects of individual compounds," he told *Science News*, "we may get information that's useful for decision making. For instance, if we have five medicinal compounds that can treat the same disease, we might now identify which is most friendly to the ecosystems - and choose to use that one."

While Europe is certainly making steps in the right direction, it is obvious that here in the U.S. we need more scientists like Shane Snyder, who have followed Europe's lead in exposing yet another damaging side effect of pharmaceutical drugs.

## Brain Disease Spreads to U.S. Livestock and Wildlife May Be Misdiagnosed as Alzheimer's in Humans

By Charlotte Gerson

In our *Gerson Healing Newsletter*, Vol. 11, No. 4, we discussed Mad Cow Disease in detail. The assumption was that most people are concerned more with the beef and milk products than whether or not the disease might actually be found in, or spread to other animals. We now find an article in *Ecstasy Now*, Vol. 23, No. 1, 1998, p. 5, titled "Mad Elk Disease Spreading". While the alarming spread of Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy (TSE) among elk and mule deer, whose famous relative Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

(BSE), popularly called 'mad cow disease', is not expected to phaze the general cow-eating populace, strong concerns should be raised for the very fact that it is transmissible. Infected animals are now found in some Colorado elk and mule deer, as well as some in South Dakota, Wyoming, Canada and most recently, according to the report, Nebraska. The first domestic case of TSE, specifically called Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in elk and mule deer was discovered on a ranch in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. While this

transmissible disease had previously been found only in wild animals, the Canadian discovery was the first case in the U.S. or Canada to involve domestic game farm elk. The diseased elk was imported to Canada from South Dakota.

CWD is believed to have evolved from scrapie (a form of transmissible spongiform encephalopathy specific to sheep). The two primary theories on how it is spread are through wild elk and mule deer grazing on the bones of scrapie infected sheep during seasons when the animals were



# FTC Targets Supplement Industry

By Susan DeSimone

For the first time, the Federal Trade Commission issued advertising guidelines targeting the nation's burgeoning dietary supplement industry.

On November 18, 1998, *The New York Times* reported that "the commission e-mailed warnings to 1,200 internet sites that it said had made 'incredible claims' for drugs, devices and dietary supplements, including herbal remedies that purported to ward off AIDS or cancer."

The new guidelines require manufacturers to back up any advertised claims with facts and also requires that their ads not be misleading in any way.

While FDA labeling forbids manufacturers from stating that a supple-

ment can treat or prevent a disease, "the FTC guidelines allow such claims in advertisements, provided that the manufacturer can substantiate them," writes Denise Grady, reporter for the Times. "What qualifies as substantiation is also explained in the guidelines: 'competent and reliable scientific evidence,' including tests, analyses, research and studies conducted by qualified professionals."

The catch is that advertisers cannot choose only those studies that favor their supplement. The guidelines state that the ads "must reflect 'the totality of the evidence'."

## Brain Disease...

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starved for calcium, and through humans mixing scrapie infected brain or tissue into feed for cattle and other livestock. In the wild, these animals then infected clean domestic herds through fence-line contact on ranches and through their introduction into captive breeding programs. The disease is also similar to a form of TSE specific to humans called Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD). In the mid-west, where squirrel and pig brains are a common dish, researchers have found a greater instance of CJD sufferers. CJD is said to affect approximately one in a million people, but it is likely that several cases of CJD are misdiagnosed as Alzheimer's. Unfortunately, CWD can lie dormant for many years, making it hard to detect, but once symptoms surface, the disease quickly destroys the brain.

Infectious proteins called prions, are the cause of all TSE related diseases. These mutant versions of proteins occur normally in the body, and are considered to be an entirely new form

of disease-causing agent, not related to bacteria, fungi, viruses or parasites.

CWD forms sponge-like holes in the brain, affecting the nervous system and motor functions, eventually leading to the animal's death. While suffering from this devastating disease, mule deer or elk, emaciated, heads down and ears drooping, will stare blankly into space, stumbling around in small circles, until they fall over dead.

Researchers still claim CWD, first discovered in Colorado mule deer in 1967, does not transmit to humans, although the number of deaths in the United Kingdom from BSE, and strong link to CJD by human consumption of infected brain tissue, demonstrate this is clearly a false and misleading claim.

Although the FDA drafted a partial ban on the recycling of mammalian protein into ruminant (cud-chewing) animal feed, the regulations fall critically short of being effective. The ban still allows the inclusion of swine product in ruminant animal feed. Although no swine have contracted CWD under natural conditions,

## Health News

### Pollutants Charged in Forty Percent of Deaths

An estimated 40 percent of disease-related deaths worldwide can be attributed to chemical pollutants and other man-made environmental factors. This is according to a study led by David Pimental, professor of ecology and agricultural sciences at Cornell University, as published in the October 1998 issue of *BioScience*. "We humans are further stressed - and disease is worsened - by widespread malnutrition and the unprecedented increase in air, water and soil pollutants."

#### Some findings of note:

- Of the 80,000 pesticides and other chemicals in use today, 10 per cent are recognized as carcinogens. Cancer related deaths in the United States increased from 331,000 in

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according to FDA claims, commercial pigs are slaughtered at 6 months, which is long before they would exhibit signs of having the disease. In the U.S., remains of mule deer and elk can be used to make feed for pigs, while pig remains can then be fed to any food animal under the FDA ban. The weakest link in the chain is easy to see, and it's already broken, according to USDA reports which have recently found a porcine form of 'mad cow disease' in U.S. pigs. This porcine form of TSE is suspected in links between greater cases of CJD in humans and pork consumption.

How can you protect yourself from this deadly disease? Become and remain vegetarian!

#### Sources:

*Vegetarian Voice*, Vol. 23, No. 1, 1998, "Mad Elk Disease Spreading"

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## Alternative Medicine...

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match that started the fire. In old China, we are told physicians were paid only as long as their 'clients' remained healthy. Imagine how much suffering would be avoided if our healthcare system were on such a reward basis with today's doctors. The heart of the problem, is that prevention is not a lucrative cause for big business.

### Overall Public Attitude of the Medical Profession

Unfortunately, attitudes held by the medical industry toward alternative medicine is still one of scorn rather than open-mindedness, exclusion rather than curiosity. The alternative health industry is not asking for blind faith and acceptance, it is only asking for a fair hearing and unbiased tests.

In *Gerson Healing Newsletter*, Vol 12, No. 4 (July-August 1997) we reported on research of St. John's Wort, published in *Nursesweek* of May, 5, 1997. This herb, used for some 2,000 years, is finding many doctors and psychiatrists' favor because it works. By the middle of 1997, physicians were writing some 3 million prescriptions per year, which is 25 times the number they wrote for Prozac. St. John's Wort causes virtually no side effects (outside an occasional upset stomach in less than 2% of users), while its pharmaceutical equivalent, Prozac, regularly causes such serious side effects as insomnia, weight loss and sexual dysfunction.

### Part 2 of 2

Will appear in our next issue...  
*Healing Newsletter*, Vol. 14, No. 2

## Book Sale!

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## Health News

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1970 to 521,000 in 1992, with an estimated 30,000 deaths attributed to chemical exposure.

• The global use of agricultural pesticides rose from about 50 million kilograms a year in 1945 to current application rates of approximately 2.5 billion kilograms per year.

• Modern pesticides are more than 10 times more toxic to living organisms than those used in the 1950s.

• In China, where tobacco smoking increased from approximately 360 to nearly 1,800 cigarettes per person per year, males smoke 98 percent of the cigarettes. However, mortality due to lung cancer is approximately equal in males and females.

Researchers believe that the only way to combat the growing environmental and health problems would be to implement "comprehensive, fair population-control policies combined with effective environmental management programs." They predict that "without international cooperative efforts, disease prevalence will continue its rapid rise throughout the world and will diminish the quality of life for all humans."

## Childhood Obesity Declared 'An Epidemic'

Linked to Cause of Type 2 Diabetes in Kids

Children's choices of high-fat, high-carbohydrate foods like frosted flakes, ice cream and cookies have led to an alarming degeneration of health. Over the past two decades, rates of childhood obesity have doubled, with an average of 1 in 5 children being overweight. Researchers have linked this higher rate of obesity with greater occurrences of Type 2, or Adult-Onset diabetes in children. "Ten years ago, we were teaching medical students that you didn't see this disease in people under 40, and now we're seeing it in people under 10," said Dr. Robin Goland, co-director of the Naomi Berrie Diabetes Center, in an article from the *New York Times News Service* by Ginger Thompson.