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The Dangers Lurking in Animal-Based Foods: Harmful Additives, Synthetic Hormones, Colorings, Antibiotics, Glyphosate

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For over 70 years, the USDA has shaped the dietary framework for Americans, crafting food guidelines to maintain the nation's health. Alongside the FDA, it bears the responsibility of regulating food safety and ensuring that our diets comprise balanced proteins, fats, and carbohydrates from trustworthy sources. Yet, as we reflect on the health landscape of previous generations, a stark contrast emerges between then and now, underscoring a disturbing trajectory in public health and dietary norms.

Baby boomers and Gen X, who came of age from the 1940s through the 1960s, recall a time when childhood illnesses like measles, mumps, and chickenpox were common but typically resolved without significant complications, leaving children with lifelong immunity. Schools emphasized USDA nutritional guidelines through home economics classes, and children led active lives, fostering physical fitness. Victory gardens in backyards exemplified a cultural norm of cultivating fresh produce, and the concept of body pollution—the cumulative impact of environmental toxins on health—was largely unheard of. Obesity, autism, asthma, diabetes, autoimmune conditions, and chronic inflammatory illnesses were rare or virtually non-existent.

In stark contrast, today's youth face an epidemic of obesity and nutrient deficiencies, including critical vitamins and minerals such as C, D, E, zinc, and magnesium. Obesity alone contributes to 335,000 deaths annually, accounts for over $260 billion in healthcare costs, and is linked to millions of disability-adjusted life-years lost. Predictions published in *The Lancet* forecast a grim future: by 2050, 80% of adults and nearly 40% of youth aged 15–24 will be overweight or obese. Teenagers, increasingly unfit, struggle to participate in sports or qualify for military service. Shockingly, many of today's children may not outlive their parents.

Equally troubling is the surge in mental health crises among the young. Teen suicide rates continue to rise, with 20% of teenagers contemplating self-harm—a phenomenon rarely, if ever, remembered by earlier generations. The proliferation of serotonin-inhibiting drugs has done little to stem the tide, pointing to deeper systemic issues.

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The Jamie L. Whitten Building in Washington D.C. is the current USDA headquarters. (Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0)

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A primary culprit is the denaturalization and industrial over-processing of food. **Today's diets are rife with harmful additives,** excessive salt, unhealthy sweeteners like high-fructose corn syrup, and a host of contaminants, including forever chemicals. microplastics and genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Regulatory agencies such as the USDA and FDA have repeatedly supported and protected these questionable practices, often with the backing of advisory panels riddled with conflicts of interest. Private industries, wielding immense wealth and power, dictate what Americans consume, perpetuating diets devoid of fresh, nutritious ingredients.

This crisis highlights a troubling pattern of leadership at federal health agencies, often staffed by medical professionals from prestigious institutions who have failed to enact meaningful reforms. Despite their credentials, these leaders have been unable—or unwilling—to challenge the corporate capture that dominates our food supply and undermines public health.

Image: Robert Kennedy Jr. (Source)

Enter **Robert Kennedy Jr.,** whose unique qualifications and decades-long career as a legal scholar and activist position him as an unparalleled candidate to lead the Department of Health and Human Services. Unlike his predecessors, Kennedy brings a history of identifying and combating institutional corruption, the very force at the heart of America's health crisis. While he may lack traditional medical or academic titles, he possesses a deep understanding of the systemic issues plaguing federal health agencies and the vision to champion transformative change. His leadership could address not only the regulatory failings but also promote healthier lifestyles and stricter oversight of the nation's food and agricultural policies.

In light of this potential, examining the dangers posed by the animal-based foods that dominate the American diet is a critical step toward understanding the broader health implications. These staples, laden with toxins and chemical residues, have far-reaching consequences for public health, as we will explore in the following discussion.

The Dangers Lurking in Animal-Based Foods

Meat Additives

For lack of a better word, the meat sold in this country's grocery stores and restaurants is fr om animals so "shotup" with hormones, antibiotics, tranquilizers, preservatives, additives, and pesticides that it is almost *more pharmaceutical than nutritional*. These added toxins have been linked to negative long-term effects on health. Here's just one example: the highly toxic organophosphates and brain damage. Human electroencephalograms showed that *a single exposure* could alter the electrical activity of an infant's brain for years and possibly cause abnormal behavior and learning patterns. The study, conducted by Harvard Medical School concluded

> "there is a dangerous possibility that organophosphate pesticides have the potential for causing long term brain damage."

As a side note, organophosphates also decrease sex drive, impair concentration, and cause memory loss, schizophrenia, depression, irritability and more; plus, the US Environmental Protection Agency has taken steps to limit their availability to the public.[1]

One group—the most egregious in some ways—is colored dyes used to beautify meat. Perhaps their use is the industry's implicit acknowledgment that they would lose flocks of consumers if they tried to sell their meat in its untouched-up state, as slimy, brownish green, rotting flesh. Like morticians, meat packers artificially treat this organic material to give it the colors of life. Red and violet dyes are added to beef and pork, while yellow dyes are put into chicken feed to enhance the color of the chickens'

flesh.

The majority of **synthetic colorings** used by the food industry are coal-tar derivatives. Some dyes, even when labeled "US Certified," meaning they meet minimum government standards, have not been sufficiently tested for safety, and some of these have been correlated with increased incidence of cancer and reproductive damage leading to birth defects, stillbirths, and infertility in animals. Red 40 (Allura Red AC) used in processed meats such as hot dogs and sausages, has been linked to childhood hyperactivity, hives and has shown to be potentially carcinogenic in animals. Carmine, a natural dye derived from crushed bugs and also used in processed meats, is associated with a wide range of reactions including erythema, angioedema, bronchospasms, allergic bronchiolitis, etc.

A much more necessary group of chemicals from the meat industry's standpoint is preservat ives such as two petroleum derivatives: butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT) and butylated hydroxyanisole (BRA). They prevent the fat in meat from becoming rancid. They are found everywhere –from lard, chicken fat, butter, cream, bacon, sausage, cold cuts, milk, vegetable oils, potato chips, peanut butter, shortening, raisins, breakfast cereals, and chewing gum. Though the industry depends on them to prolong their products' shelf life, they are hardly safe, with their toxicity being associated with skin blisters, fatigue, eye hemorrhaging, and respiratory problems.

Other problematic additives:

- Artificial flavorings, some which have proven to be carcinogenic
- EDTA, used to prevent the oxidation of fats and oils, in large enough amounts can kill cells
- Monosodium glutamate (MSG): a flavor enhancer that can cause the popularly titled "Chinese restaurant syndrome" contributes to headaches, tightness in the chest, impaired concentration, and fatigue; there is also evidence that MSG, in any form, exacerbates cancer,[2] and when manufactured using acid hydrolysis contains cancer-causing substances.[3]

Antibiotics

Overuse of antibiotics is prevalent throughout medical care and the meat and fish industries. While most of us think of antibiotics as "good" in that they can save lives from threatening harmful bacteria, we erroneously don't think of them as dangerous to our bodies when, in fact, they are if used in excess.

Those who pay attention to the news will know that the overuse of antibiotics in both animals (cattle, pigs, chickens, etc.) and people has generated new, more resolute strains of bacteria that put up severe resistance to drugs meant to cope with them. Organisms' ability to adapt to environmental conditions is a continuous and ongoing activity, which is why much of science is regularly organizing itself around a new "bug" or "pest" (think pesticides) to fight. This is how drug-resistant bacteria and "superbugs" come into existence in our foods.

Because antibiotics are prevalent in animal-raising, if you consume these products three

times a day, as the typical American does, there is an accumulation of these toxins in your bloodstream and tissues over time. A person eating such a contaminated animal may also be consuming the antibiotic-resistant bacteria that developed in the animal, increasing a person's risk for illness.

In one study, grocery store products in Minnesota were tested and showed resistant bacteria in meat samples, especially turkey. Consumers would be alarmed to learn that their "food" is infected with *Listeria, E coli, and Salmonella,* three of the most serious contaminants in inexpensive meat products over the past two decades. Not only do these bacteria withstand the antibiotics meant to suppress them, but also they often escape lax quality control processes at large factory farms. Thus, the presence of *Salmonella, norovirus, botulism, and E.coli* have been reported in meat products across the country in such trusted brands as Safeway, McDonalds, Walmart, and Arby's. As a side note, sadly, children and the elderly—many of whom have struggles with nutritional deficiencies, unhealthy living environments, and heavy dosages of medications, including vaccines—are especially susceptible to these bacteria-infected meats.

Typically, when people take an antibiotic, they are bombarding themselves directly while adding to the antibiotics that have already accumulated in the body's tissues. At the same time, the physical body's ability to fight-off other pathogens is weakened, which then requires more powerful antibiotics. In time, through ongoing assault, the body's system fails—it could be a heart attack, a stroke, cancer, or bacterial infection or virus that cannot be contained.

The CDC estimates that 48 million people fall ill, 128,000 are hospitalized and 3,000 die from foodborne diseases annually.[4] A report in the *New England Journal of Medicine* linked 18 cases of food poisoning, which claimed one life and hospitalized 11 people, to hamburger meat riddled with a *drug-resistant* form of Salmonella. The contaminated beef was traced to a cattle farm in South Dakota where the livestock were consuming grain that had been over treated with the antibiotic tetracycline.

The price of utilizing these antibiotics in animals to the extent that they are today in the US is extremely high. Eighty percent of all antibiotics used in the US are for farm animals.[5] Swine accounts for the highest percentage (43%) followed by cattle (41%).

Is there a problem with the vast tonnage of antibiotics used in food animals? Certainly. Perhaps this is why the FDA has been sued over its refusal to release data on antibiotic use in animals. The alarms have been sounded because the saturation of our food supply and human population with antibiotics is the primary cause for the staggering explosion in cases of methicillin-resistant staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) infection. Approximately 1.2 million hospitalized Americans are infected by MRSA per year,[6] and colonized MRSA infections have a 36 percent mortality rate.[7]

As the numbers suggest, the hard-nosed business people that run these factory farms do not administer antibiotics to their livestock lightly, or in a careful and controlled manner. They have become beholden to these drugs for the survival of their businesses. The antibiotics are given as a regular course to stave off the disease that would otherwise be rampant in the close, unsanitary, injurious conditions in which meat and dairy animals are forced to live. If they did not dose these animals with a bumper load of pharmaceuticals, these owners would have far fewer "healthy" animals for slaughter. In the case of young cattle, however, there is a second reason for the dosing. Some animals are deprived of iron

and rendered anemic in order to yield the white, pale meat preferred by those who prepare and eat veal. Being sickly, the calves are prey to all sorts of infection, which the antibiotics help to stave off.

Consequently, Americans are consuming antibiotics through their food multiple times daily, which is much higher than that found in Europe where control on drug use in animals is tighter. In addition to being using prophylactically, antibiotic drugs are also supplied when an animal comes down with a specific disease, such as, leprospirosis, parvovirus, erysipelas, *E.coli infection*, atropic rhinitis, gastroenteritis, *C. perfringens,* and pseudorabies.

One of the more notorious of the new resistant agents is *Enterococci*. In one study, a high percentage of *Enterococci* bacteria found in food products, including meat, dairy and poultry, were resistant to such common antibacterials as tetracycline (over 30% of the strains were resistant), erythromycin (over 20% resistant), and streptomycin (over 10% resistant). Even more shocking, a small 0.7%, were resistant to ciproflaxin, one of the strongest antibiotics on the market.

Things are getting so bad with the growth of antibiotic-resistant pathogens that the World Health Organization has issued a warning directive claiming that infectious diseases will soon outstrip our ability to contain them with any existing medicines. Antibiotic resistance is one big contributor to this trend, and feeding antibiotics to farm animals, which then gets into meat-eaters' diets, plays no small part in this tendency toward developing super-resistant pathogens.

Let's quickly note some other grim results of the overuse of drugs—antibiotic and otherwise—in animals. For one, many additives given to animals are not tested for their safety to people, since it is erroneously assumed that *if* the administration of antibiotics is discontinued well before the animal is slaughtered, *then* traces of it will not remain in the meat. Take the hormone Carbadox, used to enlarge market-bound pigs, and removed from their diet a month or so before the animals are killed; or the drug Paylean, which is given to pigs to shift their biochemistry from fat production to meat production. Neither has been evaluated for its effect on humans, which is beneficial, of course, for enterprising drug companies and the governmental regulatory bodies they control.

Most shocking of all considerations, if these antibiotics and other drugs don't reach meat eaters through land-animal flesh, they may unknowingly be getting them from the sea. Industrial runoff and dumping enable drugs to drain into the oceans, and, due to this, catches of sea life are more toxic than ever before. So fish and other seafood may be contributing to the current antibiotic resistance we are experiencing since they can be contacting traces of antibiotics in the water that they breathe.

Unfortunately, the meat and dairy industries are not required to inform consumers which products have been treated with antibiotics and other pharmaceuticals, and which have not.[8] For that matter, they don't even have to inform us if the meat comes from factory manufactured cloning.

The first question one might ask about all this is: why is it that the government agencies that are charged with protecting our health don't do something about this?

Believe it or not, they actually have tried. In 1977, the FDA tried to ban antibiotics in the animal industry, but their efforts were shot down by the successful lobbying of the powerful

livestock and drug companies, such as the then largest manufacturer of livestock antibiotics, American Cyanamid.[9] It's a sorry story of the government lying down to wealthy, free-spending companies, who used the same argument then as they do now, which is—as the pro-industry American Farm Bureau Federation puts it—curtailing the widespread use of antibiotics will cause a jump in the cost of meat. And we know they are not figuring in the gigantic tally of health bills run up by those suffering unnecessarily from *additional* illnesses attributable to the widespread use of these chemicals. Of course they are not, because it is not in their interest to do so.

One more recent antibiotic candidate is bambermycin widely used in chicken feed. The National Broiler Council says this item poses no health risk. By the way, this is the typical response you get from industry advocates who know little about human health and how the body works. However, when they are introduced, no one knows with certainty the short or long-term health risks of these drugs. A biochemist at the National Resources Defense Council believes "all antibiotics [even the newer ones] can cause resistance to occur eventually."[10] And one of the newer ones, chloramphenicol, even in low doses has already been shown to induce aplastic anemia in humans, a deadly disease that prevents the production of red blood cells in the bone marrow.[11]

We can now better understand why the meat industry can boast: *You no longer need to go to the doctor when you have an infection. Just take a bite of one of our products and you'll get a full spectrum of antibiotics.*

Hormones

No discussion of meat safety would be complete without mentioning that at one time the FDA allowed the synthetic hormone DES (diethystilbestrol) to be used in the meat industry. DES rapidly increased the size and weight of cattle. On average, a calf weighs about 80 pounds and needs to grow to anywhere from 700-1,200 pounds for sale in just 14-16 months. In contrast, according to Homestead Organics, it takes 2-4 years for natural grass-fed cattle to go to market.[12] It may be remembered that the FDA also approved DES to be prescribed to women to reduce the risk of miscarriage and premature births. There was a 40-fold increase in rare vaginal tumors in women and girls that were exposed to this drug in utero. There was also a significant rise in breast cancer. The FDA banned the use of DES in women in 1971 and later in cattle feed in 1972 for the same reasons. However, the FDA permits the use of synthetic steroid hormones in cattle like estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone to name a few. We now know after many human trials that these very same hormones, which are prescribed to millions of women for treating menopausal symptoms, have been shown to increase the risk of certain cancers, cardiovascular disease, and dementia.

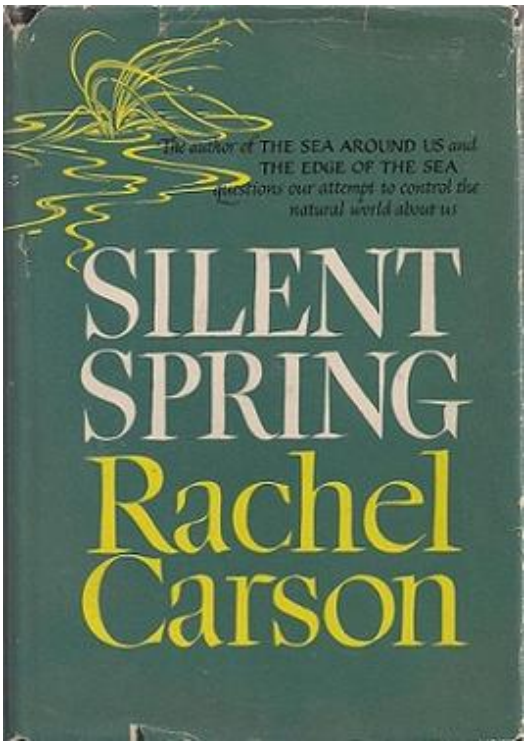
Hormones are one of the main additives used in the US for regulating breeding, and to tranquilize and promote weight gain. The downside for us, if not for the meat sellers, is that synthetic hormones can cause cancer in the recipient animals. This is not a downside for the business side of animal agriculture since it usually doesn't affect the marketability of the meat.

One of the estrogen hormones commonly fed to livestock may increase women's chances of contracting uterine and breast cancer, and may cause children to enter puberty prematurely. Add Raigro to this list, an estrogen-like compound; Lutalyse, a prostaglandin (often given to an entire herd so that they will ovulate at the same time), which may disrupt

women's menstrual cycles and cause pregnant women to miscarry; and, finally, the hormone androgen, which may cause liver cancer.

DDT and Other Additives

By cooking meat, a chef creates chemicals (HCAs) that are health hazards. This could be avoided by, for instance, eating beef raw, as is done in some cultures. But it is a terrible and potentially deadly idea due to worms, parasites, and life-threatening bacteria. Furthermore, there is nothing that can be done (short of abstention from eating meat) to guard against the chemicals that are put into it, such as food coloring, antibiotics, and hormones as well as add-ins that are introduced into livestock at the breeding phase. Throughout their existence, livestock and dairy cows are fed large amounts of chemically treated feed. To judge whether a particular meat has traces of these additives would be difficult, not only because meat is difficult to analyze, but because the government offers little help, allowing the use of over 500 chemical additives while very lightly monitoring how these chemicals are administered.



As an example of the noxious chemicals that contaminate meat, let's look at DDT. This pesticide is so dangerous it was banned in 1972, following on the heels of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, which brought to public notice the cancer-causing properties and other dangers associated with this pesticide. The chemical became popular in the '40s, and was used extensively for nearly three decades. Many people don't know that the DDT that got into plants came not through what had been sprayed on them to kill bugs but through the soil. After plants were dosed with it every year for decades, our soil became saturated with DDT. That means that even when farmers stopped spraying the plants, its presence would remain, and for up to 2 to 15 years.[13] Next step, livestock eat the crops and concentrate the chemical; then we eat the livestock, DDT and all. DDT is extremely persistent and can still be present in crops and soil in other parts of the world in their agricultural practices and in disease-control programs.[14] This is something to be mindful of when purchasing non-organic products outside of the US.

DDT is a substance that inadvertently gets into animals through the food chain, but many

other unfriendly chemicals are purposely given to livestock. The food additive sodium nitrate, used as a color fixative in most processed meats, including hot dogs, bologna, cured meats, bacon, meat spreads, sausage, and ham, is terribly detrimental to health. When ingested, nitrates form potentially cancer-causing substances called nitrosamines. While vitamin C has been found to block the formation of some nitrosamines, and some bacon producers have added vitamin C to their products to make them less of a cancer threat, about two-thirds of C's power is lost during cooking.

And meat is not the only animal product that shows the effect of these pharmaceuticals. The chemicals fed to and sprayed on milk cows pass into their milk while those given to chickens appear in their eggs. So, with any animal product you eat, you can't help getting *a side order of drugs*.

Other Miscellaneous Additives

One particular additive used in poultry farming is ionophores, such as monensin and salinomycin. These drugs are commonly used to control coccidiosis, a parasitic disease caused by the protozoan *Eimeria*. They are also used to improve feed efficiency, although not to promote growth in the same way as antibiotics. Poultry farmers are supposed to allow for a withdrawal period in order for ionophore residues to be removed from the meat before it reaches consumers. Excessive exposure through chicken consumption containing high ionophore residues can pose serious health risks to humans such as cardiac arrhythmias and neurological issues due to the way ionophores affect cellular ion transport. These compounds disrupt normal ion gradients that affect muscle function and heart rhythm. Farmers are solely responsible for following the FDA guidelines for proper withdrawal periods. But this is wishful thinking when a typical large factory farm or processing facility can slaughter anywhere from 250,000 to 1 million chickens a day and the largest facilities, such as Tyson Foods, can process 2 million per day during peak production.[15]

Rather than go further down the list of health-weakening additives that go into animal products, it is important to underline the idea that the effects of toxins in animal products are not quickly evident. One doesn't eat a slab of bacon and get sick the next day. The toxins work slowly but insidiously as Dr. Rudolph Ballentine explains. He writes that illness begins with toxicity at the cellular level. Cellular toxicity and death progresses from the organelle stage, to the cell stage, to the organ stage.

> "When a great enough number of the cells that constitute an organ die, then the organ becomes diseased."[16]

Glyphosate and Genetic Modified Feed

Glyphosate, better known as Roundup, is a widely used herbicide in genetically modified (GM) crop cultivation. The herbicide has been shown to pose significant health risks when consumed by humans either directly or indirectly through animal meat from livestock fed GM grains like soy and corn. Depending upon soil quality, temperature and microbial activity it can have life of several months and accumulate in the animal tissue, notably fat, liver and kidneys. Studies show that the meat and organs from livestock fed on GM grains with high glyphosate residues will retrain these chemicals when consumed by humans.[17]

Robert Kennedy Jr. played a pivotal role in several groundbreaking lawsuits against Monsanto, the producer of glyphosate, and its link to cancer. He helped secure landmark

verdicts, including cases where juries awarded multi-million-dollar damages to plaintiffs suffering from non-Hodgkin lymphoma after prolonged glyphosate exposure. Among the most notable victories was the case of Dewayne Johnson, a school groundskeeper who developed non-Hodgkin lymphoma after prolonged exposure to glyphosate. The jury awarded Johnson $289 million in damages (later reduced), citing that Monsanto acted with malice and failed to warn consumers of glyphosate's carcinogenic risks. Internal company documents revealed Monsanto's deliberate attempts to suppress scientific research and manipulate regulatory agencies. His legal efforts highlighted Monsanto's long history of suppressing evidence and manipulating public opinion about glyphosate's safety.[18]

In addition to non-Hodgkin lymphoma and other cancers, glyphosate has been shown to contribute to gastrointestinal disorders by disrupting the gut's microbiome leading to dysbiosis, a condition associated with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), inflammatory bowel disease and leaky gut syndrome.[19] According to Cedars-Sinai, the prevalence of IBS has been steadily increasing in American children and adolescents. It affects approximately 10-15 percent of children largely due to diet and adverse gut microbiome alterations.[20]

The herbicide also has been shown to interfere with hormone signally pathways that may disrupt normal development and reduce fertility.[21] Approximately 10 percent of American children are affected by some type of endocrine disruption, for example impacting the onset of puberty, that is certainly associated with the abundance of environmental and dietary chemical endocrine disruptors.[22] In addition, pediatric nonalcoholic fatty liver disease has surged by 30 percent since 2020 and chronic kidney disease now affects 1 in 1,000 children. This condition too is associated with dietary toxins, glyphosate bioaccumulation, poor diets and metabolic syndromes.[23]

Similarly, animals fed on glyphosate-rich GM grains accumulate higher residues in their meat. The altered protein profiles found in GM grains can induce allergies and disrupt the gut's flora by amplifying pathogenic bacteria.[24]

Glyphosate and GM grain-fed meat represent significant risks to human health and, therefore, highlights the urgent necessity of dietary and policy reform to improve public health. Consuming organic, non-GMO-fed animal products can mitigate exposure to glyphosate residues and their associated risks.

Pesticides… and the Link to Our Water Supply

Pesticides are no small health problem. The US uses over 1 billion pounds of pesticides every year on farms, in home yards, places of business and in parks. According to the watch organization Beyond Pesticides, "UA farms used 2.6 million pounds of three neonicotinoids (neonics) on corn and soy, clothianidin, thiamethoxam, imidacloprid. Farma applied nearly

1.5 million pounds solely to animal feed production."[25] It is estimated that over 100,000 people in the United States are subjected to pesticide poisoning annually—and not only farmers and farm workers, but a countless number of other individuals who unknowingly ingest pesticides in their daily diet. The most common pesticides contaminating meat and dairy are glyphosate, atrazine, dicamba, 2,4-D, neonicotinoids and bifenthrin.

So how many of these pesticides are we getting and where are they coming from?

For the average American's daily pesticide intake is between 2.5-5.0 mg, which accumulates to over 1.8 grams every year.[26] Of this, about 4 mg are stored in fat tissue and can lead to toxicity symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, muscle aches, and fever. Meat advocates might object, since even vegetarians may be getting these deadly residues through plant foods. Consider, however, that when a cow consumes soybean and corn feed containing pesticide traces, much of the poison permanently settles in the animal's fat tissue. The person who comes after and devours a T-bone from this cow is getting *concentrated* amounts of toxic residues. By contrast, if the pesticide-treated soybeans were eaten directly, the toxins would be much less concentrated.

A government report estimates that one-sixth of all meat and poultry eaten in the US contains "potentially harmful residues of animal drugs, *pesticides* or environmental contaminants." The report goes on to note that of the nearly 200 known drugs and pesticides found in meat and poultry products, "42 are known to cause or are suspected of causing cancer, 20 of causing birth defects, 6 of causing mutations, 6 of causing adverse effects on the fetus, and others of causing similar toxic effects."

These poisons also pollute the water supply through runoffs into lakes, streams, and rivers. This enormous leakage infiltrates "63% of rural America, [home to] some 39 million people, who are drinking water that may be unsafe," according to *The New Farm* magazine. This same water is given to the animals being readied for slaughter and consumption.

Moreover, further studies reveal that the beleaguered, pesticide-tainted, water- drinking population is spread across our country. Three-quarters of rural Western populations are quaffing this excessively contaminated beverage; 65% in the Southern and North-Central states; and 45% in the Northeast. To make matters worse, along with these pesticides are several other health-destabilizing substances such as the following:

- Lindane: a noxious insecticide that affects the central nervous system
- Mercury: known to cause kidney and neurological damage
- Cadmium: a toxic metal associated with high blood pressure and kidney damage
- Lead: known to damage the nervous system and kidneys
- Nitrates: the chemical precursor of cancer-causing nitrosamines

After perusing these contaminants in our meat and dairy supply, we might suggest to federal health officials that they create a replacement food pyramid, upon which they highlight the "features" of the products they are selling. Instead of such categories as meats and dairy, they would have to add pesticides, dyes, antibiotics, and preservatives, too!

"Natural" Toxins

We should not ignore the possibility of bacteria getting in the meat and think of other contaminants.

Animals, like humans, continuously eliminate waste products from their tissues and cells to the surrounding blood. This natural process comes to an abrupt halt when the animal is slaughtered; the waste material then present remains intact, and we ingest it when eating its flesh. You might say that our bodies' various organs of elimination—lungs, bladder, kidneys, sweat glands, and liver—should be adept at disposing of such wastes, but is it wise to add to their workload, which is already consumed with ridding our bodies of worn-out cells and the by-products of digestion? Our organs may well respond, if overloaded, by developing any of several degenerative diseases.[27]

There are known dangers of meat remaining for too long in the digestive tract; it begins to putrefy, which can cause noxious gas, headache and lethargy, among other symptoms. However, meat can also putrefy outside before it is consumed. Unlike fruits and vegetables, meat starts to degrade the moment the animal dies, and continues to degenerate during processing, packaging, and transportation to the market or butcher. After slaughter, a steer is sectioned and moved into cold storage. Some cuts may then be aged for a time to increase tenderness. The meat may be stored in a warehouse before finally being sent to a supermarket for packaging. Of course when it is refrigerated degeneration is slowed, but for parts of its processing time it is not kept cool.

It is important to note that for any of the time that the meat was left out of refrigeration, the bacteria were proliferating like mad. Each gram of sausage stored at room temperature for 20 hours has its live bacteria count increase by 70 million, each gram of beef by 650 million, and each gram of smoked ham by a whopping 700 million. The Michigan State University Department of Human Ecology once issued a warning that reheated food could contain the toxins of bacteria previously in food, and it warned that though cooking may kill the bacteria, the toxins could still be present.[28]

Even worse, some bacteria form spores that are not killed by cooking. Then, once the leftovers are set aside, the spores germinate and grow. The new bacteria may be strong enough to survive a second heating. Moreover, even if new bacteria do not grow, the toxins they release may stay around to inflict damage. Dr. Al Wagner of the Texas Agricultural Extension Service backs this notion by saying of certain bacteria, that "although cooking destroys the bacteria, the toxin produced is heat stable and may not be destroyed."[29] Bacterial toxins left in meats can shut down the body's immune response by affecting a cell mechanism essential to attacking threats such as viruses and bacteria.[30]

More than the dangers that face us through ingestion of animal products is an even greater danger—*our inaction* toward a healthier plant-based lifestyle that does *not* include a diet of animal products. Yes, there are very practical health reasons for putting an end to current factory farming practices, but every citizen has it within their own means to reduce their meat intake to lessen risks of dietary related illnesses.

Continued in Part 2…

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They are regular contributors to Global Research.

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