

The following letter was sent to the Ottawa Citizen on June 18, 2003 and was later printed in its entirety.

Ottawa Citizen
Letter to the Editor

Re: "Mad cow scare deters 1 in 3 from eating beef," June 16;
"Organic food make strides in Canada," June 16; and
"One mad cow, consumer fear are a recipe for disaster," June 18

Expert Should Get His Story Straight

In recent days, University of Toronto Mad Cow 'expert' Neil Cashman has been repeatedly cited in the national media, including twice in this paper, as saying: "A steak on the barbecue comes with zero risk."

This is Grade-A bull.

In the same edition of the Ottawa Citizen, in an article on the organic beef industry, Cashman changed his barbecue risk estimation to "close to zero", and admitted that one could only achieve a "zero risk" by eating organic (grass-fed) beef.

Cashman's later statements, while somewhat more accurate, still don't convey a proper estimation of risk for eating non-organic beef. There is clearly a risk. Muscle cuts do contain nerve tissue, and Cashman acknowledged that people can become infected by eating contaminated brain or nerve tissue.

Cashman should be straight with Canadians, or at least get his story straight.

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