

OPEN LETTER ON MAD COW
July 11, 2006

Time for critical reporting on Mad Cow

There is so much misinformation circulating about Mad Cow disease it is time to clear up some things. Whenever a new case of Mad Cow is detected, as was recently in Manitoba and now, perhaps, Alberta, we get the same reassuring spin from the CFIA, printed without question in newspapers across the country.

We are told that it takes time for the 'feed ban' to work. The reality is the so-called 'feed ban' isn't even a ban; cattle blood, fat and other materials are still being used in cattle feed. This is fact and has not changed. Cattle are herbivores and should not be fed a diet composed of cattle and other animals. CFIA claims to have cleaned-up of the feed supply are about communications and not reality.

We are also reassured "no part of the animal entered the food chain". Back in 1993 when we had our first case of Mad Cow, we were also told this. We were told the entire herd was "tracked down" and "destroyed". We now know this was a lie, of course. A report by the European Union's Scientific Committee noted that "eleven imported cattle that were found to be carrying a risk of being infected [with Mad Cow] entered the Canadian food or feed chain".

Instead of cleaning up the feed supply, like the rest of the world was doing, we placated industry and hoped for the best. It is obvious we don't have a handle on this disease -- we don't even know how widespread it is because we don't do enough testing to know.

So why aren't we requiring the testing of all cattle prior to slaughter, as is now happening in France and Japan? And why haven't we already imposed a total ban on the dangerous practice of using animal protein in livestock feed, as advocated by Health Canada? These are questions that need to be asked.

The CFIA has been an unmitigated disaster since its inception in 1997. GM foods which have not undergone long-term testing, and are not labeled, fill our grocery store shelves. Cancer causing hormones are still administered to cattle despite an overwhelming body of scientific evidence they are dangerous (they are banned in Britain and Europe). And the worst disaster of all, of course, the CFIA's handling of the global Mad Cow epidemic. Despite Health Canada's urgings to protect the feed and food chain and stop cannibalistic feeding practices, the CFIA resisted¹. Instead of regulating the beef industry, the CFIA was in bed with it, acting as its biggest promoter and defender.

A lot of good that did us.

We need critical reporting on the serious problems at the CFIA, not misinformation.

Bradford Duplisea
Canadian Health Coalition

¹ <http://www.healthcoalition.ca/bse5.html>