

PETITION to the House of Commons

WHEREAS:

1. On July 14, 2004, three scientists in the Veterinary Drugs Directorate, Shiv Chopra, Margaret Haydon and Gerard Lambert, were fired by Health Canada; and
2. These three scientists have become known as whistle-blowers as a result of their prolonged efforts to publicly raise awareness of various products and practices of questionable safety. Their objections to the approval of the genetically modified cow growth hormone (rBGH) to enhance milk production was the key factor in stopping this drug from being used in Canada; and
3. They drew attention to Canada's beef sector BSE risk (mad cow disease) and called for better prevention measures years ago; opposed approval of various antibiotics for use in animal feed which leads to the development of antibiotic resistant bacteria; opposed approval of hormones as growth-promoters that are banned in Europe and linked to the development of cancer; and
4. Many Canadians, including ourselves, are deeply concerned that these firings were unjust, politically motivated due to pressure from pharmaceutical companies, and an attempt to silence legitimate objections to the approval of feed and drugs that pose a danger to Canadians' health.

THEREFORE, we call upon the House of Commons to immediately commence an independent and public investigation into Health Canada's firing of Shiv Chopra, Margaret Haydon and Gerald Lambert.

SIGNATURES

(Sign your own name; do not print)

ADDRESSES

(Give your home address, city, province or postal code if possible)

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Whistle Blower Petition Backgrounder

On July 14, 2004, three scientists in the Veterinary Drugs Directorate, Shiv Chopra, Margaret Haydon and Gerard Lambert, were fired by Health Canada. They are known as whistle-blowers as a result of their efforts to publicly raise awareness of various products and practices of questionable safety. Since the early 1990s they have spoken out about the use of antibiotics and hormones in livestock production, including genetically modified cow growth hormone.

While at Health Canada they were given gag orders, suspended without pay, reprimanded and demoted for disputing orders to approve drugs. In 2002, Chopra said "We're being told to approve things even without receiving data from the company. If we don't receive the data, then there's nothing we can do. But we're often told that the U.S. has approved it so we should approve it and we shouldn't even ask questions." ***From CTV story "Health Canada workers feel pressured to OK drugs"***

In 1998 they were ordered to appear as witnesses in front of the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry hearings into rBST and the Drug Approval Process. Senate reported, "Several of the Health Canada scientists who appeared before the Committee were so concerned about their future employment that they delayed appearing until they had received assurance that there would be no reprisals. As well, they took the unusual step of swearing an oath before testifying. *These concerns are serious, and the Committee re-iterates the point made during their appearance: it wishes to be contacted should they feel they are suffering reprisals related to their appearance, whether in the short or the long term.*" (emphasis added)

The pharmaceutical industry admits it lobbies Health Canada to speed up the approval process.

The Beyond Factory Farming Coalition and other organizations are now circulating a petition calling for an independent and public investigation into Health Canada's firing of Shiv Chopra, Margaret Haydon and Gerald Lambert.

Antibiotics in animal feed – The World Health Organization (WHO) has called for a stop to the routine use of antibiotics in animal feed due to their contribution to the rising incidence of human infections caused by antibiotic resistant bacteria. It is estimated that 90% of antibiotics used in Canada are used in agriculture as a feed additive for factory farmed poultry, swine and beef. The whistle-blowers have objected to approvals of antibiotics of the fluoroquinolone, erythromycin, tetracycline, and penicillin types for veterinary use.

- *WHO Issues New Recommendations to Protect Human Health from Antimicrobial Use in Food Animals* <http://www.who.int/inf-pr-2000/en/pr2000-43.html>
- *Restrict antibiotic use in animals: scientists* (Oct 2002) http://www.cbc.ca/stories/2002/10/07/consumers/antibiotics_021007
- *Europe Says "No" to Using Antibiotics to Promote Livestock Growth* - Union of Concerned Scientists http://www.ucsusa.org/food_and_environment/antibiotic_resistance_archive/page.cfm?pagelD=259
- *Antibiotics in Animal Feed* by Joan Stephenson, PhD Journal of the American Medical Association. 2003 <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/extract/290/11/1443-a>
- *Impacts of antimicrobial growth promoter termination in Denmark: The WHO international review panel's evaluation of the termination of the use of antimicrobial growth promoters in Denmark.* <http://www.who.int/salmsurv/en/Expertsreportgrowthpromoterdenmark.pdf>

- *CFIA Summary of Feed Drug Clearances* –medicating ingredients approved for use in preventing, controlling and/or treating specific diseases and conditions of livestock in Canada. <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/anima/feebet/mib/drguse1e.shtml>

Growth Hormones in Livestock –In 2000 European inspectors evaluated drug residues in food animals in Canada. Six growth hormones being used here were banned in Europe because of links to cancer, among them revelor-H, approved by Health Canada against the advice of scientists. Previous research shows that Revlor-H caused deformities in the ovaries, uterus, and prostate of the cows, and also damaged the thymus, which controls the immune system.

- *What's In The Beef?* <http://www.healthcoalition.ca/transcript.pdf>
Country Canada (transcript), CBC Television, October 20, 2002

rBGH – Genetically Modified Cow Growth Hormone. In 1990 Monsanto applied to Health Canada for approval of this drug. It was approved in the USA in 1993. In 1997 Health Canada asked Shiv Chopra, Gerard Lambert and two others to do a “gaps analysis” of the data submitted by Monsanto and Eli Lilly. They found that the companies had not provided data on the impact of this hormone on babies and children, nor was the question of IGF-1 (associated with increased breast and prostate cancers) answered. The scientists were asked to appear as witnesses before the Senate Committee on Agriculture. As a result, rBGH was not approved for use in Canada’s dairy sector.

- *rBST and the Drug Approval Process, Interim Report* by the Standing Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, March 1999
<http://www.parl.gc.ca/36/1/parlbus/commbus/senate/com-e/agri-e/rep-e/repintermar99-e.htm#LIST%20OF%20RECOMMENDATIONS>
- *Biotech clampdown continues* by Stephanie Power, August 1998
<http://users.westnet.gr/~cgian/chopra.htm>
- *The Evidence on rBST: The Safety of rBST for Humans*
<http://www.parl.gc.ca/36/1/parlbus/commbus/senate/com-e/agri-e/rep-e/repintermar99part1-e.htm>
- *rBST (Nutrilac) "Gaps Analysis" Report* by rBST Internal Review Team Health Protection Branch, Health Canada April 21, 1998
<http://www.nfu.ca/gapsreport.html>

Whistle-blowers in the News

- *Scientist wins whistle-blower award over BGH* June 1999
<http://newsworld.cbc.ca/cgi-bin/go.pl?1999/06/18/bgh990618>
- *Health Canada workers feel pressured to OK drugs* July. 4 2002
http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/print/CTVNews/1025732142771_7/?hub=Health&subhub=PrintStory
- *Health Canada Scientists Blow Whistle on Dangerous Drugs.* CTV News 03/07/02
<http://www.healthcoalition.ca/whistleblowers.html>
- *Canada sacks three scientists - Whistleblowers fighting terminations that a lobby group calls an 'ominous signal'*
<http://www.biomedcentral.com/news/20040716/03/> The Scientist – July 17, 2004
- *Health Canada told to compensate fired employee* July 23 2004
http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/1090587789570_2/?hub=Canada