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Viva VINE



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE VIVA VEGIE SOCIETY
Edited by Pamela Teisler

Franken-veggies a la FDA

• • by Pamela Teisler • •

Food safety warrior Jeremy Rifkin has said about genetic engineering that "in the short twenty years since its birth, the new technology of genetic engineering has changed our world more profoundly than any of history's discoveries. Yet the world is generally unaware of, and fully unprepared for the changes this new science has brought."

What makes genetic engineering such a break from the past? Basically what we have here is man trying to improve on nature, sidestep ecological balances and introduce new life forms. There is always the risk that one day a new life form may escape from the laboratory or its controlled distribution. How, and at what cost could an escaped life form be feasibly recalled? It happens that insurance companies are shying away from insuring biotech companies these days.

As pointed out in the introduction to the book "Jurassic Park" (upon which the current Steven Spielberg movie is based), genetic engineering, unlike breakthrough technologies of the past, is being conducted, first, by many disparate people in locations all over the world, and second, by scientists who are not involved with academic research for its own sake but by people who have their careers and livelihoods tied to the commercial interests of a company.

So, genetic engineering is dangerously widespread on the

one hand, and prey to human folly and greed on the other.

Genetically engineered life forms represent a gigantic step beyond the simple development through selective breeding of hybrid corn, for instance, or even Tennessee walking horses. Not a slow process, genetic engineering is a blind throw of the dice when genes of two life forms are pasted together.

The development of genetically engineered BGH (bovine growth hormone) is one of the most important issues going on today. It should be of interest to a vegetarian regardless of whether one drinks milk or not. The decisions going on now regarding this issue will set precedents which will effect the purity of foods forever. If BGH becomes a reality for the milk industry, it will open the floodgates to a deluge of other genetically engineered products. For vegetarians it could mean not knowing

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For \$5./yr., receive 5 bi-monthly issues (no Jul./Aug. issue) plus a complimentary copy of "101 Reasons Why I'm a Vegetarian" and your very own personal membership card to The VivaVegie Society.

Cash or check with your request should be sent to:
The VivaVegie Society, Prince St. Sta., P.O. Box 294,
New York, NY 10012

if the food you eat is more plant, or more animal. For allergy sufferers, finding the cause of one's allergies may get harder and harder to pin down.

Today, BGH is being examined by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The job of the FDA is to evaluate products with regard to safety to humans alone. So far, nothing has been shown to distinguish the composition of genetically engineered milk apart from regular milk. Still, according to Consumers Union, publisher of Consumer Reports, "milk from [BGH]-treated cows is likely to contain more pus and bacteria than milk from untreated cows." Contaminants occur at higher levels in milk from BGH-treated cows because such cows are more likely to get mastitis, an infection of the udder. Milk with pus in it is a bit unsavory to begin with; but this milk is likely to sour more easily as well.

But pus leads us to the real problem. The danger, it happens, with a higher incidence of mastitis in cows, is in the solution. With the FDA estimating that BGH treated cows risk contracting mastitis 50% more often than untreated cows, farmers will more often have reason to treat the infection with antibiotics.

The BGH issue, for nothing else, has brought out the fact that the FDA only tests for the residues

Calendar

- Sun., Sept. 19: VEGAN SOCIETY OF QUEENS POTLUCK, 2:00 p.m., Forest Park; call Hubert at 718/263-7160 for details.
- Tues, Sept. 28: EARTHSAVE VEGAN POTLUCK, 6:30 p.m., Greenpeace offices, 462 B'way @ Grand St, 6th Fl; Call 212/978-4338 to confirm.
- Fri., Oct. 1: WORLD VEGETARIAN DAY, 7-10 p.m., Met Club, 124 E. 83rd St. Call Alycia Lee at 212/535-9385 for information.

Schedule to distribute "101 Reasons Why I'm a Vegetarian" in VivaVegie-style vegetarian street advocacy (call ahead, 212/966-2060, to confirm and to arrange meeting location):

- Sun., Sept. 12: TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES' HUMAN PROPULSION FAIR, Noon, Union Square Pk.
- Sun., Sept. 19: JUVENILE DIABETES FOUNDATION WALK FOR THE CURE, Battery Pk., call 212/689-2860.
- Sun., Sept. 26: FARM SANCTUARY WALK-A-THON, Noon, 72nd St. & Riverside Dr.
- Sat., Oct. 2: GREENPEACE WALK-A-THON, 9 a.m., 74th St. in Riverside Pk.; call 212/941-0994.
- Sun., Oct. 31: HALLOWEEN PARADE THROUGH GREENWICH VILLAGE, 6:30 p.m., Spring St. and 6th Ave. (The VivaVegie Society frequently goes out with its street advocacy on short notice. Call to learn of unscheduled events. 212/966-2060.)

Continued on page 2

of 4 antibiotics that may be in milk. The fines and penalties to a farmer who uses these antibiotics on their cows, albeit, are high. But farmers today are likely to simply turn around and use other antibiotics that won't be detected. In fact, the U.S. General Accounting Office found that some 60 antibiotics and other drugs are widely used on dairy farms, many of which are illegal.

Antibiotic residues in animal foods already have wreaked havoc on the ability of therapeutic antibiotics to cure infection in humans. Stronger and exceedingly more expensive therapeutic antibiotics today are necessary to fend off previously simple medical problems. When will it end?

BGH is an animal rights issue as well. Cows, as the Humane Farming Association points out in their literature, "can't say no." The question is, who are we (that is, humans) to administer hormones to cows?

Why was BGH even developed? Why did four giant chemical companies: Monsanto, Eli Lilly, American Cyanamid and Upjohn, spend \$500 million to create a substance that boosts milk production in cows by up to 25%? The U.S. government is quite awash in milk and forces taxpayers to pay for surplus milk and cheese already being produced. Estimates say that in the first 2 years after BGH is on the market it will cost taxpayers \$1.7 billion in government price supports.

And what is the human cost of approval of BGH? Dairies

that refuse to use BGH are likely to be put out of business. Their systems will obviously be less efficient and more costly.

It is very likely that the FDA will approve BGH on the grounds of safety, though it seems it should be judged upon a lot of other factors as well. The next fight will then be labeling. Consumer advocates like Jeremy Rifkin and his Pure Food Campaign strongly believe that any genetically engineered food be labeled. Of course this will be extremely costly to those BGH milk producers, so they are fighting it. It may be that only those companies that declare themselves to be BGH free will label their products so; but Monsanto and the rest know that if this is allowed it is sure to kill a lot of their business. It may be that the government will not allow any label.

The Pure Food Campaign, the same people who brought you The Beyond Beef Campaign, must be vehemently supported at this time. They plan to launch a grass roots campaign with a broad based

coalition against BGH and genetic engineering. Those companies that refuse to go on record as BGH free will be the target of a massive campaign when and if BGH is approved.

Contact and support 1) The Pure Food Campaign, 1130 17th St., NW, Suite 630, Washington D.C. 20036; call: 800/451-7670; and 2) The Human Farming Association, 1550 California St., Suite 4, San Francisco, CA 94109.

The following is from The Pure Food Campaign:

"Biotechnology corporations are already combining genetic materials from different species to create novel combinations of plants and animals. Some of these creatures pose serious potential environmental and health threats. Pigs with human genes. Tomatoes with fish genes. Potatoes with chicken genes. Corn with firefly genes.

"If corporate and government officials have their way, a new generation of high-tech "Frankenfoods" will soon be contaminating our food supply. Many of these gene spliced foods will be coming to your local supermarket. Watch out for milk, dairy products and beef from cows injected with genetically engineered bovine growth hormone (BGH) and genetically engineered "Flavr Savr," tomatoes with antibiotic resistance genes encoded in their genetic makeup.

"Now that corporate science has crossed the evolutionary boundaries between species, the possibilities of altering and creating new life forms are enormous and frightening.

"What's worse, the U.S. government is not requiring safety testing or labeling of genetically engineered foods. That means that you won't know which foods you are eating are genetically engineered and which are not."

news bits and shorts

Reason # 42 of the revised edition of *101 Reasons Why I'm a Vegetarian* says that crippled animals brought into stockyards around the country, or "downers," are too often legally left to suffer for days, as in waiting their turn for slaughter, alive, they may fetch a higher price. But now, for animal rights advocates, there is a glimmer of hope for change. In April of this year District Justice Vicki Baumgardner of Pennsylvania found Lancaster Stockyards guilty of cruelty in an historic case involving an abandoned debilitated cow at the stockyard. Farm Sanctuary Agent Keith Mohler who found the cow suffering was able to have her properly euthanized. Later a suit was brought. The victory is, if stockyards are made liable for the suffering of animals in their custody, they would be careful to not accept crippled animals from ranchers. The rancher would be forced to treat and ship his animals humanely to avoid their physical deterioration, or make no money. In a perfect world, of course, those ranchers, the cause of the problem, would be arrested for animal cruelty at the door of the stockyard. Write to: The Honorable Vicki Baumgardner, District Justice, 225 West King St., Lancaster, PA 17603, to thank her and show your support; and contact (not without a donation) Farm Sanctuary, P.O. Box 150, Watkins Glen, NY 14891; call 607/583-2225 for more information.

The city, Watkins Glen, just mentioned, may ring a bell for you. That's because this rural town was put on the map recently in news stories about Burger King. Due to efforts by Farm Sanctuary, based there, the local Burger King put a spicy, vegetarian bean burger, on its menu. It is, so far, the only Burger King franchise to do so. Burger King has set up a toll-free consumer hotline so you can voice your support for the availability of a veg-burger at every BK outlet. Without hesitation, go to your phone immediately and voice affirmative to something long overdue. Call: 1-800-YES-1800.

And while we're on the subject, VivaVegie Society founder Pamela Teisler, chief veg-evangelist, was in Amsterdam recently. And she did not forget to sample the vegetarian burger available at some 80 McDonald's outlets there. The McD veg-burger is part of a test marketing in the Netherlands; and Gail, the young woman at the counter who took the order said that the vegetarian option is very popular. Pamela noted that surely there must be a lot of people with a conviction for vegetarianism in Holland, because she did not find the tough, flavorless, and sauceless burger very good at all.

On the contrary, in London, where Pamela was also, you can find an absolutely great spicy bean burger at the franchise Casey Jones. Don't miss it next time you're out across the pond.

A message for the Jewish New Year -- Rosh Hashanah

• • by Richard H. Schwartz • •

(The following is unfortunately only excerpted from the Sept. 24, 1992 edition of The Jewish World in its annual Rosh Hashanah edition (p.2). If you would like to obtain a complete copy of Mr. Schwartz' essay, please send an SASE to The VivaVegie Society with your request.)

Rosh Hashanah is one of the most important events in the Jewish year. Many Jews seem to feel that its celebration can be enhanced by the consumption of chopped liver, gefelte fish, chicken soup and roast chicken.

However, there are many apparent inconsistencies between the values of Rosh Hashanah and the realities of the flesh-centered diets that are so prevalent in our society...

... While we implore "our Father, our King" on Rosh Hashanah to "keep the plague from thy people," high fat, meat-based diets are causing a plague of degenerative diseases ...

... While Jews pray on the Jewish New Year that God "remove pestilence, sword, and famine," over 80 percent of the grain grown in the United States is fed to animals destined for slaughter...

... While Jews commemorate the creation of the world on Rosh Hashanah, livestock agriculture is a major contributor to many global threats such as soil erosion and depletion, [and] air and water pollution ...

... While Jews pray on Rosh Hashanah for God's compassion during the coming year, many Jews, as well as most other people partake in a diet that involves animals being raised for

food under cruel conditions, in crowded, confined cells, where they are denied fresh air, exercise and any emotional stimulation...

... While Rosh Hashanah is a time when we are to "awake from our slumber" and mend our ways, the consumption of meat on Rosh Hashanah means that we are continuing the habits that are so detrimental to our health, to animals, to hungry people and to ecosystems ...

... While Rosh Hashanah is a time of joy (along with sincere meditation), animals on factory farms never have a nice day, and millions of people throughout the world are too involved in worrying about the next meal for themselves and their families to be able to experience many happy moments.

In view of these and other apparent contradictions, I hope that Jews will enhance their celebrations of the beautiful and spiritually meaningful holiday of Rosh Hashanah by making it a time to begin striving even harder to live up to Judaism's high-est moral values and move toward a vegetarian diet.

(Richard H. Schwartz is associate professor at the College of Staten Island and author of Judaism and Vegetarianism. On a recent trip to Israel, he made many important contacts with influential people there to promote vegetarianism. Mr. Schwartz is a member of The VivaVegie Society and a tireless vegetarian advocate. His essays are nearly constantly in print on the subject of vegetarianism and he urges people, just like he does, to write letters to the editor. "It's easy," he says, "especially with today's word processors." Mr. Schwartz' letters to the editor have reached millions! This year Rosh Hashanah begins the evening of September 15.)

grapevine

letters from readers

if I recommended a place here in NYC, it would not be from a good overall vantage point. I can tell you that my best friend had a vegan wedding and reception at Nosmo King in lower Manhattan a year ago. Her dietary requirements were very sensitively catered to there.

You might also check out Apple Restaurant, Zen Palate, and Caravan of Dreams -- all in New York City.

As for my reception in Chicago, keeping the affair vegan all but wore me out! I would simply state to the chef that the dinner was to be vegetarian and dairy-free, and he would come back with entree and side dish suggestions having milk, cheese and butter in them.

I had to keep up the tenacity of a true veg-evangelist -- which in this case was even hard for me! And then (and I'm still afraid to call and ask) I think that our vichyssoise came with milk in it!
- Pamela

Dear VivaVegie Society: Enclosed please find my check for \$181 for the following:

- \$175 for 500 copies of the outstanding 101 Reasons Why I'm

a Vegetarian (Reason #10 was enough for me);

- \$5 to be on your mailing list for a year;

- \$1 and SASE for four detailed lists of references for the above flyer. Bless you for your great work! The animals and I thank you. Sincerely, Dr. Chris C., ~~08820~~ NJ.

VivaVegie Society: As a vegetarian I am constantly under fire for my dietary habits by family and co-workers. I would appreciate receiving the list of reasons why Pamela Teisler is a vegetarian so I may further enlighten the "less informed." I learned of this list in the Spring, 1993 issue of PETA News. Thanks,

Denise C., Tampa, Fl.

Dear Pamela: Can you please send me your list of 101 reasons why you're a vegetarian. I am in need of converting but I need some encouragement. Thank you very much, Shaun R., NYC

Dear Ms. Teisler: I am currently planning my wedding and we would like an animal-free reception. Do you know of any caterers that could handle such a request.

Thanks, Kimberly M., NY

Dear Kimberly: I got engaged, myself, about the time I received your letter, in March, and was married in August. My new husband and I didn't get married in the NYC area, however, but in Chicago; so

To order a copy of the newly-revised edition of 101 Reasons Why I'm a Vegetarian, send \$1 and a stamped self addressed envelope to: The VivaVegie Society, Prince St. Sta., P.O. Box 294, New York, NY 10012. Obtain additional copies for 50¢ each. And to pass out to all of your friends: \$20 for 50 copies and \$35 for 100 copies. Checks should be made payable to The VivaVegie Society. Multiple copies, over 2, come postage free.

The VivaVine welcomes letters, articles, manuscripts and graphics, for publication or reference. Deadline for submissions for next issue is October 10. The VivaVine always needs help at mailing time. Next issue is due the end of October.

Good folks. Get to know them.

Farm Sanctuary is sponsoring a fundraising *Walk for Farm Animals 1993* on Sept. 26 at Noon beginning at 72nd St. and Riverside Park in NYC. Farm Sanctuary operates the country's only shelters for victims of factory farming. Its investigators routinely visit slaughterhouses, stockyards and factory farms to document and expose abuses. Rescued farm animals are brought back to their shelters hopefully to be adopted by compassionate humans. Support Farm Sanctuary by pledging and/or walking on Sept. 26. The VivaVeggie Society will definitely be there. Contact Dawn Hernandez at 516/944-8166 for more information and a pledge packet.

Celebrate **World Vegetarian Day** with the **New York**

Vegetarian Society, Friday evening, Oct. 1, at the Met Club, 124 E. 83rd St. in NYC, from 7-10 p.m. Enjoy music, food, and demonstrations of massage and body work by a licensed chiropractor. Call Alycia Lee at 212/535-9385 for information.

Ingrid Newkirk and **Tom Regan** will speak at a forum on animal rights at The New School for Social Research, 66 West 12th St., NYC, Monday, Nov. 8, from 8-9:30 p.m. Ingrid Newkirk is co-founder and national director of PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals); and Tom Regan is Professor of Philosophy, North Carolina State University, and author of *The Case for Animal Rights*. Author and VivaVeggie Society member **Charles Patterson** will moderate. Do not be disappointed. Reserve your seat by calling 212/229-5690 now. Cost is \$8.

So, what is The VivaVeggie Society?

The VivaVeggie Society takes vegetarian advocacy to the streets. VivaVeggie advocates confront Mr. and Ms. Pedestrian to get the facts out about their healthful, ethical and environmentally conscious vegetarian diet.

Advocates assemble where there is plenty of pedestrian traffic. They come equipped with brightly-colored T-shirts with vegetarian messages, and plenty of fact-filled information. Founder Pamela Teisler wears the outfit shown on the reverse side of this newsletter. The mission? To distribute, for donation, the flyer, *101 Reasons Why I'm a Vegetarian*, written by Pamela Teisler and inspired by John Robbins' book, *Diet for a New America*. The VivaVeggie Society has been, and will be in the future, involved with various projects such as **World Vegetarian Day** and the **Adopt-A-McDonald's** campaign. Donations can be sent to: The VivaVeggie Society, Prince St. Sta., P.O. Box 294, New York, NY 10012. Call 212/966-2060.

To obtain a copy of *101 Reasons Why I'm a Vegetarian*, send \$1 (plus self addressed stamped envelope) for one copy. Additional copies, after 2, come postage paid. Send 50¢ for each additional copy; \$20 for 50 copies; and \$35 for 100 copies. Write c/o: The VivaVeggie Society, address, below.

VUNA / AVS Call to Action

Do you have access to a database of media contacts? Or, do you simply have access to a computer with a database program that can help you systematically send out press releases? The Vegetarian Union of North America and the American Vegan Society have put forth a *Call to Action* since their Oregon conference in early August. The document is a clarion call to those key people and institutions in our society who stand between the general public and a vegetarian way of life. It is directed at cardiologists, chefs, government officials, physicians, schools, the beef and dairy industries, the health and life insurance industries, as well as cancer and heart societies. The document is directed towards the public in general as well, that is anyone concerned with their health, the environment, and farm animals. A vegetarian diet should be recognized, it says, as one to adopt or strive for in light of recent overwhelming proof. The document cites the recent scientific studies of Dr. Dean Ornish. VUNA and AVS are asking vegetarian activists to distribute the proclamation via media points accompanied by a press release. Contact Pamela Teisler of The VivaVeggie Society for more information, a sample press release, and a copy of the *Call to Action* declaration.

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