



FDA Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
5630 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20852
fax: 301-827-6870
email: fdadockets@oc.fda.gov

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Docket #99P-4613—BAN BOVINE GROWTH HORMONE ON DAIRY COWS

Milk is no longer the all-American symbol of strength and vitality. In fact, a study in Dairy Today magazine labels milk fat the "most dangerous fat Americans eat in significant quantities. This consumption of saturated fats and cholesterol tends to cause artery disease." Not to mention, juvenile onset diabetes, asthma, allergies, cancer, high blood pressure and stroke.

But that's only half the story. America is the only country which allows dairy cows to be injected with Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH), to purportedly boost milk production. Agricultural economists at Cornell University, who conducted a recent study of New York dairy farms, discovered that although BGH increased milk output, the hormone was not profitable because it raised overall production costs. So much for Monsanto's claim that BGH is key to lucrative dairies.

The bigger problem—and why Docket #99P-4613 is crucial to America's physical health and economic health—are the myriad risks linked with BGH. In 1999, the Canadian government banned Monsanto's synthetic bovine growth hormone, due to its "unacceptable threat to the safety of cows." Canada's animal health panel reported that rBGH-treated cows had a 25% increase in mastitis, an excruciating bacterial infection of the udder, and a 50% increase in lameness. In America, up to half of dairy cows suffer from BGH-induced mastitis. (Feedstuffs/97)

BGH-diseased cows are treated with massive doses of antibiotics that are passed on to humans who drink their milk. BGH also causes cows to make more IGF-1 (insulin-like growth factor) which promotes cancer cell growth and elevates risks for prostate cancer in men and breast cancer in women. (World Cancer Research Fund, the American Institute for Cancer Research.)

Canada and most European countries ban BGH-treated dairy products because of these known factors. But what about the unknown factors? There are no long-term studies to predict the effects of injecting dairy cows with synthetic hormones. No one can gauge how this chemical hodgepodge will ultimately effect human health.

Bovine Growth Hormone is unhealthy for cows and humans. Though it may fatten the bank accounts of large-scale dairy operations, I would hope the FDA is more concerned with the welfare of U.S. citizens. I urge the FDA to act on Docket #99P-4613 and ban BGH on American dairies.

Sincerely,

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