

## Your Food Choices May Need A Change

By Geoff Gluckman

### Threat of Infection?

Are meat-eaters in British Columbia now at risk for Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease(CJD) due to the recent discovery of a Black Angus cow in Alberta infected with BSE?

Research shows that CJD is transmissible by blood. So much in fact that the Center for Disease Control(CDC) in Atlanta has mandated a protocol: any person with CJD and undergoing dental surgery must go to a hospital for the procedure. The Canadian Dental Association(CDA) has confirmed that they are following this recommendation.

The key issue surrounding not only CJD, BSE, and its derivatives is how the disease passes from one species to another. At present, scientists have not determined this. Furthermore, CJD and its slower developing new variant form(CJDnv) resemble other neurodegenerative conditions, such as Alzheimer's and Senile Dementia.

This brings into question the current methods in use for early detection of CJD infections in humans before death. According to Dr. John Collinge's research (1998) at the Department of Neurogenetics at Imperial College School of Medicine in London, England, "...there are some tests to determine CJD, but it is unclear whether these markers differentiate CJD from other neurodegenerative conditions that cause differential diagnosis before death...".

In the case of CJD's new variant form, which progresses more slowly, some of the current tests are not useful in early diagnosis. For now, there is much uncertainty. However, research seems to point to a common link-- rogue prion ingestion.

Fortunately, due to early exposure to these rogue prion-caused diseases Great Britain has made an early start on a drug that slows the progression of CJDnv. Developed by DR. Dealler, a microbiologist at the Royal Lancaster Infirmary, the medicine is called pentosan polysulfate and is used in a variety of ailments. At this time it is not approved for use in North America, yet.

This drug may have it first success with an 18 year old boy, Jonathan Simm. Diagnosed with CJDnv, the drug was injected into his brain in January 2003. According to the boy's father, Jonathan seems to be improving, or at least not getting worse.

Regardless of what research finds, it is clear that the way BCer's eat may be in need of a change.

(Bon Appetit)

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