



# THE RAM'S HORN

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF FOOD SYSTEM ANALYSIS

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## Lady Bountiful Version 2.08

Reading yet another press release about the philanthropy of The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation – this time a \$19.9 million grant to The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) – I was struck by the language describing this grant and others by Gates that are “designed to help small farmers boost their yields and increase their incomes so they can lift themselves out of hunger and poverty.” According to Gates, speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos, “These investments—from improving the quality of seeds, to developing healthier soil, to creating new markets—will pay off not only in children fed and lives saved. They can have a dramatic impact on poverty reduction as families generate additional income and improve their lives.”

Charity—the obligation of the wealthy to help the deserving poor – is nothing new. The key, of course, is in the word ‘deserving’. The ‘deserving’ poor in the era of Lady Bountiful were the appropriately subservient, those who could be counted upon to be grateful for the largesse and not to challenge the upper class. The new philanthropy is not much different.

While on the surface the Gates Foundation statement is less patronizing than that tired old one about ‘sustainable development,’ it has a very American ring to it: highly individualistic, with ‘improved’ lives measured in ‘additional income.’ There is no mention of justice, which would be measured by a reduction in the gap between rich and poor, elite and deprived, or the structures of capitalism that require that a few get rich while

the many get poorer. In other words, it is still a matter of helping the deserving poor, not changing the system which impoverished them in the first place.

Unspoken, also, is the trust in The Market to pay a fair price for the additional rice produced, without at the same time increasing the costs to the farmer (referred to as ‘inputs’ in the industrial system). Given how few companies control the market, coming and going, why would anyone expect them to charge or pay a fair price when they don’t have to? Global traders, like Cargill, ADM and Bunge, play the market, and it is in their interest to pay as little as possible for the commodities they trade, while charging what they can get away with for the ‘inputs’ they sell.

As for Mr. Gates, he has made it very clear that what he wants – what Microsoft is about – is a monopoly in the market place, not competition. The laws and regulations that foster this, along with the political power of extreme wealth, are not to be challenged. Rather, we are to be impressed by the generosity of the mega-rich, while they reconfigure charity into development aid to reproduce the class structure of capital and ensure that radical insight into its injustice is masked by individual ‘income improvement’.



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IRRI's project will target the poorest rice farmers in Africa and South Asia, who have little or no access to irrigation and who are totally reliant on sufficient, timely rains. These farmers are regularly exposed to drought, flooding, or salinity—conditions that reduce yields, harm livelihoods, and foster hunger and malnutrition. The development and distribution of new rice varieties tolerant of these environmental stresses can help avert hunger and malnutrition while improving livelihoods for millions of farmers and their families.

With minimal access to irrigation and fertilizer, these farmers, who own small plots on marginal land, are inevitably most exposed—and most vulnerable—to poor soils, too much or too little rain, and environmental disasters.

IRRI Director General Robert S. Zeigler emphasizes that, with climate change threatening to worsen the frequency and severity of these problems, the need for insurance – in the form of stress-tolerant crops – is growing ever more urgent.

– *International Rice Research Institute, Philippines, Press Release, 25/01/08*

Quite apart from their prescriptions for subsistence farmers – such as drought tolerant seeds which will have to be genetically engineered, and irrigation and fertilizer which they cannot afford – one really has to ask, Is it really appropriate for one man – or one man and one woman – to decide on what will 'reduce poverty' while their own wealth continues its relentless increase?  
– **B.K.**

## "The Indian elite is . . . seceding from the people"

"We must be clear about the consequences of inequalities. Promoting unbridled consumerism by celebrating the 'Greed Creed' can never encourage responsible conduct on behalf of the rich. It will inevitably aggravate profligacy and create a stampede for ostentatious consumption. . . The 'emulation effect' among the aspiring classes can only increase their alienation from the majority. The Indian elite is mentally, psychologically and economically seceding from the people.

This process will be further accelerated. "Precisely because most Indians do not believe that the rich are rich by virtue of merit or hard work – certainly not at the 500:1 or 1,000:1 level of income differentials – they resent the wealth of the few in contrast to their own poverty. In the absence of organised political movements, this will lead to crime and social disharmony, as in many Latin American countries. This will soon endanger society, including the rich. Growing crime and lawlessness are coming back to haunt our rich and powerful – high walls and barbed wire notwithstanding."

– *Praful Bidwai, Frontline, 15/6/07*

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## Food Industry Notes

I used to keep a file titled PDR, standing for processing - distribution - retailing. It's where I put all the news about consolidation in the food industry, the latest in marketing and distribution techniques, and who's who in retailing. Over time this all became less and less interesting as the pattern was clear and the outcome largely settled. Three or so major players in each sector of the food system, from tractors to supermarkets, with fertilizer, processors and seed companies in between. Apparent choice proliferated on the retail shelf while biodiversity in the package radically diminished. Farms became bigger and far fewer. All the while the money continued to flow upwards and share prices became the golden rule while incomes down the line became thinner and thinner to the point of no return on the farm itself – unless you are, in effect, a franchise operation growing under contract for your 'input' supplier (who supplies the credit) or processor (who supplies the credit and now may be an ethanol maker) while you maintain the illusion of independence.

So there you have it – almost – in single paragraph. 'Almost' because in fact there are a lot of interesting things going on in the food system, though not perhaps in the food industry. I guess the term 'resistance' is most appropriate to describe the proliferation of projects and modest (not to say 'small') enterprises in everything from heirloom seeds to local processing and fine eating. What is perhaps most interesting is the growing willingness on the part of people whose primary connection to the food system is as eaters to put energy into elements of a different system. This stretches from upper-scale dining (following the motto: Support Rare Breeds: Eat Them) and membership in farm-direct projects, to developing training programs for new farmers and advocacy of healthy agricultural policies.

So we still have things to write about in *The Ram's Horn*: stories of resistance – and stories about the truly horrible shenanigans of Big Food. (see *Pork Brains*, page 6 and *Life Imitates Art*, page 3).  
– **B.K.**

## Life Imitates Art

Years ago, acerbic US comedian Tom Lehrer wrote a song called “The Old Dope Peddler” about selling drugs to kids. Now candy spiked with caffeine and, often, vitamins, is the \$29 billion U.S. candy, gum and chocolate industry’s answer to surging competition from energy drinks.

The new products are appearing as the candy industry is losing part of its most bankable audience—kids. There were 3.3% fewer kids age 6 to 11 in 2007 as in 2002, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Sales of sugar confectionary dropped by 4% from 2001 to 2006, while energy-drink sales rose by more than 400% to \$3.23 billion in the period.

The industry claims these new products aren’t intended to be a candy, but a “sports performance product”. (The new candies clock in at 50 to 100 milligrams of caffeine per piece. An 8 oz. cup of coffee, by comparison, has anywhere from 65 to 200 milligrams, while a can of Red Bull energy drink has 75 milligrams.)

They also claim that the products aren’t marketed to young children. Mars spokesman Ryan Bowling notes that many products, including soda, contain caffeine, adding that parents have a responsibility to monitor what kids eat.

—source: WSJ, 13/2/08

## “Dangerous invasive species”

With the rapid ascent of agrofuels on the agenda of global capital, there has been a stronger and stronger voice raised in protest, while also pointing the way to a just and viable future for all. A wide range of NGOs (Non-Government Organizations) and CSOs (Civil Society Organizations) are speaking out ever more forcefully as climate change and economic injustice cast an ever more ominous shadow over Creation. One of these voices at the meeting in mid-February in Rome of The Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSSTA) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was that of the World Rainforest Movement, based in Uruguay.

Two issues of particular concern to the WRM are forest biodiversity and invasive alien species: “Invasive alien species are a major cause of biodiversity loss in forests and other ecosystems, but the issue of invasive alien tree plantation species is rarely mentioned or addressed. This is in spite of the fact that some species of eucalyptus, pines and acacias have already become invasive in many countries (e.g. in South Africa, Chile, USA, Uruguay and others).

“If we look at the biodiversity issue from a political and economic perspective, it is clear that **transnational corporations are the most dangerous invasive alien species of all** [emphasis added]. As their natural invasive counterparts do, they invade lands and forests and destroy habitats that provided the means of living to countless other species and to local people.”

— WRM Bulletin, 1/08, www.wrm.org.uk



## “Corporate control from seed to sewer”

ECO ECO described itself at the SBSSTA as *The Voice of the NGO Community in the International Environmental Conventions*. Following is an edited version of an article from the newsletter by Patrick Mulvany of the UK.

“The challenge for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is that without radical transformation of the dominant model of industrial agriculture, livestock production and fisheries, not only will food providers and agricultural biodiversity continue to disappear but hunger will increase alongside global warming. To forestall this, among other things, the CBD needs to decisively involve the social organisations of food providers in its work.

“The food insecurity created by vulnerable, uniform and genetically weak monocultures will haunt future generations. What is needed in an unpredictable world is more not less diversity, collective not monopoly control of resources, localised not global food systems—systems that conserve rather than consume carbon.



***“The CBD will fail in its mission if it does not confront the tsunami of corporate control of the food system from seed to sewer. . . [emphasis added]***

“Agricultural biodiversity is more than colourful seeds, vegetables and fruits displayed in biodiversity boutiques. It is the product of the ingenuity of women and men whose knowledge and skills over millennia have crafted myriad varieties and breeds adapted to a multitude of ecosystems and suited to every social, cultural and economic need. It is the diversity of all species above and below the ground and in aquatic systems that have co-evolved with people to provide food, fodder, natural fibre and thriving ecosystem functions that sustain life on Earth.

“However, there is a haemorrhage of these vital resources accelerated by the spread of the dominant model of industrial agriculture for commodities and agrofuels, intensive livestock production and extractive fisheries, contaminating those resources that remain with proprietary GMOs. These losses are exacerbated by inequitable trade and commercial agreements, seed laws and intellectual property rights systems that undermine [the work of] farmers, livestock keepers and indigenous peoples. . .

“A countervailing policy framework exists that will defend agricultural biodiversity: food sovereignty. This is the policy proposal of small-scale farmers who know how to provide good, wholesome food. It puts them and other food providers centre-stage in the food system and prioritises the needs of consumers for nutritious foods, sourced as locally as possible.

“The core principles of food sovereignty cover all dimensions of a food system that will provide food in the long-term rather than short-term profits. It focuses on food for people rather than internationally tradeable commodities. It values food providers rather than eliminating them. It localises food systems rather than dependence on inequitable global trade. It puts control locally instead of by unaccountable corporations. It builds knowledge and skills that conserve and develop local food production and rejects technologies such as GMOs. It works with nature in diverse agroecological systems rather than energy-intensive production methods that damage the environment and contribute to global warming.

“The Parties to the CBD must put biodiversity-based agriculture at its core. The Parties should call for

regulation of industrial food systems that destroy this biodiversity. They should also increase priority for the conservation and development of agricultural biodiversity, and the enhancement of ecosystem functions, in agroecological systems managed by food providers where they live—on-farm by small-scale farmers, on the range by pastoralists, in inland and coastal waters by artisanal fisherfolk... [as well as] ... policies and practices that will facilitate an increase in exchanges of GM-free seeds, livestock breeds and other genetic resources for food and agriculture, between communities, countries and continents.

“In the face of climate change, increasing adaptive capacity is non-negotiable. It is essential for mitigation but can only be achieved through increased agricultural biodiversity, and its associated ecosystem functions, managed by local family and peasant farmers, pastoralists and artisanal fisherfolk and other local food providers.”  
 — 18/2/08 [www.cbdalliance.org](http://www.cbdalliance.org)



## News: NAFTA is a Disaster!

The Mexican Agriculture and Cattle Farming Commission of the Chamber of Deputies has issued an analysis on the effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), clearly explaining why it has been a disaster for national agriculture. The report said that, since the signing of the agreement, indices of poverty and marginalization have risen dramatically in the countryside. Commission president Hector Padilla pointed out that one must be blind and deaf to not be aware of this reality.

The study noted that after NAFTA was signed between Mexico, the United States and Canada, financing in agriculture fell more than 90 percent and national production of improved seeds was totally eliminated, left to the thirst of the transnationals. Also, the domestic fertilizer industry is closed and producers now depend on increasingly expensive imports while programs of technical assistance and training aimed at rural producers were cancelled.

Supported by the enormous subsidies of the United States, the price of beans as well as corn tortillas, basic Mexican staples, rose while machine costs and pesticides increased exorbitantly, it added.

The deputies pointed out the Mexican countryside is in the sharpest crisis of its history, steeping its

population in poverty and massive expulsion towards the United States. In the past few years, three million Mexicans emigrated. The commission asserted that it is not only the interest of rural producers that are at risk but the stability of the nation due to the insecurity of basic food supply, becoming an issue of both nutritional and national security. *— Prensa Latina, 4/2/08*

Some Mexicans are, however, doing just fine. Fortune magazine reported last August that Carlos Slim, born January 28, 1940 in Mexico City, had overtaken Bill Gates as the world's richest man. Carlos Slim's estimated fortune soared to US\$68 billion, based on the value of his public holdings at the end of July 07.

Slim gained notoriety when he led a group of investors that included France Télécom and Southwestern Bell Corporation in buying Telmex and Telnor from the Mexican government in 1990 in a public tender during the presidency of Carlos Salinas. Today, 90% of the telephone lines in Mexico are operated by Telmex. The mobile company, Telcel, which Carlos Slim Helú also controls, operates almost 80% of all the country's cellphones. These operations have financed Mr. Slim's expansion abroad. Over the past five years, his wireless carrier América Móvil has bought cellphone companies across Latin America, and is now the region's dominant company, with more than 100 million subscribers. *— Forbes.com, 24/2/08*

There is no record available of Carlos Slim's philanthropy.

## Fertilizer Woes

To the north, the sales and profits of the three fertilizer majors are higher than ever. Profits have doubled, according to the chief exec of Potash Corp, who is warning that farmers will need to harvest record crops every year to meet increasing food demand and avoid famine. He apparently made no mention of using food crops as agrofuels! The three majors are Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, Agrium (half fertilizer producer, half marketer of farm inputs), and Mosaic (Cargill) the world's largest producer of phosphate fertilizer. The CEO of Agrium received \$1.89 million in salary and bonus in 2006, plus various stock rewards for a total of \$11.66 million. The CEO of Potash Corp received a similar amount in salary and bonus, \$1.98 million, with added stock rewards, in one form or another, that brought his total 'compensation' to \$6.57 million. Hunter Harrison, the guy responsible for hauling a lot of that fertilizer around, as well as the farmers' grains as CEO of Canadian National Railways, had to comfort himself with a grand total of \$8.25 million. *— GM, 4/6/07*

Canada's agriculture minister Gerry Ritz does not suggest to farmers that they should demand a cut of corporate profits, or of the CEOs' obscene 'compensation,' but rather that they should be better shoppers. If fertilizer prices are too high in Canada, take your trucks and go south to buy it at half price. "We have a little thing called NAFTA that has made the border disappear," he commented. Top business groups in Canada and the USA, however, are saying that their members are growing increasingly frustrated by mounting crossing delays and rising costs imposed by security bureaucrats. Meanwhile, Canada's Competition Bureau was asked to investigate fertilizer pricing but refused. *— GM, 21/2/08*



## Seed and Ideology

The growing clash of Canada's government with Big Business is providing some welcome surprises, one over the issue of KVD – Kernel Visual Distinguishability – in wheat grading, and another over copyright 'reform.' (Actually, the old word is 'reform,' the new one is 'modernization.')

The government, in its determination to deregulate everything – actually to leave it to industry to regulate itself – appears willing to go to any length to destroy the Canadian Wheat Board and all the agencies and regulations that have served Canada and its prairie farmers well for many decades. Ritz has promised to get rid of the key tool in Canada's grain marketing by August 1<sup>st</sup> by hook or crook. The major grain handlers, including Cargill, Bunge and ADM, warn that without a tested alternative for identifying and grading wheat in place by August, the market will be chaotic and open to abuse, and alternative grading methodologies and tools are



years away, they point out. They want the removal of KVD to be done slowly, with it gone altogether in 2012.

If it is not Cargill, Bunge and ADM that are pushing for the disappearance of KVD, that leaves only the Harper government and its right-wing supporters in Western Canadian Wheat Growers and similar ideological fanatics.

We keep hearing rave reviews of Devlin Kuyek's book, *Good Crop / Bad Crop: Seed Politics and the Future of Food in Canada* (Between The Lines, Toronto). It can be ordered from The Ram's Horn for \$23 CDN including postage, and it's worth every penny.

## Bangladesh threatened with hybrid rice

Hurricane Sidr destroyed 30%-42% of the Amon paddy (rice) under cultivation in the southern region, and preserving paddy for seeds after meeting the demands for food and other necessities has become difficult. Immediate government initiatives are needed for collecting paddy to use in preparing standard quality of local varieties of paddy seeds before the farmers sell it or use it for food.

Seizing the opportunity created by the seed crisis, agents of transnational companies have already started propagation of hybrid foreign varieties in a bid to introduce foreign hybrid paddy seeds in the Sidr-affected region. They are trying to lure farmers telling them about high production rates and assuring constant supply of sufficient seeds for the coming seasons. They also claim that these genetically modified foreign seeds have better pest and disaster resistance capacity.

Agriculture experts and farmers in the region, on the other hand, said introduction of foreign seeds will threaten extinction of local varieties of paddy that have good taste and greater food values. In addition, production cost will rise as foreign varieties need more care and costly fertiliser, irrigation and pesticides. Farmers in the region are accustomed to cultivating paddy with local varieties of seeds that are more suitable than 'high yielding' hybrid seeds to geographical condition and resist different types of pests and natural calamities. More than 70% of the farmers in the southern region use local varieties of paddy seeds – white coarse, red coarse, nakuchi, moulta, kartikshail, rajashail, vushihara and other types. In Jhalakathi, Barisal and Pirojpur districts, 34, 44 and 54 local varieties of paddy are usually cultivated.

– source: *The Daily Star, Bangladesh, 19/1/08*

## Cowpeas

While you may not be planning on cowpeas for dinner, you may want to include in your grace before meals some thoughts about the new colonization of Africa by the biotech industry, its financiers and its agents. The Africa Centre for Biosafety provides a specific illustration of this assault in an excellent briefing paper entitled *Displacing Africa's Indigenous Food: Monsanto and AATF's GM Cowpea Project*.<sup>1</sup> Here's the description of the content.

"Cowpea is one of the most ancient crops known to humankind, with its center of origin and subsequent domestication being closely associated with pearl millet and sorghum. Whilst India and China are centres of origin for cowpeas, Africa is regarded as another cradle because of the prolific occurrence of the plants in the wild in many parts of Africa.



"Monsanto and industry backed African Agriculture Technology Foundation (AATF) have teamed up to push GM cowpeas into Africa over the next couple of years. They have identified Nigeria and Burkina Faso as key entry points, with Ghana, Cameroon, Niger and Mali comprising the second tier of countries that will be targeted. The project is assisted by Nigeria-based International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), one of the 15 agricultural research institutes of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

"We have examined a Project Business Plan drawn up by AATF and present our critique of the same in the attached briefing. We have come to the conclusion that it reads like a pure top-down proposal initiated by Monsanto, who is in need of a new 'Makhathini type showcase for Africa.' The true aim of the project is to displace current cowpea varieties in the hands of African farmers by the introduction of a GM variety."

– Mariam Mayet, <http://biosafetyafrica.net/portal/>

Another blunt paper found on the same site, from a meeting in Ecuador is: *The Geopolitics of Agrofuels*. A sample of the statement:

"The energy / industrial matrix based on fossil fuels, which sustains the current urban-industrial civilization and the development status, is in crisis. These energy sources are becoming exhausted, so capitalism is desperately searching for new methods of energy generation, including agrofuels. From our perspective as agro-exporting countries of the South, forced into this position by the logic of external debt and our colonial history, agrofuels embody the further entrenchment of the agribusiness model and industrial agriculture, understood as the sum of monocultures, genetic engineering, agro-toxins, environmental destruction and impoverishment of our societies, especially those in our rural areas."

# The Appalling Meat Industry

## Pork Brains

*If you have a queasy stomach, don't read this*

Workers at two pork-processing plants in the US have developed a mysterious nervous ailment after using compressed air to blast brain tissue from severed pig heads. The end product is a pink food paste that is canned and exported, but the process also generates an aerosol of brain matter that workers may inhale.

Since 2006, 12 workers at a Minnesota slaughterhouse have developed symptoms ranging from weakness, tingling and numbness to acute paralysis, US health authorities reported on 31 January. Other workers have developed similar symptoms at a slaughterhouse in Indiana. All those affected have similar patterns of inflammation in their spinal and peripheral nerves, and neurologist Daniel Lachance of the Mayo Clinic in the USA suspects that this is the result of autoimmune damage triggered by immune reactions to proteins from the pig brains. Only three US plants use the blasting process and they have all stopped as a result of the investigation. *— New Scientist, 9/2/08*

## Recalls

We thought the meat recall we reported on in the last issue was humungous, and that was only one million pounds of ground beef from Cargill. That turns out to be peanuts compared to the largest meat recall in US history: 143 million pounds of raw and frozen beef products produced by Hallmark/Westland Meat Packing Company in California, following an investigation by USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS).

FSIS investigated the Hallmark/Westland plant following an undercover investigation by the Humane Society of the United States, which produced video evidence of slaughter plant workers forcing 'downer' cows onto their feet and so into the human food chain. Workers are seen, among other things, kicking cows and ramming them with the blades of a forklift truck

The inspection service also found that the company did not consistently contact its public health veterinarian when cattle became non-ambulatory (fall down and can't get up) after passing pre-slaughter inspection. According to FSIS regulations, public health vets should reassess non-ambulatory cattle which are either condemned and prohibited from the food supply, or tagged as suspect. Suspect cattle receive a thorough inspection.

Some of the Westland Meat Co branded products were purchased for Federal food and nutrition programmes. Since the end of January the USDA has had an administrative hold on all products in these outlets including the National School Lunch Programme, the Emergency Food Assistance Programme and the Food Assistance Programme on Indian Reservations. It is however reported that most of the meat had been consumed before the recall order.

*— source: Foodproductiondaily.com, 19/2/08*

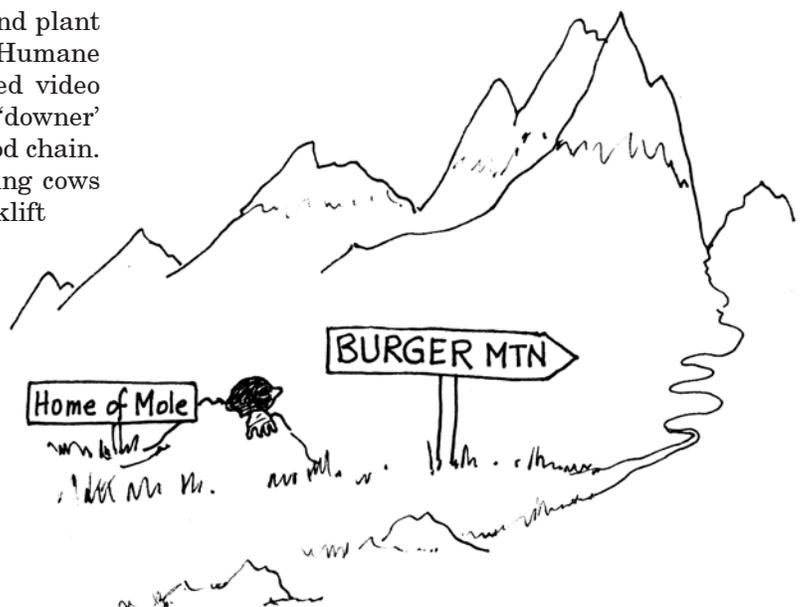
## Connecting Ethanol Byproduct and E. Coli

Studies at two universities suggest that feeding cattle a byproduct of ethanol production known as distillers grains may increase levels of a deadly form of E. coli bacteria. Production of distillers grains has soared along with the growth of ethanol. About a third of the corn that goes to an ethanol plant is turned into distillers grains.

Meatpackers recalled a record 33.4 million pounds of beef last year for possible E. coli contamination, up from just 181,900 pounds in 2006, according to the USDA. The 21 recalls last year – the most since 2002 – included one by now-defunct Topps Meat Co. that totaled 21.7 million pounds. [This would be in addition to the recalls for other health reasons such as the one reported above.]

USDA undersecretary for food safety, Richard Raymond, said the government had no intention of restricting the use of distillers grains even if the E. coli link is confirmed, and would instead leave it to the industry to decide how to address the issue.

*— DesMoines Register.com, 27/1/08*



## It's the model that has to change

The farm paper Manitoba Cooperator carried a big headline : "Greenpeace greenhouse gas report infuriates CFA". The Canadian Federation of Agriculture is the mainline voice of industrial agriculture in Canada. The article reported that what is really upsetting the CFA is the Greenpeace suggestion that there ought to be a carbon tax on fertilizers because of the release of nitrous oxide from the soil as an outcome of heavy nitrogen fertilizer use, particularly in corn production. The CFA says Greenpeace is "defaming" Canada's farmers by ignoring their contribution to reducing greenhouse gases through such practices as no-till farming (which is part of the GE seed/Roundup herbicide package promoted by Monsanto). The Greenpeace report says environmental problems caused by industrial agriculture could be solved by shifting agricultural practices.

- MC, 17/1/08

The most obvious way to do this is, of course, to practice organic agriculture which does not require or permit synthetic fertilizers, but this is not something the CFA and its industrial partners could ever admit.

Similarly, Western Producer reported Bragi Simundsson of Arborg, Manitoba, with a herd of 130 beef cattle, saying that many of his urban customers are looking for an alternative to feedlot beef and are willing

to pay a premium for it. It also makes sense to his customers that ruminant animals should be raised on grass, not grain. 'The main things they want is hormone-free and antibiotic-free, but grass fed as well. Consumers as a whole are getting much more health conscious. I think they are looking for better nutritional quality than they are going to get out of the industrial agricultural system.'

(When we started farming in the early 70s with a herd of Hereford cross cattle, we found that our beef, raised on grass and butchered just down the road, with minimal stress, was tastier and tenderer than any industrial beef we, or our customers, had ever eaten.)

The same paper quoted the director of Quality Meats of Scotland saying that he is able to tell whether an animal has been raised on grain or grass, whether it suffered stress before slaughter, and what country it comes from based on the beef's flavour and texture. For example, animals finished on grass will have a stronger flavour than those finished on grain. "I do believe that stress has a big influence on flavour. You can detect it, there is a special flavour, a chemical you can taste."

- Western Producer, 17/1/08

Among the advantages of grass-fed beef is that it reduces the methane produced by cattle as a consequence of the 'hot' feedlot diet of corn and other high-protein feeds.

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