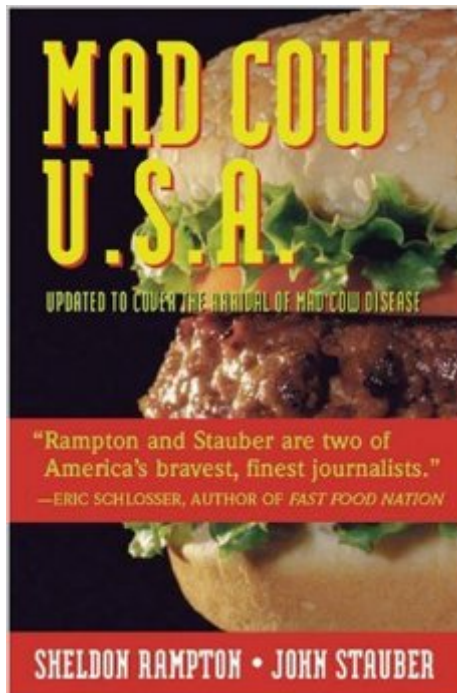


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Mad Cow USA: Could The Nightmare Happen Here?



Synopsis

"Mad Cow U.S.A." is the terrifying, true tale that industry hopes to censor. The U.S. has its own versions of the brain-wasting disease killing cows and people in Britain. In the U.K., the meat industry feeding practice of "animal cannibalism" has unleashed a deadly human demential easily mistaken for Alzheimer's, and spread by infected meat. Yet, U.S. agribusiness still feeds billions of pounds of animal waste back to pigs, chickens, cows, dogs and cats. Rampton and Stauber reveal an amazing world of brilliant scientists, callous industry, courageous victims and cowardly bureaucrats, united by a mysterious killer that threatens a global epidemic -- unless we heed this warning.

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Customer Reviews

Like kuru, scrapie and CJD, BSE ("mad cow disease") is a Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy (TSE), a fatal neurological disease transmitted by prions. That is, the infectious agent is a defectively folded prion protein, not a living pathogen like a virus or bacteria. It can survive being incinerated, or being buried for years in the ground with only a modest reduction in its disease-causing ability. The epidemiological model for the danger of BSE is kuru, a fatal but otherwise rare neurological disease that was common among New Guinea highlanders back in the 50's and 60's. Kuru reached epidemic proportions due to the practice of human cannibalism, usually of the brain. The regional government finally banned the practice, which (eventually) led to the decline of kuru incidence. So what's this got to do with hamburgers? "Rendering" is the innocuous

term for the practice of grinding up left-over animal organs, tissues, spinal cords etc that are considered unfit for human consumption, then selling it as Meat & Bone Meal (MBM) or Tallow. Agribusinesses use MBM as cattle and pig food and fertilizer (like on vegetables...); tallow has many uses including in the pharmaceuticals and cosmetics industries. Rendering is cow cannibalism, as it were, which is believed to have amplified the incidence of BSE in Britain, just as cannibalism amplified kuru in New Guinea. If you have never heard of rendering then you need to read this book. The British experience of CJD should have been a lesson to US politicians, bureaucrats, cattlemen, and the FDA, because the "new variant" of CJD that has killed numerous British persons is actually a prion disease derived from the BSE prion, that is, from cattle. That is, people have died from eating prion-infected beef.

When a topic as potentially sensationalistic as "Deadly Disease Being Spread to US Population with Covert US Government Cooperation" needs to be dealt with seriously, it takes responsible journalists to keep hysteria from distorting the facts. Rampton and Stauber have succeeded where others would have failed. The topic of the book is how the meat industry, their public relations firms and the governments of the USA and Britain worked together to attempt to conceal important information about a newly discovered disease that was abroad in the human food system. The truly frightening truth is that Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE, or Mad Cow Disease) is a real thing. It is one disease in a class known as Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy that have, until recently, been little researched and little understood. This book does not describe an episode of "The X-Files." People have died from it and are continuing to die from it. The authors documented the entire process of a growing crisis that has potentially world-shattering implications to millions of Americans. Pulling together original source material from obscure (and perhaps at time even hostile) sources they describe how the events unfolded and reason the events unfolded as they did. An important note is that this book is not, and does not pretend to be, a scientific treatment of BSE, TSE's or any other topic. Its approach is more realistic. The authors lay out the occurrences as they transpired, uncovering innumerable bits of information that were never before collected together or presented to the general public. The book details the scientific minutiae only to the degree it is relevant and stops short of either lecturing or preaching.

This review appeared in the October 97 issue of Chicago Ink Mad Cow U.S.A.: Could the Nightmare Happen Here? Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber reviewed by Heidi Thompson If you aren't a vegetarian, now might be a good time to convert. If recent outbreaks of e-coli in contaminated beef,

added to knowledge that meat contains enormous amounts of fat and cholesterol, haven't convinced you of the enormous health risks associated with eating meat, this book will. Rampton and Stauber detail the incidences of several types of transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE). TSE's include BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) otherwise known as "mad cow disease", as well as variations of these diseases typically found in sheep, mink, and humans. Rampton and Stauber provide details of experiments that clearly link various types of TSE's to each other--in other words, it is now almost certain that a human could contract a variant of TSE from eating an animal which was similarly infected. This terrifying realization gets worse: it is possible that the governments of various countries (primarily Britain) could have stopped the outbreak had the meat industry not consistently denied that there was any connection between BSE and human illness. (Does anyone else see a parallel to the tobacco industry's constant denial that smoking causes lung cancer?) One of the main problems with TSE's (aside from being completely incurable) is that they are extremely difficult to diagnose. It is impossible to be for certain whether or not the disease is present until the victim is dead and the brain can be looked at under a microscope. At that point the signs are unmistakable: the brains of TSE victims (animal and human) resemble Swiss cheese--full of holes.

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