

**The supermarket offers the cheapest meats in the most convenient locations.**

**Yet some consumers spend more for locally-raised pastured meats.**

**This seems foolish.**

**Why do some people do this?**



#### **Livestock Feed**

The single largest expense in raising livestock is the feed. Consequently, by-products and slaughter house wastes are substituted to displace more costly natural feed components. Examples include blood meal, feather meal, bone meal, dried poultry manure, rendered offal, ground hooves, confectionary wastes. For some people, it's not just the fact that these by-products are fed but also the sourcing. By-products are a specialty industry in which slaughter house wastes are purchased from packing plants throughout the world, brought to one location, then mixed and processed for sale to livestock producers. This raises the concern that one diseased animal's by-products could unknowingly contaminate many thousands of pounds of feed. The process of feeding dried poultry manure to cattle raises the additional concern of cannibalization. Since the Mad Cow scare, it is illegal to feed rendered bovine products to bovines. However, it remains legal to feed rendered bovine in chicken feed. As selective eaters, the caged chickens push feed out of the feeder where it lands in the chicken manure. Chicken manure as a common bovine feed supplement effectively completes the cannibalism loop.



#### **Livestock Medications/Hormones**

Because consumers demand low prices, conventional livestock producers must maximize their housing and labor. Animals eating, drinking and defecating in high density, crowded confinements creates the ideal conduit for pathogen proliferation. Consequently, sub therapeutic antibiotics are administered with each daily feeding. Over time, producers recognized that this prophylactic use of antibiotics carried the added bonus of increasing feed efficiency. Because of the same consumer demand for low price, hormones (steroids) are implanted in beef cattle to increase both feed efficiency and accelerate weight gain. Arsenic is another concern, being routinely fed to poultry as an appetite stimulant. The antibiotic/hormone issue has two concerns for consumers. Some people are concerned that trace amounts of these substances remain in the meat. The larger issue rests with antibiotic resistance created by the ubiquitous utilization of the same classes of antibiotics as are used to treat humans.

#### **Animal Environment/Animal Husbandry**

In spite of advertising attempts depicting livestock reared in lush, sunny, green pastures, an increasing number of consumers are learning that these depictions are false. These consumers learned that the food they have been placing on their kitchen table was derived from animals forced to exist in densely populated confinements, breathing ammonia and fecal laden air while eating, drinking and sleeping directly above their own septic tank. Laying hens are caged their entire lives, 6-8 hens per cage, with an 8-½ x 11 sheet of paper being the equivalent floor space for two hens. Their cages are stacked. Manure and dust falls upon the cages below. Workers must wear respiratory protection to avoid burning their lungs with ammonia. Some consumers recognize that these conditions enter into the bodies of the livestock - the very place in which their future meat and eggs are metabolizing.



#### **Butchering/Processing**

Industrial processors repeatedly slaughter high volumes - 250,000 chickens/day, 120,000 hogs/day, 5000 cattle/day. This is compared to local butcher shops which typically process 40 beef and 60 hogs per WEEK. Because the kill floor is killing such high volumes 20 hours/day, every day, many consumers recognize the potential for cross contamination in which one pathogen-laden animal contaminates thousands. Poultry processing involves submerging hundreds of thousands of manure-caked carcasses into scald tanks for defeathering. Evisceration is accomplished with machinery which forcefully enters the body cavity to remove the organs and intestines. Because some intestinal breakage occurs, manure is spilled within the carcass as well as being transferred from carcass to carcass by repetitious machinery. Because this fecal contamination is persistent throughout the scald, eviscerate and chill processes, chlorine baths are required as a means of killing the pathogens. Industry recognizes that it is impossible to remove the pathogen from the meat, relying on chlorine or tri sodium phosphate to kill the pathogen so that the pathogenic material is safe to eat. The liquid and blood that drains from a supermarket chicken is in fact the liquid the meat absorbed while soaking in chlorine baths which contained this fecal-laden water. Most pork is now "enhanced" typically to 12% with a brine solution consisting of water, sodium tripolyphosphate, salt, sodium lactate, potassium lactate, sodium diacetate, preservatives and flavoring agents. Because industrial hogs are so lean and the hogs live a sedentary lifestyle in confinements, these watered salt solutions improve flavor and eliminate dryness. Consumers pay the going rate for pork to which 12% of the weight is pumped with these enhancement brines. Some consumers have learned of the process used to pump the meat with brine solution. This pumping process uses a series of injection needles which repeatedly probe and pump fluids into the pork as it moves on a conveyor. Excess fluid drains from the pork, is captured and recirculated. The process of probing and recirculating brine fluids on a conveyor belt system assures that pathogens normally found exclusively on the exterior will be pushed deeply into the meat as well as spread via the thousands of gallon of recirculating fluids. Grinding meat has become a specialty business in which trimmings are procured from slaughter plants throughout the world. The grinding plant dumps these collected trimmings into a grinder/mixer capable of processing thousands of pounds. It is in fact accurate to state that a single hamburger is comprised of and/or has come in direct contact with meat trimmings



derived from thousands of animals sourced from throughout the globe. Some consumers recognize that one animal with e-coli or other hazardous health problems will in fact contaminate thousands. As is the case with poultry, industry recognizes the presence of pathogens and the vectors the industrial grinding process creates. The industry preference is to kill the pathogen on the carcass, rendering the dead pathogens as safe to eat.