

Mad cow puts U.S. in a panic, but will it last?

Pity the poor cowman. Just when the late Dr. Atkins and his diet fad pushed beef prices through the ceiling, they find a mad cow in Washington state. Millions of pounds of American beef stack up in warehouses, banned by dozens of importing countries. Consumers shocked by the price of steak opt for chicken — or the other white meat. Vegetarians wag their fingers and say, "We told you so." PETA, People for Ethical Treatment of Animals, probably will blame the whole thing on a conspiracy by cruel ranchers. And needless to say, beef prices have taken a tumble. But for how long? Many observers say the market will recoup most of last year's gain. They don't see much permanent damage from the mad cow scare.

For one thing, the beef industry has been moving to better track and account for its product. Many experts say the long-term damage to the industry will be minimal.

That doesn't help much if you need to sell a bunch of calves next week, though.

Stronger government regulations and more testing seem certain. There are problems. For one thing, the prions thought to cause the disease are shadowy, protein particles classed as non-living.

Though not considered a life form, prions seem to be able to spread, reproduce and infect other organisms. While it can take years for a cow to become sick after infection, though, people who eat infected parts can go down rather quickly.

The disease, while frightening, is rare even where it is most common. Britain reported only about 150 deaths before it got control of it's epidemic. In Japan, where all beef slaughtered for the table is tested, only nine infected animals have been discovered.

Science has little understanding of the prion or brain-wasting disease. The infection leaves brain tissue with a sponge-like consistency when viewed through a microscope, but scientists can't explain exactly how it spreads or why similar diseases in other animals don't seem to affect humans.

A version in sheep, called scrapie, has been known for more than 30 years. A big proportion of the deer and elk in north central Colorado are infected with "chronic wasting disease," still another relative. Cannibals of New Guinea were known to pass a similar disease on by eating brain tissue of the dead as much as 65 years ago.

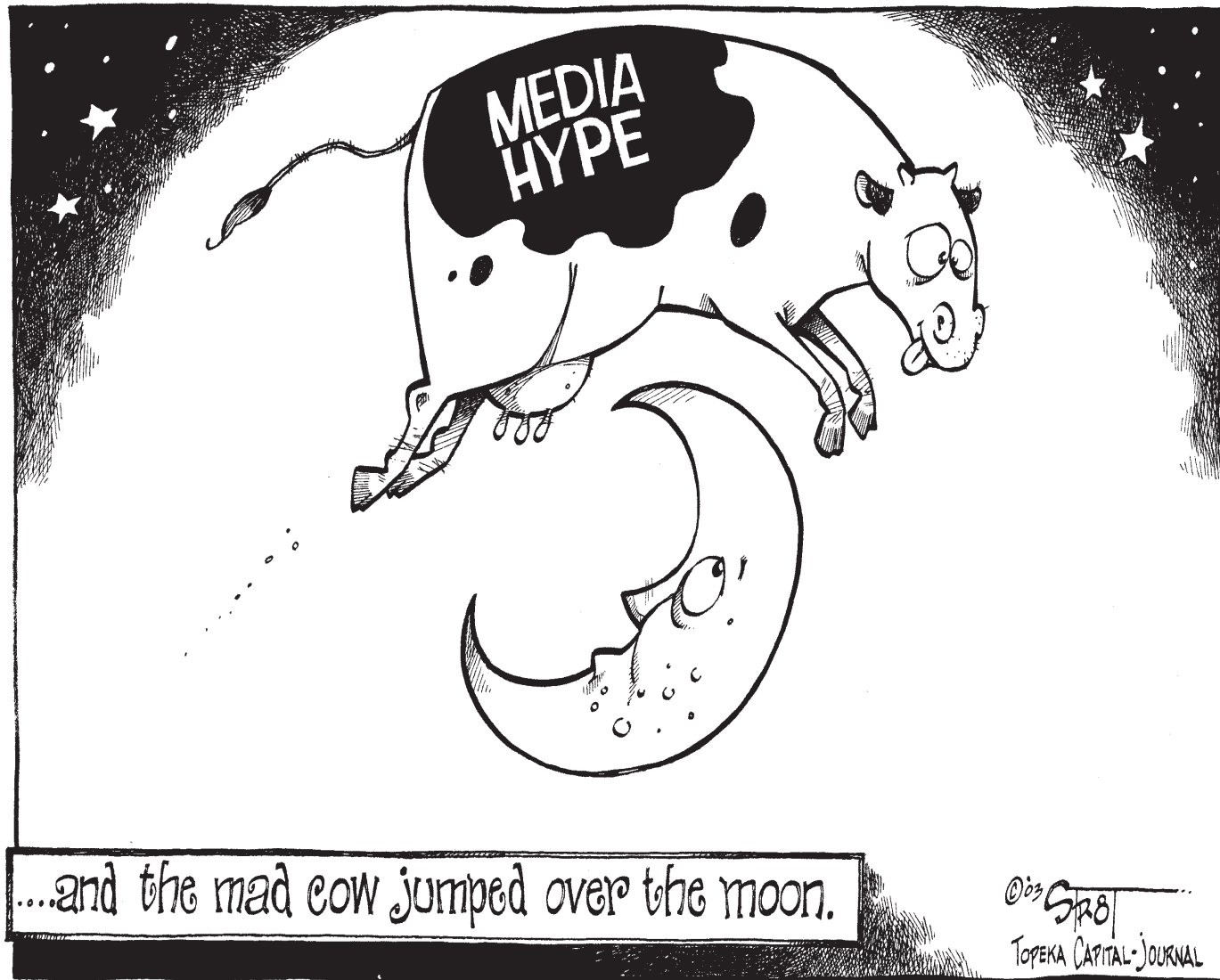
While the link between eating infected tissue and human infection is clear with cows, there is no proof — yet — that humans can contract the disease from deer or sheep.

There is the problem, that "yet."

The government has banned beef parts from cattle feed, hoping to prevent transmission, but infected material might still be fed to pigs, pets or other animals. Why not ban use of brain and nerve tissue entirely?

There is just so much we don't know. Yet people seem determined to eat steak, despite the price. And losing weight has a strong appeal.

The market will recover because Americans like their beef. But the scare hardly seems fair to the cowman. — Steve Haynes



Ann Landers eat your heart out

My column has struck fear in the hearts of my family.

I have promised never to embarrass them if they don't make it too easy. My youngest child thinks I should write an advice column. If I solicited some questions about college football, it might go something like this. This may get long as there seem to be a lot of issues out there. I will try to just hit the high points.

Dear Nancy:

I am fairly new to KU athletics. I was promised all-out support from the athletic director and was very excited because it always appeared the fans were rabid about their teams. But in our recent post-season appearance we could not even give tickets away. I am depressed; do you think anyone really cares?

Coach Mangino

Dear Coach:

You gave away free tickets for a KU game and no one wanted them? Where was I? I'd love to see KU play basketball. Wait a minute, I thought the new coach was named Bill Self. You smart college boys are always trying to put something over on me. Better luck next time.

Dear Nancy:

We were all busy during the regular season and did not get to see Oklahoma play. Most of us did catch the Big 12 Championship and the BCS game. However, we are just wondering how a quar-

Back Home Nancy Hagman



terback who can't run and who only sustained two drives for a score in eight quarters won the Heisman?

Other Heisman Finalists

Dear Finalists:

I, too, am at a loss. Unfortunately, life is not always fair.

Dear Nancy,

Why are people skeptical when I have assured them that I have dealt with the Ell Roberson incidence? The details will remain within the system. This is the way it has always been with me, and it will stay that way. I really don't want any advice, because I have been given license to run this program as I see fit. Thank you for giving me an opportunity to reassure everyone.

Coach Bill Snyder

Dear Bill,

No problem.

Dear Nancy,

Why was KSU so mean to us, running up the score on us back in November?

Bo Penilli

Dear Bo,

Get over it.

Dear Nancy,

Do you understand why we fired our head coach? Even though he wasn't there, don't you think that the credit for winning the bowl game mostly goes to him? Only one other Big 12 team was able to win their bowl game.

Did you know he has won more games against Big 12 opponents than any other coach has since its inception? Didn't we just play in the national championship two years ago? We have decided to go after the Pederson now. Do you think that is a good strategy?

The Husker Faithful

Dear Faithful,

First just let me say — I was born in Nebraska but I overcame it! Yes — go after Pederson. The more disarray you can create, the better it is for the rest of football. Good luck with your little plan.

Dear Nancy,

I am so upset, I lost the BCS championship game and am no longer the highest paid coach in college football. How can they expect me to live on \$2,500,000 when the LSU coach is going to make \$2,500,001?

Maybe if I had had the incentive of a raise, I could have coached better.

Coach Bob Stoops

Dear Bob,

If you aren't happy, I hear Nebraska is looking for a coach.

Dear Readers,

I have asked a guest columnist to answer the last question because it really is outside of my area of expertise.

Dear Ell Roberson,

My coach and dad have warned me about having consensual sex before a big game. In your experience, is it a good idea?

No Name Please

Dear No Name,

NO!

Ell Roberson

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

To the Editor:

This is in response to the recent editorial entitled "New Proposals Make Sense".

The first proposal would require a public vote on any increase in taxes or fees. We already have elections to choose representatives to deal with these issues which tend to be complex and difficult. To expect the public to educate themselves to all the issues involved is unrealistic. The result would be to tie our representatives hands so they would be unable to

respond to public needs — just as they are in California.

The second proposal would require a two-thirds vote in the legislature to increase a tax. This will make our government unresponsive, unable to do the will of the majority of voters. A minority of one-third plus one in either house of the legislature could prevent any action. Notice the proposal is not to prevent an increase or a decrease of taxes. They only want it to work one way.

The figures concerning state growth are

bogus

Yes, the state budget has made a huge gain, because the state took over funding for local schools. A fair comparison would have to compare state and local educational spending then to state spending now — with a very different result.

Keep in mind that inflation is decreasing the value of money, so to remain even more dollars are needed which does not mean that government has increased.

What is it that makes 2-year-olds act so terrible. For the first time, I have an understanding about what the terrible 2s are. It's like having a two-and-a-half foot teenager around.

My goddaughter Rose just turned 2 at the beginning of December and I got to spend four days with her, discovering just how terrible a 2-year-old can be.

Screaming fits at all hours of the day and night were just one of the wonderful things I had the pleasure enjoying.

Generally, the only thing that could calm her down (if it was a bad one, because a mild fit could just be ignored) were Mommy, sometimes Daddy, and "The Groove", which for those of you who don't have a 2-year-old in residence is the movie "The Emperor's New Groove."

For a movie that I had to watch several times a day, it wasn't bad.

Rose's mother Casey said I brought it on myself since I was the one who bought her the movie in the first place. I must say

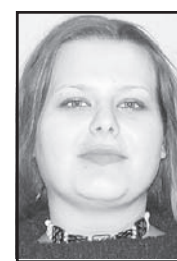
Both proposals are bad ideas that would change our government, a government that has served us well for many generations. These proposals are not conservative — which tries to protect what we have.

These proposals are radical ideas that would undermine our state's future.

Sincerely,
Bob Strevey
Norcatour

A 2-year-old and no heat: what a time

Night Noise Veronica Monier



that I have to agree.

When I got home I asked my mom if I was a horrible 2-year-old. She said by the time I was 2, she was just starting to recover from my first year and a half so it wasn't too bad.

I apparently screamed very loudly every waking minute of the day from the time I was born to around 2. My poor parents couldn't find anyone to babysit, because everyone got a headache just thinking about babysitting me. I even stretched my grandmother's patience.

—nn—

We went up to Omaha to spend Christ-

mas with my brother. The four-and-a-half hour drive usually zips by, but this time it wasn't so fabulous, because the heater went out in my car. Mom and her friend Greg were in her car, so I got to endure the bone-chilling cold by myself.

So anyway, I was driving along and then right outside of Kearney I noticed it was a little bit cold. Well, it got a lot colder. The heat came back on just before I hit York, but then (can you guess?) it went out again and stayed off for the rest of the trip. I have to say that I was a bit chilly by the time I made it to my brother's Old Market loft.

Greg drove my car back the Friday after Christmas so he could drop it off at the shop, but they couldn't find anything wrong. With my luck, I was expecting it to go out again either on the way to or back from Salina, which is where I spent New Year's, but, amazingly enough, it worked the entire time. Maybe it's a good omen about the year to come. I can only hope.

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