

The new

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Beneath the rule of men entirely great

The pen is mightier than the sword



FANCY BEING POISONED,...NO?

Our vegetables grown with Aminopyralid infected dung, going to seed!



NEITHER DO WE!

WITH A MOO MOO HERE

Lately in the National Press and on TV, there has been great concern expressed over some half a dozen cloned bovines entering the food chain. Whether it was by accident or design it matters not as the Food Standards Agency (FSA) let out a howl of protest and protested that as they were there to safeguard the General Public, and as it wasn't legal for such animals to be offered for human consumption, that in their capacity they would prohibit any further sales of such beef. What noble sentiment from the non-ministerial Government department.

AND A MOO MOO THERE

But what is the same department doing about bovines which have been fed on Aminopyralid treated haylage or silage? It seems to me to be ridiculous that a chemical, that appears to be active for up to four applications/generations, can pass through beef cattle without leaving a trace of itself in the slaughtered carcass. Hopefully such meat can not be labelled as 'organic'. Will that noble body, yes I do mean the FSA, clarify their position on the continued use of Dow Chemical's Aminopyralid treated fodder being fed to cattle destined for our food chain.

An Imperfect Contrast

Introducing on my left, (as they say in boxing circles) a perfect specimen of an old established Iceberg Rose from the Seacrest pond area, which thankfully was not treated by Dow Chemical's Aminopyralid herbicide. And on my right we have a somewhat malformed rosebush, about the same age and species. If that bush, and I, are blessed and see next spring and should 'it' decided to try again I intend to grow grafted scions, using wild rose stems to try to establish whether or not

the deformities can reproduced in another generation of plants.



By the way I was speaking to a well known local vegetable exhibitor whose tomatoes shrivelled but worse that that he said, was the fact that his wonderful show onions were all going soft and their roots were totally withered. He too used contaminated dung, but from another farm, not where mine came from. Briefly he considered eating the onions but has since changed his mind and has decided

LETTERS TO AND FROM YOUR EDITOR

On the morning of 13th July 2010 I called the Highland Council's Environmental Service in Dingwall over my concern relating to the ongoing reports which were coming in, as more and more gardeners realised that all was not well with their growing crops.

Up to a few days prior to my call Morag and I were using some of the potatoes and a considerable amount of basket grown strawberries without being aware of the possible health risk the consumption of our home grown produce might entail.

Environmental Health Officer, Carol Rattenbury said that she would call in that morning. When the officer arrived she took samples of potatoes, lettuce and peas along with a small tub of dung. Ms Rattenbury said that it would take about 14 days before a result would be forthcoming and that if she were in my position she would not eat any more produce until the samples were analysed.

After waiting impatiently without response from the laboratory I sent Ms Rattenbury the following e-mail, dated 29th July 2010..

Hi Ms Rattenbury,
Two weeks ago you took some samples from my RBG at Seacrest.

To date I have not been advised what herbicide was used nor whether the vegetables and fruit are fit for eating.

Please.....I need some info.

Many thanks. Euilleam.

On the 5th of August I sent the following e-mail to The Presiding Director at Dow Chemical USA.

Good Morning from the Highlands of Scotland.
May I introduce myself? My name is Euilleam Ross and I am a 77 year old pensioner.

Many amateur gardeners in this area are experiencing severe growing problems due to Aminopyralid residue in cow dung.

Apparently 'South of the Border' gardeners have been subjected to like conditions for some time and the manufacturers, Dow AgroSciences, are reluctant to accept responsibility.

Since 1995 I have published a wee newsheet locally

and for several years posted it on the Web.

Tongue in cheek, this year I have added another site, so if you have time and care to take a peep you will find them on the attached live links.

Many thanks. Euilleam. (no response)

On the 9th of August I sent an e-mail to Alan Yates

Principal Food Safety Officer
TEC Services - Environmental Health
The Highland Council

Dear Mr Yates,

Four weeks tomorrow Ms C. Rattenbury took samples of my vegetables and that of cow dung supplied indirectly by a farmer from the Invergordon area.

The Environmental Health officer promised that she would be back in touch with me advising if my vegetables are fit for human consumption, within 14 days.

May I add that there are some fifteen gardeners locally that I know of, who are experiencing the same problem, caused by using cow dung that contains Aminopyralid.

The herbicide is manufactured by Dow AgroSciences, an off shoot of Dow Chemicals from America.

This is a serious problem, possibly for public health country wide. On Friday last I sent a recorded delivery letter to Dr Kevin Woods, Director General Health, seeking a ruling on the same matter.

I require a signed letter from your department stating whether or not my vegetables are fit for eating.

Thank you. Euilleam Ross.

Dear Mr Ross

I have spoken with Ms Rattenbury regarding your email. The results from the laboratory are still awaited. This is not unusual for pesticide analysis. Ms Rattenbury will contact you when the results are received.

Yours sincerely, Alan Yates.

Letters to Dr Woods, Director Public Health and to Dr Lucy Caird and Mr David Lees, both of the Raigmore

LETTERS TO AND FROM YOUR EDITOR Cont.

Recorded delivery

Dr Kevin Woods,
Director General Health,
St Andrews House,
Regent Road,
Edinburgh.
EH1 3DG.
6th August 2010

Dear Sir,

Perhaps my concern is outwith your remit and if so perhaps you will be kind enough to 'pass it on' or refer back to me with an appropriate name and address.

Attached is a copy of my latest wee publication wherein you will read about a chemical herbicide being imposed on the general public by Dow AgroSciences, trade name *Forefront*.

This herbicide contains an element called Aminopyralid and if you pursue my various Web publications you can view its affect on growing vegetables, fruit and flowers.

Further it is unclear whether or not the Aminopyralid residue, which is being re-cycled in cow dung, is harmful should garden produce be eaten, grown with help from the said dung.

Dow Chemicals appear to have a somewhat cavalier attitude towards public health and welfare. And their interpretation on whether its safe to eat one's garden produce or not, is ambiguous to say the least.

So sir, as Director for General Health in Scotland, can you endorse or condemn the eating of one's garden produce grown with the aid of dung impregnated with the Dow AgroSciences' herbicide known as Forefront?

The problem of grotesque looking fruit, flowers and vegetables is wide spread in the UK yet there is no definite ruling either by Health Authorities or the herbicide manufacturer.

I hope you are able to provide an answer.

Many thanks. Euilleam Ross.

(No acknowledgement 14/8/10)

Dr Lucy Elizabeth Caird,
Obstetrician & Gynaecology,
Raigmore Hospital,
Inverness.

Dear Dr Caird,

If you have a spare moment will you be so kind as to use it, to read my letter? For more years than I wish to remember I have grown my own vegetables and have enjoyed eating them, from fresh or frozen. This year unfortunately I got the present of some cow dung, via a third party, from a local farmer.

Unbeknown to me, and to many other local amateur gardeners, the cow dung was contaminated with a Dow Chemical produced herbicide, trade name *Forefront*, and it contained 'Aminopyralid'. This ingredient kills most broad leaved weeds and allegedly, when ingested in the grass by bovines or equines, passes through their gut without harm or alteration, into their dung. Dow Chemicals, in their 'bumph' lay claim to all sorts of safeguards for the general public regarding the disposal of contaminated dung, including that it should not leave the farm or be used on food crops.

Like all the recipients of the dung I gladly spread it onto my various vegetables, plants and flowers. After a few weeks I could see gross deformities appearing in potatoes, tomatoes and various flowering plants. At that time I put it down to several reasons, the main one being that I overfed them. Not until about the middle of July did I see the significance of the plants deformities, due I believe to Aminopyralid altering the growing plant's genes. And in particular when the farmer supplier told one of those whose potatoes were deformed, that he had better not eat them nor grow more crops in the ground for at least a year.

What, I hear you ask yourself, has all this got to do with an Obstetrician and Gynaecologist based in Raigmore? Well when I finally realised that things were not normal I contacted the Highland Council's Environmental Health Dept, SEPA and latterly Dr Kevin Woods, (copy attached) seeking reassurance that food grown with the help of dung reinforced by Dow Chemical's herbicide, Forefront, was safe for

Be sure to read **The Catalyst**® on the web, a mystery novel without an ending, . Parts one to four are readily available. So too the Dilettante Gardener, Recipes and Photo Gallery are all on site at:-

www.independent-highlander.co.uk

LETTERS TO AND FROM YOUR EDITOR

Cont. Reading Dow Chemical's spiel on its research into the herbicide before it was marketed, they lay claim, using rats and guinea pigs in their tests, that the end results were within parameters safe for public health. As far as I can see no mention has been made as to whether the said chemical, that undoubtedly alters plant genetics during their growing stage, would have a similar affect on embryos, by fetal malformations, in animal or human?

I appreciate that my concern will be outwith your direct remit, but as I am getting no satisfactory response elsewhere, I am hopeful that you will record my worry and possibly pass it on to the appropriate National Department. Finally I have it from good authority that a well known named potato, grown with infected dung, was sold in the human food chain during 2009.

Many thanks, Euilleam Ross.

An identical personal letter was sent to Mr David A. R. Lees.

An unsolicited e-mail from a reader. Eric (TL) Anonymity requested.

It seems to me that they are advising gardeners with ground that has been contaminated with manure which contains the offending chemical to rotovate regularly and thoroughly. This suggests to me that they are relying on a dilution process - mixing the contamination thoroughly with soil as much as the micro organisms to make the chemical safe. This leads me to believe that the half life is not as short as 6 months or a year. Manure is a highly microbially active substance and you would imagine that after digestion it would be well and evenly integrated within the faecal material which should cause it to break down. By their own admission, some of the damaging contamination must have come from manure that was seasons (years) old so microbial breakdown as a contaminant removal mechanism seems tenuous to say the least.

It seems to me to be wrong to continue selling the stuff and also advocate a strategy that requires reme-

dial action that destroys soil structure and is only relevant to those with the machinery do regular and thorough rotovating. It is also the case that if like me you rotovate garden compost into the soil, you will be well aware that you still end up with pockets of soil with no compost and compost in lumps, despite ones best efforts to do the job thoroughly. So even with their solution, I believe pockets of contamination will continue to exist.

I note that the affected crops are the majority of those grown by amateurs and that the affected plants include ornamentals like roses and dahlias where this corrective regime is going to involve stripping garden that one would never normally rotovate.

Taken together, I think the chemical should be banned simply because it is not possible in the real world to regulate it out of all manure that can find its way into gardens and allotments and because I do not believe the remedial solutions to contamination are realistic or workable in the context of amateur gardening.

By Dow Chemical's own admission Aminopyralid in its own right is a dangerous chemical and must be used per instructions. Just how many users will stick to the letter? I think the majority of us tend to believe that when all else fails. 'Read the instructions'.

Personally as a layman I find the results from their research on rats and guinea pigs a bit 'sketchy' to say the least.

It cost a lot of dollars to produce in the first instance, so be hook or by crook Dow wants its money back plus profit .

Aminopyralid is highly toxic to all forms of aquatic life and it is with this warning in my head that I contacted the local SEPA representative at the Dingwall office. Mr Watson wanted details etc which he passed on to the SEPA department dealing with agriculture matters. He said that investigations would take about 14 days to commence.

The amount of e-mails available to me clearly shows that the Aminopyralid threat is not a localised matter.

Ed.