

The new

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*Beneath the rule of men entirely great*

*The pen is mightier than the sword*



## CONTRIVED SILENCE?

Despite some 42 days elapsing (to date) since the Highland Council's Environmental Officer, Ms Carol Rattenbury, took four samples from Seacrest, three of growing vegetables and one of the actual contaminated dung, there has been no result from the laboratory used by the Highland Council's Environmental Health Department for analysis.

I find this quite difficult to accept or even believe, if the council are paying for a service then they are entitled to receive one. In the case of the mysterious laboratory (see Mr Alan Yates response to my request for information later in this publication) it is either deliberately delaying providing that service in the hope that your editor will 'give up' or that they never received the samples in the first place.

Well I am happy to say that there are lots more samples available, not only at Seacrest but elsewhere in Easter Ross, for regularly I have amateur gardeners coming up to me and telling me that their garden produce is contaminated in exactly the same way as ours is and that they are unable to eat any of the fruit and vegetables for fear of 'after effects', (just like Morag and I).

After all, all that we amateur gardeners want, (apart from recompense) is an official ruling whether or not garden produce, grown with the help of the contaminated dung, is fit for human consumption? Like all the other growers I don't think that is too much to ask, do you?

Doubtless some readers will be a bit peeved by continually being bombarded with my spiel about Dow AgroSciences Herbicide, trade name *Forefront*, but considering the recorded impact that that herbicide is having in a relatively short marketing life on home gardens, it must be looked at much more closely, and in the meantime taken off the market.

Whilst amateur gardeners are prepared to voice their concerns publicly over the effect that the Dow's Herbicide *Forefront* is having on their growing programme, little is heard from professional users of the product, in particular, farmers using the herbicide to poison weeds on grass destined to be harvested and stored for winter feed for cattle and sheep and in some cases, horses.

From the very obvious effects that contaminated dung is having on growing crops in our gardens Aminopyralid must be fairly concentrated in the animal's feed in the first place. This can only indicate the feeding of hay, haylage or silage, to the beasts, constrained in Cattle Courts over the winter months, thus allowing the contamination in the droppings to become more concentrated. Lets not forget that 'Dow' claims the Aminopyralid passes through the animal's digestive system without being absorbed. Yet at the same time claiming Aminopyralid can readily diluted by (water) moisture. Now with years of experience in the culling of animals for the meat trade I have never come across an animal's stomach that was 'dry'. So is Dow's claim that none of the Aminopyralid is being absorbed, based on scientific fact or wishful thinking?

Lets not forget dairy cows too are extensively fed on pasture produce, in one way or another over the winter period and mostly we all use their end products, in 'one way or another'. Milk, cheese etc.

As they say in gambling circles 'lets raise the ante' and so, I will ratchet up my campaign another notch or two by asking various people in authority to take notice of a possible threat to amateur gardening, and the health threat to Homo Sapiens generally, a stage further by writing to Marketing Directors of many leading supermarket chains requesting that they take a closer look at just what and from where, the beef animal products they have on their shelves have been subjected to. See letter further on in this news sheet.

# LETTERS

02 08 2010

The Marketing Director

Dear Sir/Madam,

Doubtless you will be aware of the controversy that has ensued in our society by the revelation that cloned bulls have reached the food chain and despite assurances from 'Europe' that the meat is perfectly safe to eat and the reluctance by the buying public to accept it.

There again you may well be unaware that there could be a much greater risk, not only to public health but so too, to the public rejecting meat that may have been fed on contaminated fodder and offered for sale on supermarket meat counters. Whilst elsewhere in your stores, milk and milk products are offered from producers feeding their dairy herds on fodder that may have also been treated with Dow AgroSciences Herbicide, trade name *Forefront*.

It is not possible in this short letter from me, a layman, to highlight what appears to be several severe shortcomings in the research into the after effects of the herbicide and its prevalent chemical, Aminopyralid, will have, not only on our environment but so too on public health.

Claims are made that the chemical can stay active for years after passing through the animal's body, yet having a zero impact on the actual animal or its by-products, other than its dung.

As marketing manager, are you able to assure your customers that you are aware (if this is the case) that some, if not all, of your meat on the supermarket counters has been fed on fodder that has had the *Forefront* treatment and that you are confident no harmful residue remains in the flesh? This scenario also applies to the dairy produce on your shelves.

All supermarkets are eager to 'help the environment' by many ways such as restricting the issue of free plastic bags. Our national gardening environment is being devastated at present by the use of contaminated dung from cattle fed on fodder treated with Aminopyralid, you can do your bit for this part of our environment by questioning your suppliers as to whether or not they use *Forefront*, *Banish* or *Milestone* herbicides on their land?

**Copies to** Sainsbury, Waitrose, Co-op Society, Morrisons, Marks and Spenser, Aldi and Others.

The Secretary,  
NFU Scotland,  
Rural Centre West Mains,  
Edinburgh.  
EH28 8LT. 18 08 2010

Dear Secretary,

Please find enclosed copy of my latest publications for your perusal.

Apparently I am far from the only amateur gardener who has had a year's (or possibly more) garden work and produce contaminated by the application of dung contaminated by the Dow Chemical Herbicide trade name *Forefront*, containing Aminopyralid.

Its not necessary for me to elaborate on the effect that that chemical has, and possibly will have in the future on the human food chain. Suffice to say that I am hopeful it will be recalled ASAP.

However could you advise me if all NFU Members carry Public Liability Insurance?

Many thanks. Euilleam Ross.

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Dear sir

I understand you have been in contact with Colin High, our Group Secretary in Dingwall regarding public liability insurance.

I note that you have previously written to NFU Scotland in that regard. I apologise but we have been unable to track down the letter addressed to the Secretary. This is not a current position within the Union but the letter may have been intended for our President or Chief Executive.

I apologise for the delay in responding.

Regarding Public Liability insurance, NFU Scotland does not provide its members with insurance products, we are simply a trade organisation representing the farming and rural interests of our members. If asked, we would certainly recommend that their business is protected with regards to public liability.

More information on public liability can be obtained from NFU Mutual, the leading provider of insurance to the sector. I understand from its website that for farmers who take out a farm insurance policy with NFU Mutual, public liability cover up to £5 million is provided as standard. Note that other insurance providers can also provide similar products to agricultural businesses who wish public liability cover and not all Scottish farmers are obliged to insure with NFU Mutual or to be members of NFU Scotland.

Regards. Bob Carruth

# MORE LETTERS

Regular readers will recall my letter to Consultant D. A. R. Lees at Raigmore Hospital last month, regarding the possibility of the Dow chemical Aminopyralid having an adverse effect on pregnant woman.

Mr Lees response is published alongside.

24/08/10.

Alistair Dodds Esq.,  
Chief Executive,  
Highland Council,  
Inverness.

Dear Mr Dodds,

Exactly six weeks today I telephoned the Environmental Health Dept. at Dingwall and eventually spoke to Ms Carol Rattenbury. The reason for my call, and concern, was that for some weeks prior, my partner and myself were eating garden produce which was grown in compost that had been fed with contaminated dung from a local farm. And we urgently require a ruling on whether or not garden produce so cultivated is fit for human consumption? Ms Rattenbury said that it would take about fourteen days to come back from the laboratory.

Unbeknown to us the said dung was, and still is, heavily contaminated with a herbicide manufactured by **Dow Chemicals** and marketed under the trade name 'Forefront'. The dung contains a chemical called Aminopyralid gleaned from Dow's herbicide Forefront.

The effect that this chemical has, and apparently will have years later, needs to be seen to be appreciated. However I do not intend, at present, to educate your good self on the harmful effect it (Aminopyralid) has on horticulture, not only in Easter Ross but throughout the UK.

Never-the-less, I do wish to lodge a formal complaint over the lack of response from the Environmental Officer and so too the Laboratory making the tests taking so much time over getting a result. (Can one be certain that the samples were sent and delivered?)

In addition I lodge another complaint, this time against Mr Alan Yates, Principal Food Safety Officer for not providing me with an answer for my request for the name and address of the said laboratory despite the Freedom of

Dr D A R Lees' Unit  
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Obstetrics & Gynaecology Department  
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Mr Euilleam Ross  
"Seacrest"  
Barbarville West  
Delny  
INVERGORDON  
IV18 0NA

Date 18.08.10  
Our Ref DARL/JC  
Extension 5287  
Direct Line 01463 705287

Dear Mr Ross

Many thanks for your recent letter and the copy of your correspondence with Dr Kevin Woods at St Andrews House.

I am sure that you were very disappointed and somewhat disquieted to find the quite dramatic effect that Aminopyralid had on your vegetables and flowers.

It is difficult to judge what adverse influence, if any, consumption of the affected produce might have both on the consumer and a fetus in pregnancy. My own, somewhat non-scientific view, is that consumption of affected produce by any women who either are known to be or who are at risk of becoming pregnant would be unwise. As far as your own personal consumption is concerned this would be a matter for personal judgement. As to how long it might take for the chemical influence to disappear from the soil I imagine that the advice you have already received to avoid growing crops in the affected ground for a year is reasonable.

I have spoken to our Senior Consultant in Public Health for the Highland Health Board and he has suggested that you may wish to contact the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) who I understand have an office in Dingwall.

I am sorry I cannot be more scientific in my response.

Kind regards.

Yours sincerely

  
  
D A R Lees  
Consultant Obstetrician & Gynaecologist

Information Act being applicable to my demand.

In addition I understand that before I can make a complaint to the Ombudsman I require to give you an opportunity to respond to my dissatisfaction and provide me with relevant answers and the information I seek. Thank you.

Dear Mr Ross,

**Issue re Environmental Health..**

Thank you for your correspondence dated 24 August, 2010 in connection with the above. I have asked the Council's Director of Transport, Environmental and Community (TEC) Services to look into this matter on my behalf and he will contact you as soon as his enquiries have been completed.

Yours sincerely,  
Alistair Dodds.

# INVERGORDON'S HIELAND FLING

Held yearly on the last Saturday of August, this year's The Invergordon Highland Gathering was blessed with bright weather for most of the day. Competitors and spectators came from all over the area and while some enjoyed participation the spectators were enthralled with the spectacle.

Even better the liner *Europa* docked about midday and many of its passengers walked up Castle Road to view the Highland spectacle. From Caber tossing, to cycling, to Cheerleaders and to one of the crowd's favourites, Highland Dancing.

The 'games' are run by a voluntary group of people from the town and area and deserve full praise for an

excellently organised event.

Many years ago when my family competed at the 'Games' the venue then was in the Invergordon Castle grounds and I am loath to say that then the atmosphere was so much more friendly or maybe even 'cosy'.



These days are however past and I am not suggesting that the present site is unfriendly but rather as it seems to be spread over

a larger area and so, to me at least, has a more reserved air about it.

This photo has already been published on the web and has caused one potential English visitor (coming to

## A footnote or perhaps a footprint?

One of the producers of the one of the most popular synthetic pesticides, dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane (DDT) was none other than the present manufacturer of *Forefront* as you can guess.....Dow Chemicals.

The production of DDT is a thriving business in the Far East where several thousand tonnes are produced annually mostly for the destruction of Malaria bearing mosquitoes.

That aside, in Dows bump they say that they are pro

posing to combine a pesticide with their now infamous (as far as amateur gardeners are concerned) herbicide trade name *Forefront*.

And that is before the long time effect on our environment by their *Forefront* herbicide has been established.

We, amateur gardeners, all know just how devastating their herbicide is and how little attention is being given to the damage it is causing. The UK Government is dragging its heels, as in so many other matters, yet again. Ed.