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### **Ammonia in Your Burger**

A few weeks ago there was another E.coli outbreak, this time in beef treated with ammonia (it is treated with ammonia in an attempt to kill bacteria). The same ammonia commonly found in floor cleaners can comprise up to 15% of many fast-food burgers. It is also used in the ground beef that goes into the U.S. school lunch program.

On 12/31/09, the New York Times published a report on the lack of efficacy of ammonia treatment in killing salmonella and E.coli in beef from South Dakota's *Beef Products, Inc.* (BPI). According to BPI's website they are the largest processor, a euphemism for murderer, of beef in the country. Their ammoniated product is used in frozen hamburger, taco meats, low-fat hot dogs, beef-stick snacks, and is sold to fast-food chains.

BPI uses low-grade beef trimmings (notoriously high in microbial pathogens like E.coli, Salmonella, Lysteria, and Staph), spins off the fat, then pumps the, if you'll pardon the expression, beef full of ammonia in an attempt to kill the pathogens that multiplied during the fat removal process. Unfortunately, not all the pathogens are reduced and some might even be increased. At present, the product ends up in 70% of hamburgers served in the U.S.. The projection is 100% in five years.

The ammonia used in BPI's meat(?) substance does not have to be listed as an ingredient as it is classified as a “processing agent”.

Another slaughterhouse practice is to gas beef with carbon monoxide as it keeps the flesh red for weeks. This deludes customers into thinking they are getting freshly killed cow bodies despite the fact that it has already spoiled.

In this same NYT report, it was found that the USDA whole heartedly endorses BPI's ammonia treatment. They believed in it so much that they exempted BPI's hamburger sold to the general public from any testing.

Even though the school lunch program finds tainted meat from time to time, it continues to buy it. Apparently, the low price they pay saves them about \$1 million a year. In addition, in 2004, school lunch officials increased the amount of BPI meat allowed in its hamburgers from 10% to 15% to increase savings.

Despite massive recalls, disease outbreaks, and scares over mad cow disease, the U.S. demand for beef has remained relatively constant. Why? Because there is complete faith in “our government's food inspections”! Are these people drunk??

Meat that is spoiled is sold as fresh due to chemicals to keep it red. Ground beef is made from the

scrapings off the slaughter house floors with ammonia added to kill the bacteria. The school lunch program continues to buy this garbage because it saves them money. And, in Hawaii, a bill gets killed that would allow vegetarian and vegan meals to be offered in the public schools.

All this coming from a government of the people, by the people, and FOR the people. God help us!

Aloha!