

I have mentioned my family members and friends many times in this Life-Line Newsletter over the years, and how they have playfully taunted me and my husband, Steven, about not eating meat. It has always been with good-natured humor and definitely nothing to take offense over, and I'm being honest. In fact, neither of us is ever offended when someone gives us a "hard time" about not eating meat and we have never given them a hard time because they do. But you know what? Something interesting has begun happening.

I have started seeing a shift in the carnivorous paradigm over the past few years. Yes, an alignment seems to be taking place and we are moving toward that vortex of vegetarianism, slowly, but surely. It's no longer, "Why are you a vegetarian." Instead, I am hearing more and more, "A vegetarian? Oh, I am too!" Have people wised up? Are they trying to eat healthier foods? Or could this new gravitation toward the mighty vegetable as a main source of sustenance be due to the fact that more people are becoming aware of the altered states or our food sources?

AquaBounty's threat of the "Frankenfish" transgenic food animal (TFA) is looming just over the horizon, literally, and is slated to hit the market December of this year. If good ole Frank makes it to our restaurants, stores, and tables, what's next? Are we paving the way for mad scientists to genetically alter cows, pigs, and poultry by splicing them with who only knows what? Most of these animals are already subjected to hormones and antibiotics and filthy living and processing conditions. If someone can splice a salmon with an Ocean Pout (eel-like fish, but you might as well just go ahead and call it a snake fish) then what on earth will the rest of the food chain be altered into? And when good ole Frank does make it to our stores, will the product be properly labeled that it's a mutant salmon ocean pout gene spliced TFA? I highly doubt it.

Salmon is so overfished that it's now being spliced with the Ocean Pout species that will give it an accelerated growth rate in order to keep the human population fed. What will we splice the cow with, what will it look like? Or the pig or the chickens, etc. Will they be processed the same as the new "salmon" where they are factory created and will actually never even see the ocean, yet be raised in tanks. If the mutation were allowed to live in the ocean, it would reproduce and the salmon population as we now know it would be lost forever. This is not science fiction—it's real. If you don't know how this "food source" is created, please go to Life Grocery's *Life-Line* Newsletter archives and look up my past articles: "Any Way you Splice It" from March/April 2013 and "What's for Dinner" from May/June 2013. Hopefully, those articles will give you some pretty good insight on all this.

If I were a meat eating, chicken eating, pork eating, fish eating person, the prospect of eating these things would indeed be pretty scary to me these days. No wonder more people are turning away from these products and turning to the vegetable kingdom. But wait. Is that really a good alternative? Monsanto's pesticide-ready infused and genetically

altered vegetables are making the animals that eat them sick. What do you think these vegetables will do to us? These genetically modified seeds Monsanto is creating have not even been tested to see if they are fit for human consumption once they grow into vegetables, yet they have been on the market for years. If the animals that eat GMO foods are getting sick, I think it's a sure bet we will, too. Look around at drug store parking lots, the doctors' parking lots, hospitals' parking lots. They are always full and there is a good reason for this.

Farmers that grow crops from seeds purchased from Monsanto are not even allowed to let their own crops go to seed so they can reuse them. They must be plowed under, and new seeds must be purchased. Neighboring farms whose crops are being cross-pollinated by the Monsanto crops are accidentally modified, and Monsanto has been suing these farms for raising crops that are cross-pollinated by natural processes such as rain water run-off, wind, birds, and bees. We grow food here in America and the industrial farmers (as well as private small farms at growing rates) are all told what they can and can't grow and what they are "allowed" to keep or sell.

We can't eat what they grow because most of it gets shipped overseas. Overseas countries grow food. They can't eat most of it because it gets shipped to America. When did this start happening, and why? Why can't I go the market and buy food grown here in the U.S.? Do I have to go overseas? We know the conditions and unsustainable practices of some of these other countries from which food is exported to us.

We read about it and see it on the news that reports to us how polluted these countries are and they have no solid health regulations in place to safeguard the health of the public. No wonder we have more and more food recalls all the time. Is food grown in foreign countries grown from genetically altered seed or mutated animals and fish such as ours? It looks to me like the USDA and FDA, and even the EPA are throwing us all under the bus as far as fair treatment, proper nutrition, and not telling us what's in our food.

Now that we know most **all** food is tainted and it's getting worse, what are we supposed to do? What's safe? What can and should we eat? Organic, non-GMO foods...but can everyone afford only organic and non-GMO? No, and our governments know this. I don't have millions of dollars to lobby against this at the local Capitol, do you? I don't have dinner on a regular basis with a member of Congress, do you? It's disheartening, to say the very least. So what can we do? I struggle with this all the time and I have been a vegetarian longer than some of you reading this have been on this planet.

All we can do is to write, email, call, or protest against all this. At least there is hope, but it will take the voices of many to achieve this fight for the right to consume healthy food. Food is meant to nourish us; not make us sick. At the moment, our voices have been heard and as far as we know, we won't be forced to purchase the TFA at some of our major supermarket chains out there, and especially not at Life Grocery who would never sell something such as this to their patrons. Life Grocery sells real food to real people who believe in them and their cause. We have to support Life Grocery and the small

farmers, and the continued use of non-GMO and organic products because if we don't, it will all go away. That—is the scariest thing of all.

Go to health, FDA, USDA, and EPA!

The opinions of the author are independent and spoken solely from the author's point of view.

References:

http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Goliath_and_David:_Monsanto%27s_Legal_Battles_against_Farmers

<http://www.aquabounty.com/>

Betsy Bearden is a certified, published writer, and author of Normal People Eat Tofu, Too. She has worked as a volunteer chef and cooking class instructor and as a reporter for The Paulding Neighbor Newspaper. She offers professional website writing services to businesses and individuals, and you can reach her at betsybearden@bellsouth.net or visit her company's website at www.creativewrites.net.