



Pink Slime Aside, Meat is Not Safe

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The recent uproar over “lean beef trimmings”—also known as “pink slime”—has led the maker of this ammonia-treated meat to suspend operations at all but one plant. Beef Products, Inc., acknowledged that the company has taken a huge hit since social media exploded with concerns about this disturbingly unhealthy, chemically-treated substance going into school lunch lines.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is considering removing pink slime from schools, and fast-food companies have even taken the slime out of their burger recipes. The pink slime pandemonium has inspired bloggers to expose the long list of other unlabeled chemicals that end up in almost all industrial meat. Without any labeling requirement, meat processors can lace meat with chemicals used to bleach fabric, disinfect pools and hot tubs, and bleach wood pulp, just to name a few.

These revelations have consumers fuming. Some are calling for more labeling, and less processing of meat. The meat industry is claiming that these chemically treated products are safe—maybe even safer than beef not treated with chemicals.

But ultimately there is no such thing as safe meat. Meat is loaded with cholesterol and saturated fat, not to mention E. coli and other pathogens that can cause serious illnesses. If treated with chemicals, it then contains substances that may increase the risk of cancer and other health problems.

Beef Products, Inc., is desperately trying to rebuild business, taking out a full-page Wall Street Journal ad and launching a website that proclaims that “Beef is Beef.”

The company has that right. From ground beef to sirloin steak to rump roast, every cut of beef contributes to more deadly illnesses than the chemicals in pink slime will likely ever cause. Whether it’s pink slime or organic, grass-fed beef, it all leads to obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and other life-threatening illnesses.

The pink slime victory shows just how powerful consumers are when they come together to fight an unsafe product. But it’s hardly the end of the battle: It’s

time to face up to the consequences of our meaty diets and move to more healthful ways of eating.

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