

Agriculture by Marcia Merry

What's your beef?

Jeremy Rifkin and the anti-beef crowd cover up for IMF-imposed world hunger and starvation.

In recent weeks, eco-gadfly Jeremy Rifkin has been clogging the airwaves with his unscientific opinions, to plug his new book, *Beyond Beef* (New York: E.P. Dutton.) You might think the man just has a personal beef against beef, and a thing about cows. You would be wrong.

Rifkin is getting all the media limelight because he and his ilk are the apologists for the programs of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), food cartel companies, and banks connected with Anglo-American financial interests imposing food shortages and hunger. They demand usurious debt service, at the cost of not supplying food, water, and other essentials.

Rifkin is just one of the coverup acts for the fact that output of beef, and of all other diet staples—cereals, meats, eggs, dairy foods—is declining sharply worldwide. Likewise, the global ecology is deteriorating because of the depression. Conditions are in the making for global famine, and ecological catastrophe.

What is required are economic emergency measures to restore production. Instead, Rifkin and a chorus of anti-development freaks argue that people should adjust to the decline. First, they lie that meat is bad for your health. And second, they say that cattle pollute.

In terms of nutrition, the case for meat is open and shut. A balanced diet, including some form of animal protein, is the most efficient way to guarantee the body the full complement of essential amino acids—building blocks of protein. A person's gen-

eral health, and especially the immune system, is dependent on complete protein intake. But the human body is unable to manufacture 10 of the most essential amino acids contained in complete protein, which means that those amino acids must be consumed or eaten by the person for the body to have access to them. Vegetable and cereal matter do not contain all the needed amino acids, unless you have daily access to dozens of kinds of fresh and specially milled grains, and vegetables and fruits—a situation possible for only the wealthiest.

The charge that agriculture “pollutes,” is as bogus as saying that meat is bad for you. Rifkin asserts that centuries of cattle raising are ruining the Earth. He blames cows for deforestation, desertification, global warming due to bovine methane, and many other alleged crimes. And he demands that we break the “human-bovine” relationship and stop eating beef.

Rifkin and his wife, Carol, plan to operate a Washington, D.C. coalition against cattle raising and beef, to file lawsuits, and cause trouble in 20 countries.

The only real issue about beef is the worldwide food crisis. The 1992 harvest of all grains is forecast at under 1,680 million tons, which is *below* the current annual consumption of 1,720 million tons, either for cereals for direct human consumption, or through the livestock food chain. The global grain harvest has been below consumption for four of the past five years, so millions are starving but there are no stocks for food relief.

Herds are being culled. In Russia, for example, there is such wholesale slaughter in the Samara Oblast (district) that the March 18 *Izvestia* reported on “the man with the gun” who visits stockyards to kill the cattle for which there is no more feed. “In Samara Oblast the herd . . . has fallen by several thousand head in comparison with last year. The dairy herd and the breeding herd are still being maintained,” the article said. According to official Russian figures, the number of cattle has declined this year by over 2 million.

The U.S. cattle inventory is down to about 100 million head from its level in the early 1980s of 115 million. Over the past five years, live cattle have been brought into the U.S. food chain from Mexico and Canada.

Worldwide, beef output is contracting. However, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization in Rome, in deference to the IMF, rationalizes that the decline in per capita beef availability is irrelevant, because “effective demand” has also declined worldwide.

Rifkin opines that cattle raising and beef eating were bad from the start. His book features an incompetent history on the topic. In an interview with Joan Mooney of *Publishers Weekly*, he said, “I was surprised at the extent to which we owe western culture to this animal. We have built much of western civilization on its back, from our early theological explorations to colonial adventures to our unfolding consciousness.”

Who benefits from all this bull? Watch your Sunday television news shows and catch the pitch from sponsor Archer Daniels Midland, part of the food cartel, which has now introduced the new line of ADM's vegetable-based fake meat products. Top of the line is the harvestburger. Where's the beef? Gone.