

to the highest possible earnings. The issue is “shareholder value,” and nothing but that. The original specifications for the TT were aimed at a sales pitch about the “design,” and that goal was not to be sacrificed to any technical requirements, such as using a spoiler to reduce the lift effect at the rear end. The solution adopted by other manufacturers, to have a spoiler operate hydraulically above certain speeds, was not built in “for reasons of cost.” Here is a “lifestyle trophy” — for anyone vain enough to scrape together roughly \$38,000 — replete with all sorts of optical bells and whistles; it is fully certified to be road-capable, yet it can’t keep itself on the road, because of its aerodynamic defect. The proud owner of this piece of junk can nail the standard-equipment light-metal wheels to his garage walls, presuming that he survives any crash.

The objection that the directors did not fully realize the need for a correction, does not hold water. The board did agree, after all, to mount an extra 15 kilograms in the rear, although that dampened the weight-performance ratio: The effect is about what a small spoiler would have. It is true that the upward lift on the rear axle of the TT is about 58 kg at a speed of 200 kmh, and only 36 kg in a similarly powered Porsche Boxter. But it is pure quackery to think that the upward lift can be overcome by adding weight, because the upward lift remains 58 kg, compared to a rear axle weight of 665 kg instead of 650 kg, which is a negligible difference. But, because this weight is mounted far aft of the rear axle, it does indeed have an effect, namely, it creates a leverage, such

that the car spins *considerably faster* on its axis when the rear end does break away!

The third alternative to tame the TT, the electronic stability program or “ESP,” which was the salvation of the Mercedes Benz A-Class, is also not supposed to be built in, so that the pure, uncorrupted sports character of the vehicle not be marred. This, too, is nonsense: The only real issue was to save money. The ESP adds nothing to the “design,” goes the directors’ reasoning, and so it is just a waste of money.

### Public pressure forces change

Since the analyses of severe TT accidents led to no essential changes, a wave of public disgust against the Audi directors has poured out, much like that against Mercedes a year ago, and, there has been a sharp plunge in sales. Suddenly, everything previously scoffed at and rejected by Audi’s board of directors, because it would hamper the “pure fun of driving,” has become possible after all. The Audi board announced in late October that the new Audi TT will be sold, beginning in December, with a more finely tuned suspension system, a spoiler, and an electronic stabilization program. In existing models, changes can be made to the suspension — new springs, shock-absorbers, and stabilizers — while the spoiler has to be mounted as a retrofit. But Audi will only install the ESP for buyers who insist on altering their purchase contract. Presumably, the Audi board will want to avoid another round of bad press by not putting up resistance on that point.

## Is dioxin scandal agriculture’s future?

Deregulation, battle for market shares, and constantly growing pressure on prices is a mixture that puts lives directly at risk. One striking example is the so-called dioxin scandal, which erupted in Belgium in early summer and spread into all neighboring European countries. Feed companies had mixed all kinds of sewage into animal feed, to become “more competitive” on the market. Used oil (Altoel), sewage sludge, and even human excrement were added in and sold as high-quality feed to farmers, who gave it to their hogs, chicken, and cattle. Only after farmers alerted the veterinary services that entire flocks of chickens had stopped laying eggs and soon after had died, were these unbelievable practices slowly brought out into the open. It took the Belgium government several months to take action against these feed producers, while the practice continued. It was also recently revealed that French feed producers were using the very same practices.

Farmers may wonder why some feed companies offer cheaper feed than others, but they have no choice: The prices that they get for their eggs, milk, and meat are so low that they are desperate to lower the costs of production. As a consequence of this policy, the health of animals and of the people who eat the products of such animals, are consciously being put at risk.

At the height of the dioxin scandal, the Belgian government ordered all Belgian meat and meat products, eggs, and all products that contained Belgian eggs to be removed from the stores and destroyed. For some weeks, in the Belgian capital of Brussels, where the European Union has its headquarters, there were scenes like those in the former Soviet Union: customers were staring at empty shelves, and consumer prices for food were soaring.

Such breakdowns will occur again, because liberal economics leads to such incidents. The problem lies in the policy. Soon, a similar scandal, but of bigger proportions, will strike again, or, these wonderful liberal policies will have driven so many farmers into bankruptcy that food will be scarce. You must decide: Either you eat contaminated food or go hungry, or organize to dump these liberal policies now. — *Rosa Tennenbaum*