

# Hold the Hormones

## Free Your Campus from rBGH

There's something in our milk, and the dairy industry doesn't want you to know about it. A synthetic hormone banned in much of the industrialized world is administered to nearly a fourth of American dairy cows, and many consumers don't even know. Find out how to protect the milk supply on your college's campus!

### What is rBGH?

Recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH or rBST) is a genetically engineered hormone injected into cows to increase milk production. Not only does the hormone not improve milk's taste or nutrition, numerous studies reveal potential health risks to consumers and negative health effects for the cow.

### Why should we care?

The FDA approved rBGH in 1993, despite concerns voiced by many scientists and government leaders. Though legal in the United States, rBGH is banned in all 25 countries in the European Union, Japan, Canada, Australia and other nations.

Opposition to rBGH is widespread because milk from rBGH-tainted cows contain increased levels of the hormone IGF-1. This hormone has been linked to increased rates of colon, breast and prostate cancer in humans.

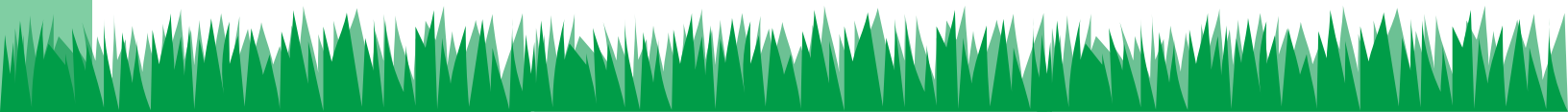


Additionally, cows treated with rBGH have a higher rate of mastitis, a painful infection of the udder that requires antibiotic treatment. An increased rate of medication causes the development of drug-resistant bacteria. Using rBGH leads to at least 16 other harmful effects in cows, including birth disorders, increased pus in milk, hoof problems and heat stress.<sup>1</sup>

### How do I know if my college's milk is rBGH free?

Ask! Chances are if producers don't say their milk is rBGH-free, then it's probably not. The problem for consumers is that there's no way to tell. Producers are not required to label foods produced with this potentially harmful hormone. Approximately 22 percent of cows are injected with rBGH, with higher rates in large farms.<sup>2</sup> College dining halls can serve as an important leader in a push for farmers to produce rBGH-free milk.

There are many businesses, colleges, and hospitals that have chosen to go rBGH-free to meet consumer demand. Tillamook, one of the nation's largest cheese producers,



makes its cheeses with rBGH-free milk. Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream purchases only dairy from farmers who have pledged not to use synthetic hormones. Large health-care systems such as Kaiser Permanente and small hospitals such as St. Luke's in Duluth, MN have begun sourcing their milk from rBGH-free distributors."<sup>3</sup> Three years ago, student interest helped fuel the switch to only buying rBGH-free milk at Williams College.<sup>4</sup> As the demand for rBGH-free milk grows, consumers are finding a greater variety of choices. Help the growing movement away from industrialized agriculture and towards better milk!

## What can I do to help?

With a rising interest in food quality in the United States, college students have begun to vocalize their desire for local, fresh, and ethically produced foods. From small liberal arts colleges to large public universities, the past decade has seen a large growth in Farm-to-College programs across the country. Nearly a quarter of these programs are initiated by concerned students!<sup>5</sup>

1. The first step to getting rBGH milk off your campus is to speak out. Tell your college administrators & food service directors that you want to drink milk that is rBGH-free.
2. Organize a group of concerned students and work together to communicate your desire for safe dairy products.
3. Using our rBGH-free guide, find possible rBGH-free replacements. Milk produced without rBGH is typically the same price or slightly more expensive than milk produced with the hormone. Organic milk, by definition rBGH-free, is often more expensive than non-organic. Frequently, colleges are able to find rBGH-free milk from local farms, so that the change benefits the college, the students, and the community. A college switching to rBGH-free milk has nothing to lose and everything to gain.

## Start today!



## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> North, Rick, "rBGH-free Oregon Campaign Fact Sheet," Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility, [http://www.oregonpsr.org/csf/rbgh\\_fact\\_sheet.doc](http://www.oregonpsr.org/csf/rbgh_fact_sheet.doc) [Accessed March 20, 2006].

<sup>2</sup> APHIS, "Bovine Somatotropin: Info Sheet," USDA, <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ceah/ncas/nahms/dairy/dairy02/Dairy02BST.pdf> [Accessed June 19, 2006].

<sup>3</sup> "Health News," St. Luke's Hospital, [http://www.slhdluluth.com/health\\_news/index.php?sect\\_rank=1&story\\_id=236](http://www.slhdluluth.com/health_news/index.php?sect_rank=1&story_id=236) [Accessed June 19, 2006].

<sup>4</sup> Robert Volpi, e-mail to author, June 21, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> "About Farm to College," Community Food Security Coalition, <http://www.farmtocollege.org/about.htm> [Accessed June 20, 2006].

## For more information:

web: [www.foodandwaterwatch.org/food/dairy/](http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/food/dairy/)  
or [www.farmtocollege.org/](http://www.farmtocollege.org/)  
email: [foodandwater@fwwatch.org](mailto:foodandwater@fwwatch.org)  
phone: (202) 797-6550

A state-by-state guide to rBGH-free brands:  
[www.foodandwaterwatch.org/food/dairy/rbgh-free-guide](http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/food/dairy/rbgh-free-guide)

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