

Genetic engineering in cows affects milk

Craig Schiller
(CUP)

A PROTEST AGAINST A TRADE POL-
proposal that threatens consumers' right
ose healthy food products, more than 300
nizations dumped milk in front of Otta-
Conference Centre Oct. 25. The Interna-
al Network on Genetically-Engineered
s(INGEF) wants to ensure that people
about scientific advances that are radi-
changing the food we eat.

INGEF spokesperson Jeremy Rifkin says
U.S. government "ismore interested in the
s of transnational chemical, pharmaceu-
and biotech companies than they are in the
health and safety of consumers in the
ted States, Canada and other countries
and the world."

The Codex Alimentarius, the food
y arm of the United Nations and the World
th Organization, met in Ottawa Oct. 24-
o discuss one of the most contentious areas
international trade policy: the labelling of
etically-engineered food products. The
merican delegation at the conference report-

edly proposed banning such labelling alto-
gether, potentially denying consumers the right
to know what they
are eating. If this
proposal passes, it
would be binding-
- any country la-
belling such prod-
ucts would then
be subject to pun-
itive measures.

INGEF's
protest centred
around the use of
recombinant bo-
vine growth hor-
mone in dairy
cows. Treated cows are able to give 25 per cent
more milk, but according to INGEF, they also
suffer from severe udder infections, reproduc-
tive disorders, leg problems and premature
death. Antibiotics used to treat the infections

show up in the milk, as do unusually high levels
of pus and Insulin Growth Factor-1, which has
been linked,
when present in
high doses, to
cancer in hu-
mans.

The group
also suggests that
Monsanto, the
pharmaceutical
company which
makes the hor-
mone, is burying
reports of hor-
mone-related
health problems

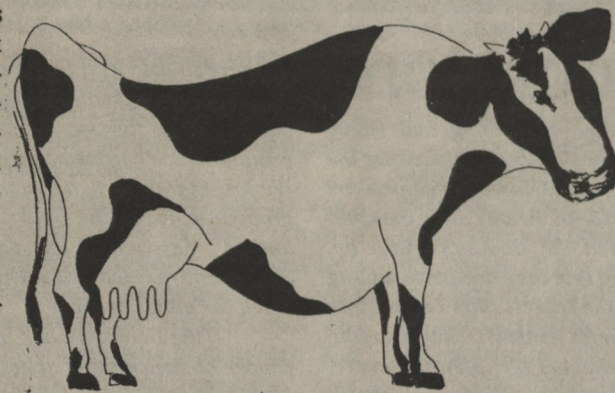
in the U.S., which must be filed with the Ameri-
can Food and Drug Administration. According
to Monsanto, the hormone is completely safe.
However, in the autumn 1994 issue of Canadian
Perspectives, Alex Boston of the Council of

Canadians says that Monsanto is the same
company that said PCBs and Agent Orange
were also safe.

The growth hormone is not yet avail-
able in Canada, but is under consideration.
INGEF is calling for the Canadian govern-
ment to withhold approval for the drug until
independent long-term health studies can
prove it is indeed safe. As it stands now, the
hormone could be used in Canada as early as
next July.

The problem has already corrected
itself somewhat in the American market-
place. A growing boycott of genetically-engi-
neered milk by school boards and supermar-
ket chains has led many producers to stop
using the hormone.

Rifkin remains concerned, however,
saying that "the success or failure of rBGH
[the hormone] in Canada sets the stage for
other products to enter the market without
labels and without appropriate health testing."



Using steroids for cosmetic reasons

Michael Mainville
(CUP)

MUSCULAR, STRONG AND LEAN. THESE
words define the modern ideal image of

body image.

"There's all these figures they have to
live up to, images they
see in the movies,"
says Guy Murray, fit-
ness director at the
Citadel gym and
owner of a personal
training company in
Ottawa. Murray says
he sees new people in
the gym everyday,
mostly between 16
and 20 years old,
whose only purpose
in working out is to
"get big."

Steroids are
quickly becoming one

of the most popular ways to do this. Two types
are commonly used, anabolic and
corticotrophic, with anabolic steroids being
the most popular. Both are synthetic derivatives
of the male hormone testosterone.

Steroids help increase fluid inside the
muscle cell and increase muscle protein. More
fluid and protein work to shorten muscle
recovery time which allows for more frequent
workouts. As a result the user is therefore
stronger and body mass can increase more
quickly. Steroids are generally used on ani-
mals by veterinarians to aid in the healing
process of animal muscle tissue. They work
quickly when combined with weightlifting to
build muscle. Users can usually see changes
in body mass and strength within a few weeks.
It is this quick-fix solution that explains much
of the popularity of steroid use.

Murray says a lot of people, not seeing the
results they want immediately from working out,
turn to steroids for a fast answer.

"They don't care about the end result,"
he says, "They shut themselves off to it. They
just want to be big."

However, steroid use commonly leads to
prolific outbreaks of acne on the upper back,
baldness, shrunken testicles, changes in sexual
drive, heavier beards and depression. Prolonged
use can increase the chance of any number of
physical problems, from heart disease to liver
failure.

Once someone decides to use steroids,
Murray says it's not that difficult to get them.

"You go to the right gym enough times
and the next thing you know, you've got what
you need."

Murray says he's worried because the use
of steroids for cosmetic reasons among young
people is on the rise.

Dr. Arthur Blouin, an Ottawa psycholo-
gist who is studying the similarities between
steroid use and eating disorders, agrees. Blouin
says media pressure and changing norms have
led to the increasing use of steroids among young
people. "In order to be acceptable to themselves,
to see themselves as a happy person, they must be
muscular, lean and big."

According to Blouin, media pressure is
so high that it can make people forget the
dangers of using steroids. The physical dangers
are well-documented. Blouin says the psycho-
logical dangers, which haven't received enough
attention, are as much of a problem. He says
steroid use escalates into a whole series of
psychological problems like increased aggres-
siveness, a delusional sense of invulnerability

and psychological dependency on the drug.
These problems can include frequent rages
and a psychosis called the "superman com-
plex."

He says the "superman complex" is a
state in which users become almost delusional
with the sense of invulnerability that comes
about after prolonged use of steroids. In
extreme cases the increased aggressiveness
and delusions can lead to violence.

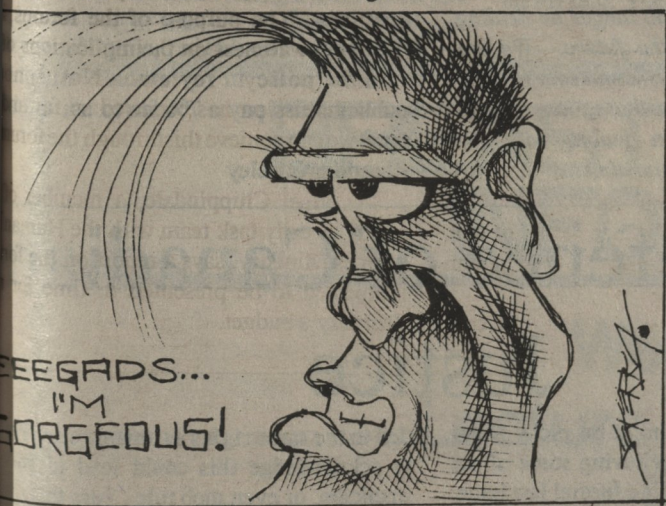
Blouin says even if users quit taking
the drugs, the problems may continue. He says
25 to 30 per cent of people who stop
using steroids experience strong feelings of
depression. The final and possibly most seri-
ous risk involved in steroid use is the same
danger with any illegal drug-- users cannot be
sure if drugs bought on the street are pure.

Often, says Murray, black-market ster-
oids are mixed or "cut" with other substances
to improve dealers' profits. In a March raid on
a dealer's home, Vancouver police seized
anabolic steroids that were mixed with Ar-
mour-All, a protectant and cleaner for mate-
rials such as leather and rubber.

"You really don't know what you're
putting into yourself," Murray says.

The Centre for Drug-Free Sport's study
showed that 3.9 per cent of 14 to 15 year olds
and 5.5 per cent of high school male students
16 years old or older used anabolic steroids.
That study came out almost two years ago.
Many of those high school students have gone
to university and many more are on the way.

The longer the image of the ideal
physical man remains what it is, and the
longer the media continue to inundate us with
this portrait, the more young people will turn
to steroids.



male body. The new state-of-the-art phy-
is displayed everywhere: billboards,
commercials, music videos and magazines.
new man is primed for Saturday night,
confident, he's attractive and he's invul-
erable.

Stereotypical images of the male sex
are nothing new. But the worst problem
today's incarnations is that in attempt to
state them, men face serious physical and
psychological consequences. Steroids, once in
exclusive domain of elite athletes, have
come a tool for those who aspire to the
perfect physique. According to a 1993 study
commissioned by the Canadian Centre for
Drug-Free Sport, about 83,000 Canadians--
most entirely male-- between the ages of 11
and 18 use steroids, and nearly half of those
are solely concerned with improving