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Where's the beef?

Surge in contaminated meat will reduce Americans' carnivorous ways

Presumably, almost every college student could write a book entitled, "Fast-Food Or How I Survived My First Year in College." But this fascination that college students have with fast-food chains may soon change. A recent Associated Press report said that following another E. coli outbreak, Hudson Foods Inc. "will sell a Nebraska hamburger plant linked to an E. coli outbreak if it can't replace Burger King as its main ground beef customer."

Opinion Editor



James Francis
 Junior English major

Furthermore, Burger King, the nation's second largest fast-food chain, said that it would stop buying meat from Hudson "even though there was no indication it received tainted meat."

This latest scare of tainted beef in the meat industry is sure to send consumers on the war path regarding the safety of beef processing. Although the meat industry is a huge entity within itself, there can be no leeway for the rush of processing and testing meat. American consumers depend on fast-food restaurants and grocery stores to sell them meat that they believe to be safe enough to eat. As humans, we are carnivores by nature, although many people choose to lighten their eating habits by becoming vegetarians. And with this tale of bad meat slipping, more and more people are likely to switch their carnivorous habits, opting for something more along the lines of vegetables and fish.

But E. coli outbreaks aren't the only problems that should be addressed in the meat industry. It has been reported that the cows, from the cattle ranchers who are in question, have been being fed chicken manure as part of their diet. Clearly, this suggests some type of unscrupulous thinking on the part of the cattle ranchers. It can be assumed that consumers do not want to imagine that the beef they eat came from cows that fed on chicken feces.

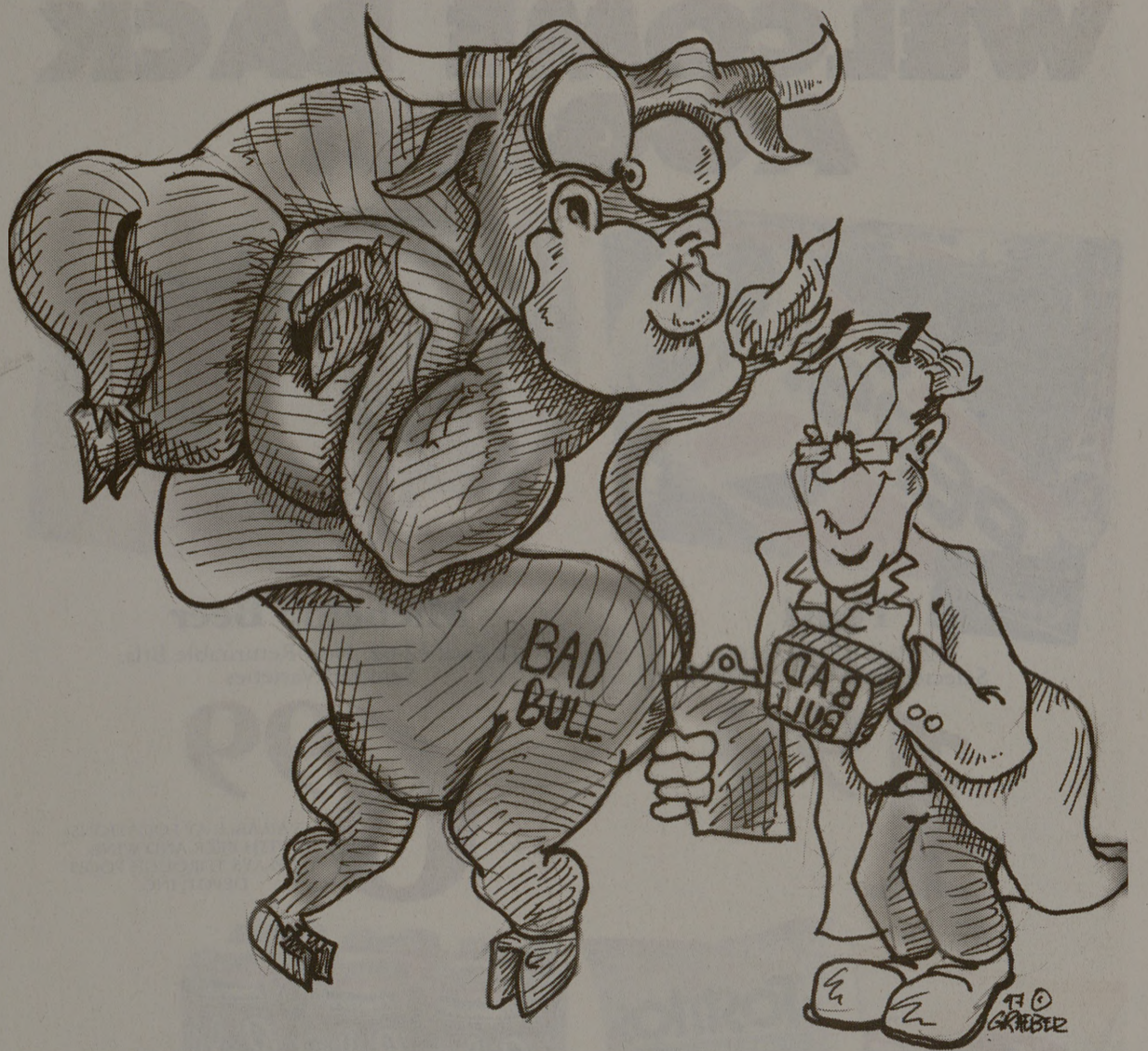
Furthermore, not too long ago, a televised re-

port on the safety of beef processing was aired on ABC — the activities caught on tape were astonishing. Slabs of cows in a meat packing house were shown being cut up for shipment. What seemed to be a normal operation turned out to be a less than optimal work ethic on the part of the production-line workers. When meat would fall to the floor, where it was surrounded by cow intestines, feces and muck from the workers' shoes, someone would simply pick it up and place it back on the conveyor belt. If this represents good standards of meat production, Americans have a lot to worry about.

This is not the first time that Burger King has found itself in trouble with the meat industry. On Aug. 12, Hudson recalled 20,000 pounds of beef. The next week, the recall reached close to 25 million pounds, which was deemed the nation's largest recall ever. The incident forced close to 1,650 Burger Kings in 28 states to serve only chicken, ham and fish. The AP report also said that before being shut down, the Hudson plant was processing between "2 million and 2.5 million pounds of ground beef a week."

Although some people say statistics are just numbers, sometimes there is reason to worry about the figures. This is one of those situations. People must not sit down and accept these low standards of meat processing and safety precautions. Not everyone should become vegetarians, but we must now look more closely at what we are eating and how we are cooking it. Fast food is exactly what it claims to be; it is not exactly something that you would want to risk your life over. So the next time you get a craving for Taco Bell or Whataburger, you might want to consider going to your local grocery store and stocking up on some Lean Cuisine.

Today, on account of new diseases being discovered, there can be no ignorance or low work ethic on how our country's meat is processed and shipped. Sooner or later, the old commercial adage will have to change, and its slogan will probably be: Beef, it's not what's for dinner anymore.



MAIL CALL

Health center deserves praise

On behalf of the staff and the 294 participants of the 1997 Texas A&M National Youth Sports Program, I would like to thank you and your staff for the time spent giving physical examinations to our participants this year.

As you know, every participant is required to have a physical examination before participating, and your assistance for the past two years has been a definite contribution to the success of our program.

We would not be able to host this program on campus if not for the efforts of you and your staff in providing over 200 physicals each year.

It may seem as though A.P. Beutel Health Center does not get all of the recognition that it deserves, especially for all the services that it provides.

I would personally like to thank and recognize Beutel and

its staff for their unselfish donation of time and effort to the success of the 1997 Texas A&M National Youth Sports Program.

Frank B. Ashley III, Ed. D.

Project Administrator

Associate Dean for

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Reveille situation has simple solution

I believe I have a solution to the current controversy over the Reveille gravesite relocation.

Once the new horseshoe expansion is finished, a group of drunk rednecks from the Dixie Chicken should dig up the remains of the former Reveilles, have the remains bronzed and mount the remains on top of the luxury boxes that are to be built in the horseshoe.

This way, each of the dead Reveilles will have a birds-eye-view of the scoreboard, as the Aggies run up the score against their weak non-conference opponents they host every year.

Wade Bynum
 Class of '97

Field expansion breaks tradition

As recent graduates of Texas A&M, we are concerned with what this action will lead to in the future. A&M is based on rich traditions and beliefs. These traditions are

what sets A&M apart from other universities. To see these changes occur only to benefit our athletic program makes A&M no different than the University of Nebraska.

When people speak of Nebraska, all they talk about is their football team. When outsiders mention A&M, football is not the main topic. They talk about yell practices, Bonfire, Aggie Muster and other traditions that have been as much a part of Aggieland as Reveille herself.

We are fans of A&M football as much as any other Aggies. But when one tradition, such as football, begins to step on another tradition, such as Reveille's graves, then something is wrong. We wonder what other traditions will be changed, or done away with, the next time A&M tries to "keep up with the Jones'."

Brad Barrett
 Class of '95

Jana Casada Barrett
 Class of '97

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class, and phone number.

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

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Sorority rush exemplifies conformity among students

That strange annual phenomenon has returned: the heavy perfumed air, the blinding streaks of silver and more shoe polish on automobiles than a Las Vegas wedding chapel. That's right, it is once again time for sorority rush.

Perhaps this sounds a bit stereotypical, but sororities are perhaps the greatest example of enforcing stereotypes evident on campus today.

Rush is that time of year when insecurities are exposed and personalities are ignored. Hundreds of women focus their energy on making themselves attractive to prospective "sisters" to gain popularity.

Professional portraits are prepared, designer labels are snatched up by the handful and letters of recommendation are written.

Rush is the time when College Station, especially the Harvey Road area, is transformed into Anytown High School, U.S.A. There is cheerleader-like chanting, petty backstabbing and selections that resemble small-town Homecoming Queen elections.

Hundreds of nervous women gussy themselves up in their best finery and put themselves through hell for a few days in order to "earn" a spot as a sorority member.

The question that begs to be asked is why any woman would knowingly subject herself to such an archaic practice. Why would she spend hundreds, even thousands of dollars just to "make friends?"

Well, sororities claim to be a place where women can gather together as sisters. They promote themselves as both social and service organizations.

Although sororities may contribute their time to a few token service projects, that can hardly be portrayed as their main focus.

Sororities on this campus serve as yet another institution for conformity. Everything from requiring the memorization of chants and the Greek alphabet to surveillance of behavior become mechanisms for said conformity. Even clothing becomes a controlled item. Sorority members are as easy to pinpoint as the Corps of Cadets on campus. This could be attrib-

Assistant
 Opinion Editor



Mandy Cater
 Senior psychology major

uted to the practice of issuing "fashion demerits," popular in many sororities.

More than being social examples concerned about the common good of society, sororities have become the most explicit examples of cliques. Many sorority members look down their tanned noses at just about anyone who is not a member of their elite Greek crowd. There are even catty grudges between sororities, aspects of which can be overheard via silver-tongued whispers on shuttle buses and in classes.

Before the common rebuttal is voiced, yes, I too had the opportunity to rush a sorority. I had offers of letters of recommendation. But I also had older friends who had rushed. I heard their stories and saw the changes in their personalities, and I was not interested.

Drunken slobberfests, cutthroat backstabbing and fashion demerits just are not my idea of a good time. They seem better suited to high school drill teams or slumber parties. Certainly, these are not things for which I would be willing to pay my own or my parents' money.

As for rush, it is less about sororities getting to know people they would like to include in their membership than it is about materialism. The parade of parties and socials and the behind-closed-doors bidding seems more like a cattle auction than some sense of "sisterhood."

Just a tip: a couple of hours of "mixers" and a packet with a picture on top does not a good friendship make. Anything so shallow does not have much of a foundation for real relationships.

This is not to say that all sororities or their members are bad, but stereotypes do unfortunately prove to be true quite often where sororities are concerned. One needs only to walk through the Wehner Building without sorority letters or the "regulation attire" to feel the ugly sting of sorority snobbery.

College can be a frightening, lonely place. But there are other ways to make friends than flashing your checking account balance and wearing cute outfits. Join an organization you care about, introduce yourself to dorm members or people in your neighborhood or even get a job. Just because rushing is an easy,

guaranteed way to meet people does not mean it is the best way. It also does not guarantee that these people will be your friends.

Don't let insecurities flaw your judgment. Make friends on merit, not selling yourself out. To borrow a phrase, "Just Tri it."

