

Environment

Reducing the intake of meat could solve several problems

By JANET DUVAL

There are many good reasons for reducing the meat in our diets. Our own health is one. The health of the planet is another.

A hamburger looks harmless enough, but most of us know that we should "have a heart" - and cut down the amount of fat and salt we get from eating as much meat as we do - far more than we need for good nutrition, by the way.

Of greater concern is what goes into producing the meat in that hamburger. It takes up to 16 pounds of grains and soybean feed to produce just one pound of beef. That's a lot of precious farmland, and a lot of water too, to grow the grains to feed the beef we crave so much.

Is it worth it? In Canada and elsewhere, far more grain goes to feed animals than to feed people, and in countries like Brazil, which is a major meat exporter, the cost in malnutrition and hunger is criminal.

Speaking of Brazil, we can ponder the destruction of vast tracts of rainforest to produce grazing land for cattle. Why? To help feed the insatiable North American appetite for beef.

You needn't feel dismay at the thought of reducing meat in family meals. True enough, when you mention "meatless", visions of



tofu, soybean caseroles, and lentil soups dance in many heads. But it can be more exciting than that!

Keep in mind that for most of human history, diets centred around cereal grains and vegetables, with meat just as a supplement. Most of the world still eats this way, so your adventure into "eating to save the planet" can begin with Chinese cooking, Mexican, Italian, and so on. The popular Lightheaded Cookbook has many helpful recipes.

Try a vegetable stir fry, with just a bit of meat included, and accompanying rice. Make lasagna without the meat, and try many other pasta dishes that use little or no meat, often with delicious cheese sauces.

Start serving low-meat or no-meat dishes gradually. I began by serving spaghetti sauce without the meat about once a

week, and no one has missed it. During winter, we often enjoy a meal of thick soup and a hearty bread, and that's enough.

I'm not concerned about protein intake, because North Americans get far more than they need every day. Eggs and cheese alone can provide what we need. I'm also not vegetarian. That kind of diet needs good nutritional guidance, and attention to other nutrients besides protein.

But I do believe we can all benefit by reducing meat intake, and can enjoy it too.

If anyone in your family complains, tell them to think about a hungry child herding beef cattle at the edge of the shrinking Brazilian rainforest.

The writer is a graduate nutritionist, active in the local group "Ten Days for World Development", which focusses on the Two-Thirds World.

New products available to fight environment battle

Roads with recycled plastic milk jugs in them; hip implants made of steel with ceramic surfaces; and computer chips that work with light - what do these have in common? They are all examples of the types of new products becoming possible because of the availability of new materials. In fact, everywhere we turn new metal alloys, new plastics, new ceramics, etc. are not the stuff of science fiction but rather part of our everyday lives.

These examples are also based on materials under development with research funding assistance from the Ontario Centre for Materials Research (OCMR). Set up as a provincial Centre of Excellence three years ago, the OCMR is supported by the Ontario Technology Fund. Its goal is to create a knowledge base about new materials that Ontario's in-

dustry can use in the creation of new products. How does it do this? By supporting research initiatives at Ontario's universities and by linking this research to industry partners. "The OCMR unites approximately seventy university research faculty with employees of over forty-five industrial members" said Peter McGeer, managing director of the OCMR. "It is our intention to combine Ontario's intellectual and economic strategies, thus increasing Ontario's competitiveness."

Courses and workshops form an important part of the OCMR's work. In recent months the Centre has sponsored workshops on new steels, protective coatings, degradable materials, and plastics processing and recycling. Each workshop not only showcases the results of the OC-

MR backed research but also helps research teams from different companies and universities to exchange ideas and information.

Why do all this? To use the examples given at the start, the roads with recycled plastics in them should last longer (as well as getting rid of a waste problem) Bone can grow into the ceramic coating on the hip implant to hold the implant more securely, making it last longer. And optoelectronics promises ever faster, more capable computers. In a world where change is the only constant, the OCMR is helping maintain Ontario's competitiveness as a leader in new materials development.

For more information, please contact the Ontario Centre for Materials Research at (416)978-4314.

Oakville company promotes ecology friendly techniques

OAKVILLE - Nutrilawn International Inc., the nation's leader in "Ecology Friendly Lawn Care" is experiencing a strong demand for its services from ecologically enlightened consumers. Recently, the company opened a franchise

operation in Oakville to handle the Halton Region marketplace, servicing Oakville, Burlington, Milton and Georgetown. The franchise is owned by area residents and partners, Bill and Carol Schaper.

Bill Schaper is licensed by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and he and his Customer Service Representatives are thoroughly trained in lawn

analysis, spraying and aerating techniques.

"When we were looking for a franchise to purchase, it was Nutrilawn's commitment to the ecology friendly lawn care concept that impressed me most," says Bill Schaper. "Many do-it-yourself consumers have learned the hard way that it's only too easy to damage a lawn with fertilizer.

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