Course: Bio Animal Science Grade level 10- 12

Type: Argumentative Structure: Argumentation/ Analysis

Teaching: Should consumers purchase beef products that have been altered from their natural state? After reading provided texts, write an argumentative paper that addresses the question and support your position with evidence from the text. Be sure to acknowledge competing views.

Performance level: 4

Student 1

Too often we are not aware of what we are eating, and in a few situations, ignorance is bliss. Before I began this module, I had no idea what was in the beef I was consuming. As long as it was fully cooked and appealed to my taste buds, I was not really concerned. Since I have been introduced to the disgusting and potentially dangerous chemicals and “substitutes” that producers use in the beef products of today, I have become more aware of the harmful effects these products have on us. As consumers, should we purchase these toxic beef products, or is there another approach altogether? I believe that these harmful products should not be sold to anyone because there are serious health risks concerned with these beef products. These risks involve illness, disease, and even death in some with fragile immune systems. A closer examination of antibiotics, bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), and simple greed will shed light on a topic most would rather ignore. Many will argue that these risks are nonexistent, but further examination in this paper will prove otherwise. Regardless of your stance on my position, this paper will educate the consumer so that a more informed choice may be made when purchasing beef products.

Bacteria are microscopic organisms that multiply by simple division. Some bacteria cause disease while others are helpful in humans. Bacteria are on us, in us, and in the meat we eat. Because of this phenomenon, we will never be able to get away from them. Antibiotics help fight off harmful bacteria by destroying them or slowing their growth with the help of your immune system. If used correctly and in moderation, antibiotics can be very useful. If antibiotics are misused, they can be dangerous. Injectable antibiotics are intended to be given in the neck region only. Medication that is injected must be administered in the neck because of the absence of high quality cuts of meat. In addition, it is recommended that only 10cc of medication should be injected at any one site. Overdose of medicine given at the same site can also have dangerous effects. If excessive amounts of medication are given at the same site, not all of it may be absorbed and metabolized, leaving some to linger in the meat. Most antibiotics have withdrawal times, which is the number of days the animal must be off the drug before slaughter. For example, if a drug has a 21 day withdrawal period and is administered on the first of April, the animal cannot be slaughtered until the twenty second of April. If the same antibiotics are repeatedly used, eventually bacteria will become immune to it. When cattle are slaughtered and processed for consumers, these disease resistant bacteria linger in the meat. If consumers ingest disease resistant bacteria, they may not respond to some forms of antibiotics if they are to get sick. “Concern about the growing level of drug-resistant bacteria has led to the banning of sub-therapeutic use of antibiotics in meat animals in many countries.”(Levy) In organic beef, antibiotics are not allowed. This means that if cattle become sick, the producer can do nothing for them except hope that the illness abates. Some may see this as being cruel, but in fact, this is survival of the fittest.

“We have taken this benign, natural vegetarian and turned it first into a cannibal, and when that did not work, into a vampire. We’ve turned its brain and spinal cord into toxic sites. We have managed to turn its feces into something that routinely makes us sick and occasionally kills us. We have taken the cow and used it as our experiment in developing the perfect food machine.” (Canell, M) In the process of developing the “perfect food machine”, producers turned the brain and spinal cord of cattle into toxic sites and created BSE. BSE is a fatal neurodegenerative disease in cattle that causes a spongy degeneration in the brain and spinal cord. To save money, after a cow has been slaughtered, producers take what is left and grind it up. This material is then added to feed for the next generation of cattle that will be slaughtered for consumption. This leftover material may contain bones, hooves, and blood. Forcing cattle to eat their own kind turns them into cannibals; this not only transformed their brain and spinal cord into toxic sites, but also creates the infamous mad cow disease. Mad cow disease has caused entire processing plants to shut down, and has even closed the Canadian border for three years. The USDA still declares these products to be safe, but warns consumers to treat them as toxic before fully cooking them.

“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”(1 Timothy 6:10) In many situations, this is true. Although all of us need money to obtain food and shelter and other necessities in life, we do not need money at the expense of others. There are other ways to obtain and save money besides forcing cattle to become cannibals and infecting people with BSE, however this is the way some groups have decided to do it. The cattle barrens of this country care more about money than they do for the safety of the citizens. This group thinks that what they are doing is okay, that they are only hurting a few people. In my opinion, one is too many. Money should never be made at the expense of others. This is commonly known as simple greed. Do not become a victim of big money corporations’ greed. There are other, safer choices produced by some who care about their customers that do not want them to get hurt. The USDA claims that using growth hormones and feed additives to improve the growth rate of cattle is perfectly acceptable. But at who’s expense? They are cutting corners and in doing so, hurting consumers who buy beef that has been altered. When does the price of cutting corners outweigh the cost of hurting consumers? Consumers are at risk from these feed additives and hormones that have been added to this beef. Organic beef production is under strict guidelines and therefore is not able to cut corners. The price may be a little higher, but investing in consumer safety is always worth it.

Many more will be hurt by disease resistant bacteria, BSE, and simple greed. I choose to separate myself from these casualties, and urge you to do the same. Disease resistant bacteria will continue to become more and more common unless we change the way we treat food animals with bacterial infections. Soon these bacteria will be immune to the majority of antibiotics and nothing will stop disease and illness from sweeping the nation. Toxic sites will continue to be potential poison to the unlucky child who cannot keep his or her fingers out of their mouth. For example, if a child touches a contaminated counter top or a piece of raw meat and sticks their fingers in their mouth, they could become very sick and die. Some may have great faith in Agriculture’s ability to guide us in a safe direction for production. But in the end, does it not always come down to money? Ask yourself what they care about most; your safety or profit? It is time for us to stand up and demand that we be informed about what is being done to the beef we consume. Stand up so that no one else is hurt by these mistakes. Do not become a victim to these illnesses and diseases. Stand up for your safety and the safety of the nation.

References

Beef Quality Assurance and Beef Safety Programs. (n.d.).  *THE MERCK VETERINARY MANUAL* . Retrieved April 18, 2013, from <http://www.merckvetmanual.com/mvm/index.jsp?cfile=htm/bc/180831.htm>

Canell, M. (Director). (2005). *Frankensteer* [Documentary]. Canada: Bulfrog Films.

Gadberry, S. (n.d.). Feed Additives for Beef Cattle. *U of A Division of Agriculture*. Retrieved April 17, 2013, from [www.uaex.edu/Other\_Areas/publications/pdf/FSA-3012.pdf](http://www.uaex.edu/Other_Areas/publications/pdf/FSA-3012.pdf)

Levy, .. S., M.D.., years, w. h., & that, e. (n.d.). Is Your Meat Safe? - Antibiotic Debate Overview | Modern Meat | FRONTLINE | PBS. *PBS: Public Broadcasting Service*. Retrieved April 17, 2013, from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/meat/safe/overview.html>

Loy, D. (n.d.). Understanding Hormone Use in Beef Cattle. *Iowa Beef Center*. Retrieved April 17, 2013, from <http://www.iowabeefcenter.org/information/IBC48.pdf>

1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.. (n.d.). *Online Parallel Bible: Weaving God's Word into the Web*. Retrieved April 19, 2013, from <http://bible.cc/1_timothy/6-10.htm>

Troxel, T. (n.d.). Natural and Organic Beef. *U of A Division of Agriculture*. Retrieved April 17, 2013, from [www.uaex.edu/Other\_Areas/publications/PDF/FSA-3103.pdf](http://www.uaex.edu/Other_Areas/publications/PDF/FSA-3103.pdf)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Where’s the Beef  Student 1 | | |
| Annotation | | |
| Focus | 4.0 | Writer addressed all aspects of the prompt throughout the entire paper. |
| Reading/Research | 3.5 | The points made were substantiated by evidence from the resources. There was one point where the writer needed to give a factual story to back up their point. This would have clarified the point intended. |
| Controlling Idea | 4.0 | The argument was clearly stated in the introduction and expanded on in each of the body paragraphs. It was also restated in the conclusion. The writer never varied from the argument. |
| Development | 4.0 | Writer made the position clear in the thesis statement and clearly developed the points of the thesis statement throughout the body paragraphs. The conclusion was a clear and a call for action was made. |
| Organization | 3.5 | Writer was focused and stayed true to the outline portrayed in the introduction. However, the writer could have made a stronger counterclaim. |
| Conventions | 4.0 | Writer maintained a well developed command of standard English and cited sources using appropriate format. |
| Content  Understanding | 4.0 | It is clear there is a solid foundation of understanding in this paper. |