

IS THE LOW-CARB BACKLASH BEGINNING?

US food producers are scrambling to satisfy consumer clamourings for low-carbohydrate products but also see a move toward more balanced eating that could spell doom for the strictest low-carb diets, like the Atkins diet. At an industry conference last week in Scottsdale, Arizona, companies including Kellogg Co. and Hershey Foods Corp. touted products such as low-carb cereals and chocolate bars catering to the millions of Americans following diets that eschew carbohydrates like bread, sugar and pasta in favour of high-protein foods and those made with sugar alternatives. But even as they push these new products, companies which have been hurt by the backlash against carbohydrates expect consumers will soon back off the more extreme low-carb diets due to growing concerns about their intake of artery-clogging fat and cholesterol.

www.cnn.com/2004/HEALTH/diet.fitness/02/23/carb.extremes.reut

INQUIRY OPENS IN US MAD COW REPORT

A criminal investigation has begun into possible falsified documents in the lone US case of BSE (mad cow disease), an Agriculture Department official says. Phyllis Fong, the department's inspector general, told a House Appropriations subcommittee the inquiry focuses on whether the infected Holstein dairy cow was a "downer" – a cow too sick or injured to walk, as official records indicate – when it was slaughtered on December 9 at Vern's Moses Lake Meats in Washington State. The official report from the veterinarian at the slaughterhouse said the animal was "sternal, alert", meaning that it was conscious but down on its sternum, or chest, before it was killed, the *New York Times* said. But three witnesses – the worker who killed the animal, the trucker who hauled it to the slaughterhouse and an owner of the slaughterhouse – have all said publicly that it was walking.

<http://washingtontimes.com/lupi-breaking/20040304-101525-8689r.htm>

DIET LINKED TO NON-HODGKIN'S LYMPHOMA

What's causing America's huge surge in blood cancer? It might be our diet. It's called non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, a killer collection of different white-blood-cell cancers. And it's a mystery why it's been increasing so quickly in the US and other parts of the world. Tongzhang Zheng, ScD, head of the division of environmental health sciences at the Yale School of Public Health in New Haven, Connecticut, collected detailed dietary information from 601 local women and from 717 similar women without cancer.

"What we found is that if a person has a higher intake of animal protein, they will have a higher risk of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma," Zheng said. "And people who have a higher intake of saturated fat have an increased risk. On the other hand, if you have higher-than-average intake of dietary fibre – particularly if you frequently eat vegetables and fruits with a high fibre content – you have a reduced risk of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma." A high-fat diet may indeed be linked to higher body weight. But Zheng says that people eating low-carb diets may also be at risk of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma if they eat too much meat and too few vegetables. Zheng's study showed that people who ate more of certain foods tended to have a lower risk of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Those foods include tomatoes, broccoli, squash, cauliflower, onions, mixed lettuce salad, leeks, apples, pears and citrus fruits.

American Journal of Epidemiology, March 1, 2004.

EAT YOUR PET

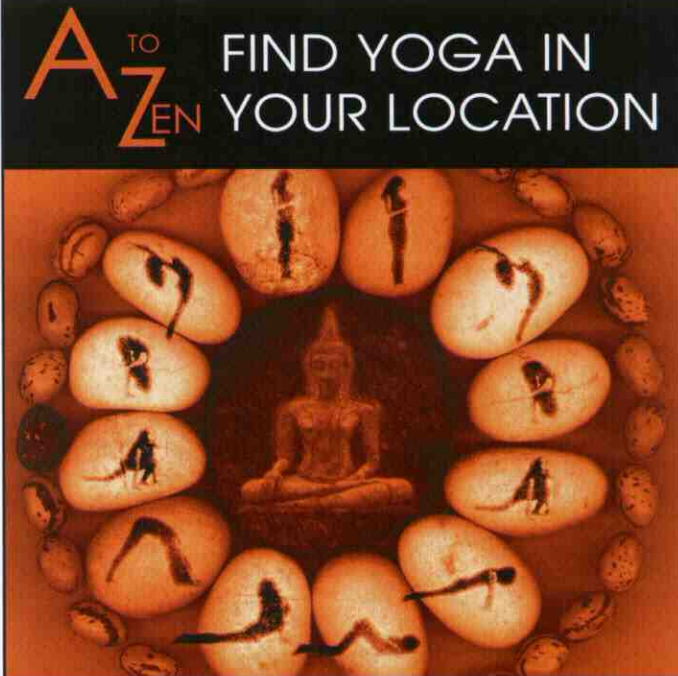
Australian food standards dictate that the meat in a meat pie can be any part of a "buffalo, camel, cattle, deer, goat, hare, pig, poultry, rabbit or sheep" that is abattoir processed. Any attached "animal rind, fat, connective tissue, nerve, blood, blood vessels" and, in the case of poultry, skin, can be considered "flesh". Your meat pie may also contain game such as kangaroo. But what about cats and dogs? No problem. "There's nothing in the NSW food legislation which prevents us eating animals like cats and dogs", a NSW Safe Food spokeswoman told *Sydney Morning Herald's Radar*. They're not so progressive in other states, however. Apparently, pet eating is such a problem in South Australia that folk there have recently enacted a law prohibiting it. An amendment to South Australia's summary offences declares it an offence to knowingly "consume, etc, dogs or cats". Those found guilty may be fined up to \$1,250.

BARCELONA BANS BULLFIGHTING

Barcelona became the first city in Spain to ban bullfighting after a massive campaign by human rights activists against this cruel practice. Protests were held in the Catalan capital as councillors took the vote at city hall, with demonstrators waving placards declaring 'Barcelona against bullfighting'. Animal rights groups had collected 250,000 signatures from around Europe which they handed in to Barcelona's city hall in March.

The petition was an initiative by the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) and Spanish animal rights groups, appalled at the killing of dozens of bulls each year at Barcelona's La Monumental bullring. While bullfighting remains popular in major Spanish cities, including the capital Madrid, it raises relatively scant interest in Catalonia, the region covering north-east Spain.

Agence France-Presse, April 2004.



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