

Does red meat really kill?

What you haven't read about fats - heart disease

By Ann Gooding

ST. JOSEPH, Mo. — Many Americans, maybe you too, believe that eating beef contributes to heart disease and even cancer.

And why not? The Senate Select Subcommittee on Nutrition and Human Needs through its Dietary Goals and a recent surgeon general's report made the government's stand on red meat consumption quite clear. Both concluded Americans must change their diet, claiming people would be healthier if they ate less red meat.

Without conclusive evidence, the government has called for radical dietary changes and, even worse, it has inferred that cutting down on beef consumption will automatically reduce chances of developing heart disease and cancer, basing its stand on nothing more than flimsy evidence.

Of course, big corporations who manufacture vegetable oils and margarines have had a field day with the government edicts. And they convince the public that consuming animal fats is hazardous to health, spending tens of billions of dollars each year promoting polyunsaturates as healthy alternatives to animal fats.

Well, there is evidence to the contrary, evidence that the whole anti-beef movement could lead to some real health problems. What's more, there is evidence that polyunsaturates in large

quantities are anything but healthful.

The key to the whole anti-beef movement is cholesterol and just as the anti-beef people have intended, the word itself strikes terror in the hearts of Americans. We are led to believe cholesterol is a near toxic substance, hazardous to health.

In truth it exists naturally in the body and is essential to life. Among other things it maintains the structure of cell membranes, contributes to the formation of certain sex hormones and vitamin D.

Those who suggest less beef consumption not only suggest that cholesterol is akin to poison but they infer that beef literally drips with it.

Figures from the Journal of the American Dietetic Assn. on the cholesterol content of various foods show how wrong this is. A three-ounce serving of beef accounts of 77mg. cholesterol, while a similar serving of chicken (half white meat, half dark) has 73 mg. cholesterol, turkey, 76.

Shrimp (again three-ounce.) has 128 mg. and herring and mackerel account for 82 and 86 respectively. Lobster contains 85.

Another myth, this one dealing with saturated fats, has gained widespread acceptance. Like cholesterol, saturated fats have been dubbed dietary villains and successfully associated with beef.

But according to USDA figures, beef contains both saturated and unsaturated fats, about half and half. And a University of Maryland study has shown the public actually gets more saturated fats from vegetable sources than it gets from beef.

The jury is still out on whether eating foods that contain cholesterol can cause a build-up of cholesterol in the body. There is practically no evidence that high levels of cholesterol in the blood leads to heart attacks anyway. Even though the public doesn't hear much about them, study upon study question these theories.

For example, in an experiment at Texas A&M University professors followed four separate diets; Red meat and no visible eggs; red meat and three visible eggs (a large egg contains 252 mg. of cholesterol); poultry and fish and no visible eggs; poultry and fish and three visible eggs.

Reiser, the school's lipid biochemist, found that as a group there was no significant build-up of cholesterol resulting from any of the diets.

In fact, most of the participants recorded a slightly lower serum cholesterol content when on the red meat diets than when eating fish and poultry.

A study done at the University of Georgia has found there is a fatty acid that does raise cholesterol levels. This acid is not found

in red meat. There is, however, an acid in meat that, according to the same study, tends to lower cholesterol levels in the body.

To date no study has conclusively shown that cholesterol levels affect incidence of heart disease, anyway, even though the public has been bombarded with propaganda to that effect.

For one thing, studies have shown that only 30 to 40 per cent of the people experiencing heart disease have elevated serum cholesterol, the same percentage as the general population.

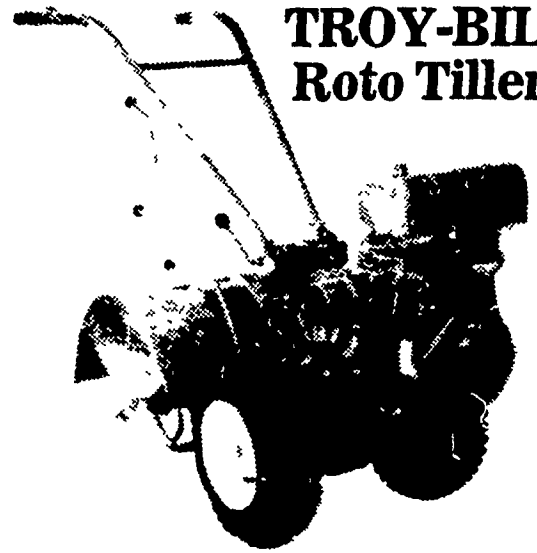
So if elevated cholesterol is the cause of heart disease, how are the other 60 to 70 per cent of those stricken (but who do not have elevated cholesterol) explained?

Other studies pose similar questions.

Why, for example, do men living in different areas but having the same serum cholesterol levels have different rates of heart disease? Studies to this ef-

(Turn to Page E5)

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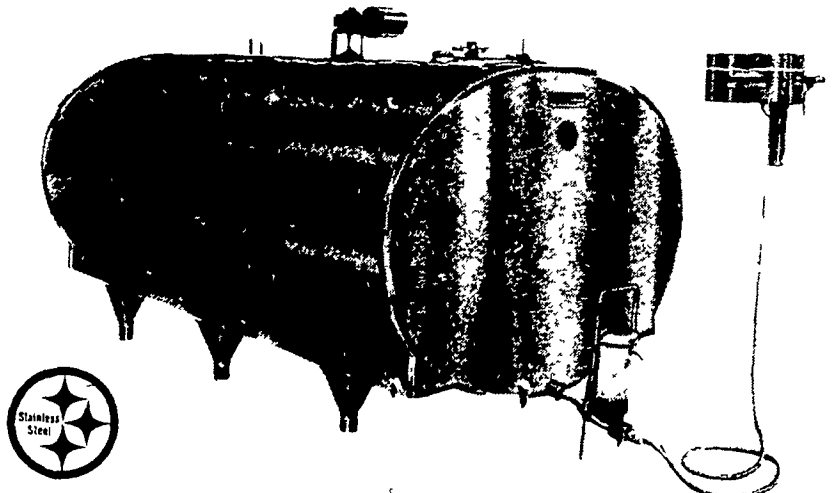
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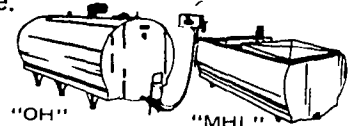
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