

# BST Gets

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Dr. Bob Collier, representative for Monsanto who also testified repeatedly before the advisory committee, called Wednesday's decision, "A great victory. I'm very happy with the outcome. I think the committee has given a very positive sign. I'm looking forward to full approval."

While several companies have created their own versions of synthetic BST using biotechnology, each has had to perform its own tests and trials on the efficacy and safety of BST for submission to the FDA for review. Monsanto has been working with BST for more than seven years.

BST has been controversial because it represents new medical technology that is designed to increase animal performance, not cure a specific ill, because of fears that dairy prices will plummet from a milk glut, and because some people find conflict with the message it sends to youth — society tells youth to turn away from using drugs to increase performance, or for recreation, and at the same time looks to use drugs to increase performance for profit.

However, at the onset of Wednesday's hearing, it was made clear that any testimony which did not specifically address the issue of increased mastitis, the incidence of antibiotics, or the risk to human health, would not be allowed.

Nevertheless, several speakers representing anti-BST organizations or constituencies strayed from the subject to pontificate on ideology.

Wednesday's hearing and meeting represented a long process of review. Dr. Gerald Guest, director of the Center for Veterinary Medicine, said that the volume of data and work submitted by Monsanto in its application for approval represented one of the most complete and intensive compilations received by the agency.

Monsanto happened to be the first company to get this far along in the process. The Monsanto product is called "Somatribove."

The bottom line issue before the 13-member advisory committee was whether there could be inferred any risk to the health of the consumer from using BST to stimulate cows to produce extra milk.

While a direct correlation is not apparent, the question was raised as to the possibility that using BST could lead to an increased risk of antibiotics showing up in the consumer's milk supply.

Antibiotics are of particular concern because there is a segment of society, estimated from 3 percent to 10 percent, which reacts allergically to exposure to penicillin-type antibiotics.

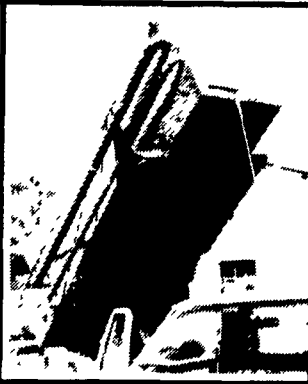
Though there was no case presented of people having ever suffered from reactions to antibiotics in milk they drank, it was reported that in four cases antibiotic-like substances in carbonated beverages had caused allergic reactions in people.

The link between the use of BST and antibiotics was made in a review by the General Accounting Office, the investigative agency of the U.S. Congress.

A cause-and-effect scenario was proposed by the GAO that, since there has been shown to be a statistical increase in mastitis among cows treated with Monsanto's BST, and since the majority of clinical mastitis cases are treated with penicillin-like antibiotics, then there could be an increased risk of consumer exposure to antibiotics in milk.

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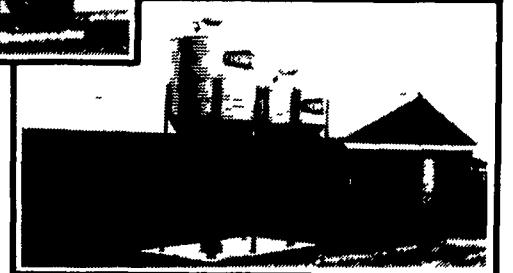


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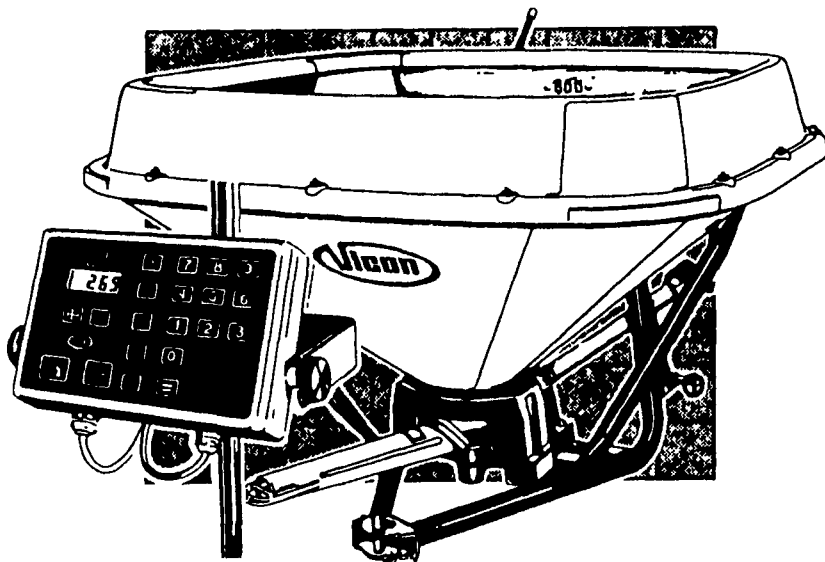
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