



No More Bull!: The Mad Cowboy Targets America's Worst Enemy: Our Diet

By Howard F. Lyman, Glen Merzer, Joanna Samorow-Merzer

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In 1996, when Howard Lyman warned America on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* that Mad Cow Disease was coming to America, offended cattlemen sued him and Oprah both. Not only were Lyman and Oprah vindicated in court, but events have proved many of Lyman's predictions absolutely right. Mad Cow Disease has come to America, and Lyman argues persuasively in *No More Bull!* that the problem will only grow more deadly until our government deals with it seriously. In *Mad Cowboy*, Lyman, a fourth-generation Montana rancher turned vegetarian then vegan, told the story of his personal transformation after a spinal tumor, which he believes was caused by agricultural chemicals, nearly left him paralyzed. In *No More Bull!*, Lyman uses his humor, compassion, firsthand experience in agriculture, and command of the facts of health to argue that we might all profit by transforming our diets. He makes a powerful case that Alzheimer's is yet another disease linked to eating meat. And he explains that the steak at the heart of your dinner plate not only may destroy your own heart but actually offers no more nutritional value than a doughnut! If you've been confused by the competing claims of the Atkins Diet, the South Beach Diet, and other fad diets, *No More Bull!* is the book that will set you straight. Its pure, unvarnished truth is told with down-home common sense.

Lyman's got a message for meat eaters, vegetarians, and vegans -- and the message of *No More Bull!* is that we can all do better for ourselves and the planet.

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Editorial Review

Review

"In a witty but candid and no-nonsense language, Howard Lyman speaks a truth about health that needs telling. Few messages are more important for our times and almost no one has the personally compelling experiences that make Lyman's telling of the story so unique and so persuasive. This is a fun but serious book to read. Try it and I think you'll like it!"

-- T. Colin Campbell, PhD., Jacob Gould Schuman Professor Emeritus of Nutritional Biochemistry, Cornell University

"*Reading No More Bull* is an amazing experience. It is a wonder how a book can be such a pleasure to read, so entertaining and enjoyable, and yet carry such a profoundly important message. If you read this book, several things will happen. There will be more health in your life. There will be more joy in your life. And you will be playing a part in the greater healing our troubled world so greatly needs."

-- John Robbins, author of *Diet for a New America*

About the Author

Howard F. Lyman is president of the International Vegetarian Union. He lives in Alexandria, Virginia.

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Introduction: My Journey

I grew up outside of Great Falls, Montana, as a fourth-generation dairy farmer and cattle rancher. It was a way of life that I believed in deeply, as did my whole family. We worked hard and did our small part to help provide America with high-quality beef and fresh, rich dairy products. I ran the Lyman Ranch until I was forty-five. My learning curve may have been a little slow, but I eventually learned the crucial lesson that impels me to write this book: the "wholesome" meat and dairy products that I was in the business of selling to the public were in fact poisons.

I can guarantee you that if you knew as much as I do about what goes into creating meat and dairy in America today -- if you could see behind the walls that those who practice large-scale animal agriculture in this country seek to keep in place -- your diet would resemble my own. Vegan. I haven't consumed an animal product in over a dozen years, and during that time all my considerable health problems (along with over a hundred unnecessary pounds) have melted away.

I was born in 1938, an ominous time in Europe, but just another Depression year back home. Growing up during World War II, I had no idea my family was poor. In addition to the farm, we had a large garden that I helped to tend. My love for birds, trees, and healthy soil came from working there as a boy. The family didn't have much cash, but we ate very well and I had no wants.

During the war, it was almost impossible to hire any help, so the entire family was pressed into providing the labor to keep the operation running. I remember to this day that whenever there was a family picnic, we would have to leave early to get home so we could milk the cows. I vowed early on that I would never again have my life controlled by the mammary secretions of a cow.

Going to school provided me with a welcome break from work. I loved the freedom of spending time in a

warm, clean environment. I liked it so much that I forgot to devote any time to learning. My first twelve years in school consisted of partying and playing football -- at both of which I excelled. If I did any studying at all, it's escaped my memory.

I accomplished my main objective in high school: our team won the state football championship. In the same year, without noticing how it happened, I also somehow managed to graduate. After high school, I spent a year working on the farm full time, where it became apparent that I didn't have the tools to become a successful farmer -- especially not in an age in which science was boldly coming to the aid of agriculture. Although I didn't know much, I knew enough to realize that the farms that employed new technologies had the competitive edge.

My solution was to enroll in Montana State College, at its College of Agriculture, where I learned not only much of what I had neglected in high school but also a great deal more -- about pesticides, herbicides, synthetic fertilizers, hormones, and antibiotics. My agriculture professors were all chemists, and I truly believed that they understood more about farming than my old man, who'd been doing it all his life and didn't believe in their newfangled ways.

Upon graduation, I received a commission as a second lieutenant in the Army. While serving a two-year tour in the United States, I learned a lot about organizing and leading. I planned to put those skills to good use in running the farm.

When I returned home from the Army, my brother was dying from cancer. The management of the entire operation fell on my shoulders. It was a responsibility that I had to take seriously because it meant providing a living for several families. Bursting with confidence, I expanded the family's small, organic dairy farm into a large factory farm. We took on thousands of head of cattle, thousands of acres of crops, and over thirty employees. I truly believed that it was necessary for the business to constantly get bigger, or else it would go under. Looking back on it today, I just shake my head in wonder at how I could have managed to get nearly everything wrong.

I used herbicides and pesticides liberally to grow feed for my cattle. Concentrating thousands of head of cattle from different origins in close quarters bred disease, so I added antibiotics to the feed like sugar to a breakfast cereal for kids. Since cattle were not designed by nature to digest the grain that I was using to fatten them up, I fought a constant losing battle to control their digestive ailments. I injected steroids into my bovines to further stimulate their growth and to abort pregnant heifers. I sprayed insecticide to combat the flies that were attracted to my operation like, well, flies to cow manure. And I did it all without the aid of goggles or protective clothing.

In retrospect, it seems unsurprising that, at the height of my chemical farming, in 1979, I was paralyzed from the waist down by a tumor on the inside of my spinal cord. But at the time it came as something of a shock. I had suffered back pain for many years, which I had attributed to an incident at my sister's wedding, when she and her groom jumped into their Volkswagen after the ceremony and I wittily grabbed the rear bumper and lifted the back end of the vehicle off the ground, preventing them from taking off. Volkswagens turn out to be heavier than they look, at least when they're loaded down with presents. I succeeded in delaying my sister's honeymoon by about a minute, and thought I had paid a price in pain.

But it turned out that the cause of my backache was not my nuptial antics but a tumor that had been growing for so long, it was practically old enough to vote. The damned thing had been sneaking up on me, and when it finally pounced, it pounced hard -- preventing me from walking, from even being able to feel the floor beneath my feet. The doctor told me that I needed an operation to remove the tumor, and that the odds I would ever walk again were one in a million. I promised myself that, whatever the outcome of the operation,

I'd dedicate the balance of my life to restoring health to the land I had damaged, and to fighting those agribusiness interests that continue to destroy the fertile earth that should be our birthright.

My operation was successful. Every day I thank God that I can walk, and I renew my vow. I can truly say that my life splits neatly into two parts: before the operation, when I was dangerously unhealthy, thoughtless, self-centered, and devoid of compassion for the animals I slaughtered; and after, when the lessons I've learned about kindness and compassion have taken me on a journey that has restored my own health.

I've done a lot of things since then to fight for a healthy, sustainable system of agriculture. I began returning my own farm to the organic operation that it had been when my father ran it. I worked for the National Farmers Union, lobbying for small farmers in Congress. I ran for Congress myself in Montana, losing by three percentage points.

But the smartest thing I ever did was to start down a path that eventually led me to become a vegan. It was a process that took years; I made some mistakes along the way, and I'm still learning. But I have arrived now at a diet that leaves me with more energy than I've felt since I was a kid, and leaves my doctor shaking his head in wonder at all the glorious numbers in my blood work -- one hell of an improvement over the ominous numbers that used to make me think that my only hope was to buy more life insurance. I understand now that no change could produce as much benefit for our land and the water -- and our health -- than a shift among the American populace toward a plant-based diet.

All my energies now are devoted to reaching that goal. It is my hope that this book can bring us a small step closer to achieving it.

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