

Advertisement

[FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION]

“After what I personally experienced watching my son suffer and die, I am very skeptical and cynical about for-profit meat companies and their professed commitment to food safety. Not all companies “walk their talk.” BPI does.”

NANCY DONLEY
Founder and President
STOP Foodborne Illness

IN DEFENSE OF FOOD SAFETY LEADERSHIP

by Nancy Donley
Opinion

My only child, Alex, died from hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) caused by eating E. coli O157:H7-contaminated ground beef back in 1993 when he was only 6 years old. It was the most horrendous experience possible.

His first symptoms were severe abdominal cramping and bowel movements that consisted strictly of blood and mucus. Alex suffered terribly as his organs shut down one by one. At one point one of his lungs collapsed, requiring bedside surgery. His brain swelled so horribly that shunts were drilled into his head in an effort to relieve the pressure, but to no avail.

My brave little boy's last words to me before slipping into a coma were, “Don't cry, Mommy” as I couldn't stop the tears from silently flowing. His last gesture to his dad was to blow him a kiss. I was with him when he suffered a grand mal seizure and was put on a ventilator. My little boy, my only child, was dead.

Alex had wanted to be a paramedic when he grew up so that he “could help others” — his words. So when he died we hoped to be able to donate his organs so that he could fulfill that wish of helping others, but his organs were unsalvageable because of the damage caused by the E. coli toxins.

There was no cure for this awful disease then and there still isn't today. Doctors can only hope to support bodily systems until the toxins pass through. ***It is for this reason that it is critically important for meat and poultry companies to put into place prevention strategies and technologies to ensure that contaminated meat doesn't make its way into the marketplace. That's why we need to support innovations and advances that enhance food safety.***

After Alex's death, I felt compelled — really more like obligated — to fulfill his wish of helping and protecting other consumers by being his voice and working with federal regulating agencies and with companies to see to it that we did a better job as a country in generating a safer food supply. In the process, I have visited numerous meat and poultry plants, have provided input on public policies and food safety laws, and have served on the National Advisory Board for Meat and Poultry Inspection.

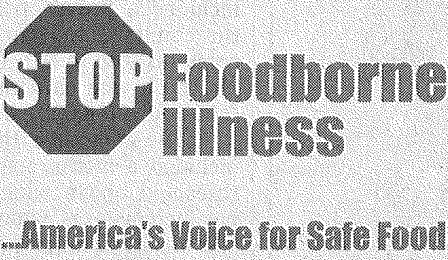
One of the many plants I visited was Beef Products, Inc. I got to know the owners, Eldon and Regina Roth, and was impressed by their complete commitment to the safety and wholesomeness of the meat products they produced. I was also impressed by the food safety culture they instilled throughout

their company. We shed tears together over what happened to Alex and realized how we share the common goal of preventing illness and death from foodborne pathogens. Ever since that moment, BPI has generously supported STOP and has never asked for anything in return.

That said, one point that needs to be perfectly clear is this: ***After what I personally experienced watching my son suffer and die, I am very skeptical and cynical about for-profit meat companies and their professed commitment to food safety.*** Not all companies “walk their talk.” BPI does.

There has been a lot of misinformation swirling around the Internet and on TV about lean beef trim produced by Beef Products, Inc. As I stated earlier, I have personally visited their plant and the categorization of calling their product “pink slime” is completely false and incendiary. Consumers need to understand that this product is meat, period, and that the use of ammonia hydroxide in minute amounts during processing improves the safety of the product and is routinely used throughout the food industry. There are many types of interventions including food-grade antimicrobial sprays which are used on all manner of foods. Some of these things may sound icky and gross, especially when inaccurately portrayed. These interventions are necessary in ridding meat of deadly pathogens and are required to prove they pose no threats to consumers. Companies would be prohibited by the USDA and FDA to use substances that could be harmful in human consumption.

I am very concerned that mis-categorization campaigns such as this “pink slime” campaign will cause well-intentioned companies such as BPI to cease innovations for developing better food safety technologies and strategies. Why try to do something better only to get set up as a target? If this does in fact happen, and promising technologies get thwarted, we, the American public, will be the losers. And tragedies like Alex will continue to go on and on and on.



“PINK SLIME” LIBEL TO COST THIS COUNTRY JOBS

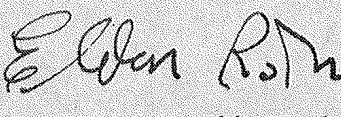
March 23, 2012

Before last summer, we could not have imagined the personal, professional, financial and spiritual impact of the campaign of lies and deceit that have been waged against our company and the lean beef we produce. But over the last several weeks, that campaign has been joined by entertainment media, tabloid journalists, so-called national news - and all to what end? The clear goal expressed by the campaign organizer - put BPI out of business.

It is simply amazing how this mis-information campaign can take a company and product that has long been recognized for its quality and safety and turn the public perception so negative that it now may result in the loss of over 3,000 jobs (direct employment and companies that rely upon our business) and affected their families and communities.

Our record is unsurpassed. NEVER has a foodborne illness been associated with our lean beef for over 30 years. In nearly 300,000,000,000 meals, we have been a recognized leader in food safety by groups such as the International Association for Food Protection. Look at the overwhelming support from food scientists, USDA officials, Consumer Advocate organizations, academia and customers we have received reaffirming the wholesomeness, nutrition and safety of our lean beef (<http://www.beefisbeef.com>). But, none of that seems to matter when the campaign has its own agenda.

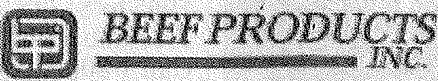
As the founder of the company, I can personally guarantee that in our 30 year history, we have never produced “pink slime.”


Eldon Roth
President & CEO



“It is simply amazing how this mis-information campaign can take a company and product that has long been recognized for its quality and safety and turn the public perception so negative that it now may result in the loss of over 3,000 jobs.”

ELDON ROTH
President & CEO



891 Two Rivers Drive | Dakota Dunes, South Dakota 57049 | (605) 217-8000
FOR MORE INFORMATION, GO TO BEEFISBEEF.COM.