

## Joining the Dots

On Jan 25<sup>th</sup>, you reported, “A product used to reduce pollution in Kiwi waterways has been pulled off the market after traces of it were found in New Zealand milk”. The product has been used widely to “reduce nitrogen leaching on dairy farms”, but where does the problematic nitrogen come from? Maybe we’ve been putting too many cows and too much urea (derived from natural gas) on our paddocks for too long? EPA’s hazardous chemical database says Dicyandiamide (DCD) – the product’s active ingredient – is “harmful in the soil environment”. So more cows, more urea, more nitrogen, more “anti-polluting” products, poorer soil and more urea needed... a vicious cycle!

Alarming indeed, DCD can cause cyanosis, i.e. bluish discoloration of skin from deficient oxygenation of blood. As a mother and regular milk consumer, I find it absurd that the reason for the withdrawal was not potential health risks, but “a possible trade risk”. If we follow this reasoning, what about the hundreds of products that the oil and gas industry use on our land? The Tag Oil story (on same front page) announced plans to drill up to 120 wells in Taranaki. Wake up, they’re not just drilling holes in the ground! Each operation will produce tonnes of chemical-laden wastes, much of it will be spread on our paddocks! What will foreign buyers think if they know where the premier milk they buy actually comes from? Risky.

Sent to Taranaki Daily News on 28 Jan 2013 in response to

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/farming/8220954/Fears-of-tainted-image-for-NZ-milk> and <http://www.stuff.co.nz/taranaki-daily-news/news/8221070/Tag-plans-40m-Taranaki-drilling-programme> Published on 4 Feb 2013.

## Milk safety serious

How can our prime minister or anyone be so sure that DCD in milk is safe for everybody? It is known that DCD can cause cyanosis, i.e. bluish discoloration of skin from deficient oxygenation of blood. Even if it is “safe” at the concentration found, shouldn’t we ask where all that problematic nitrogen came from that required the use of DCD in the first place? Could we have been putting too many cows and too much urea (derived from natural gas) on our paddocks for too long? EPA’s hazardous chemical database says DCD –the so-called “environmentally friendly” product – is “harmful in the soil environment”. So more cows, more urea, more nitrogen, more DCD, poorer soil and more urea needed... a vicious cycle!

If the current milk scare is considered ironic or unjust, we can expect to see more of it, as our governments continue to promote industrial farming and oil/gas extraction. On the latter, one must take note of the hundreds of chemical products that the industry use on our land. Each drilling operation produces tonnes of chemical-laden wastes, much of it is spread on our paddocks (as it's the case in Taranaki)! What will our overseas milk buyers think if/when they know what the cows have been grazing on? How will Key mollify them then?

Published in The Press on 31 Jan 2013, in response to <http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/opinion/editorials/8233089/Editorial-Milk-safety-serious>

## **Dairy trade risk**

The Ministry of Primary Industry's statement is totally irrelevant to the Chinese. The critical question is: Can the MPI, the ambassador or anyone truly guarantee that DCD in milk powder is safe for infants, bearing in mind that DCD can cause cyanosis, i.e. bluish discoloration of skin from deficient oxygenation of blood? Even if it is "proven safe" at the concentration found, the vast majority of Chinese will insist on zero tolerance to chemical residues when it comes to food for their precious babies, who wouldn't?

Talking about "perception issues", our government and producers will be battling more and more, as they continue to push for industrial farming and oil/gas extraction. On the latter, one must take note of the hundreds of chemical products that the industry use on our land. Each oil/gas drilling operation produces tonnes of chemical-laden wastes, much of it is spread on our pastures (as in the case of Taranaki, NZ's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest dairy producer)! What will our Chinese customers think when they find out what NZ cows have been grazing on? Much more than a perception issue.

Online comment on 31 Jan 2013 in response to

[http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=3&objectid=10862207](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=10862207)