JUNE 1975, A FARM IN CENTRAL MICHIGAN.

MIX-UP IN MICHIGAN

RAMIN ABHARI
How are we going to pay Susie's hospital bills now that we have no cows?
The Wilsons' cows also had PBB in their milk. Marge Wilson says we shouldn't bury the carcasses. PBB may get into our drinking water, you know...

...we all sold contaminated milk and meat for over a year... right? Did that man from Lansing say anything about all that?

I don't give a damn about any of that no more... my dairy farmer years are over and I have my little girl to take care of.
FOURTEEN MONTHS EARLIER (APRIL 1974) AT THE PRIVATE CHEMICAL ANALYSIS SERVICES FIRM OF CALIBRET, DETROIT, MICHIGAN

WHAT YOU GOT THERE GARY?

A FARMER SENT THIS SAMPLE OF HIS ANIMAL FEED. HE SAYS IT'S MAKING HIS COWS SICK AND THE VETS HAVEN'T A CLUE.

HE'S BEEN USING THE SAME KIND OF FEED FOR YEARS... GRAIN WITH MAGNESIUM OXIDE NUTRIENT. IT'S MADE BY A COMPANY IN BATTLE CREEK. HE INSISTS SOMETHING IS DIFFERENT, BUT THE MANUFACTURER SAYS NOTHING HAS CHANGED.
I BET THEY JUST SPRAYED SOME PESTICIDE ON IT BY ACCIDENT AND ARE BLAMING THE FEED!

SURE GARY. I’LL SHOOT AN EXTRACT THROUGH OUR G.C. AND MAYBE DRIVE OVER TO THE UNIVERSITY AND HAVE A MASS SPEC RUN THERE. THOSE PESTICIDES ARE MOSTLY CHLORINATED HYDROCARBONS AND EVEN PARTS PER MILLION SHOW UP IN MASS SPEC!

HAVE YOU SEEN HOW THOSE FARMERS GO CRAZY WITH THAT STUFF?!

DUNNO... WHAT’S WEIRD IS THAT THERE ARE OTHER DAIRY FARMERS WHO’RE ALSO COMPLAINING OF STRANGE ILLNESSES WITH THEIR HERDS. PROBABLY A COINCIDENCE.

OH, HE ALSO SENT THIS PICTURE OF ONE OF HIS CALVES... LOOK HOW THE HOOVES HAVE DEFORMED!

OH NO... IS IT A MUTAGENIC EFFECT?
Hi, this is Anna from Calibret. I dropped off a sample there for mass spectrometry... ok, I’ll hold.

Umm yes...

Oh... no chlorine?

Bromine?

But... ok... thank you!

Click!

Polybrominated biphenyl! What is that used for?? And what the hell is it doing in animal feed?
KNOCK! KNOCK!

Gary Sommer
DIRECTOR

COME IN!

I KNOW WHAT’S MESSING UP THOSE COWS... IT’S PBB.

WHAT?

POLYBROMINATED BIPHENYL. IT’S TOXIC LIKE CHLORINATED HYDROCARBONS... PROBABLY WORSE!

IF I ASSUME THE SAME RESPONSE FACTOR AS PCB, ITS CONCENTRATION IN THE SAMPLE IS ABOUT TWO PERCENT BY MASS.

OKAY! JUST WRITE A REPORT SUMMARIZING THE RESULTS. HAVE SANDY SEND IT TO THE DAIRY FARMER WITH OUR INVOICE.

GARY, AS LONG AS THE HERDS OF PBB COWS ARE BEING USED FOR MILK AND MEAT THERE’S A RISK TO PUBLIC HEALTH! WE NEED TO CONTACT USDA AND FDA IMMEDIATELY! IT MAY NOT BE TOO LATE TO STOP THE PBB MILK AND MEAT FROM MAKING IT TO THE SUPERMARKET SHELVES!
THIS STUFF DOESN'T GET PURGED FROM THE BODY...

--- IT CONCENTRATES IN FAT, PASSING FROM COW'S MILK TO PEOPLE, FROM MOTHERS' MILK TO BABIES...

YOU'RE NOT LISTENING, ANNA!

THE FARMER IS FREE TO CONTACT USDA OR WHOMEVER HE WANTS! YOU HAVE OTHER THINGS YOU NEED TO BE WORKING ON!
FOUR MONTHS EARLIER
(DEC. 1973) AT FARM
BUREAU SERVICES,
BATTLE CREEK,
MICHIGAN

CAN YOU
BELIEVE OHIO STATE
IS GOING TO THE ROSE
BOWL INSTEAD OF
US?

BUT THAT 10-10
TIE WAS A GREAT
GAME!

I TELL YOU- THE
WHOLE VOTE THING
WAS RIGGED AGAINST
MICHIGAN!

ANYWAYS, WE
ARE STARTING A
DAIRY-402 RUN. WE
NEED TO BLEND IN SIX
40-LB BAGS OF
MAGNESIUM OXIDE
PER 1-TON BATCH
OF GRAIN.

I’LL GO
GET THE
BAGS.

THE
MAGNESIUM OXIDE IS
LABELED NUTRIGUARD.
ALL BAGS OF NUTRIGUARD
ARE ON THE SAME
PALLETS.

WHAT "-GUARD"??
IT’S A WHITE
POWDER.

IS IT
ALSO
CALLED...
UMM...
FIREGUARD
?
Yeah it's a white powder.

OK then bring the bags. We need to start the batch.

After this bag, seal the hatch closed and press the green button to start the blend cycle.

I'm going for a smoke. You can start the next batch on the other blender.
THREE MONTHS EARLIER (AUG. 1973), MICHIGAN CHEMICAL, ST. LOUIS, MICHIGAN

HOW 'BOUT 'EM WOLVERINES?

I KNOW! IT’S GONNA BE A GREAT SEASON!

NOW GO GET THAT PALLETOF NUTRIGUARD WE NEED TO SHIP OUT!
SOME OF THE BAGS HAVE FALLEN OFF THE PALLET. COME GIVE ME A HAND!

I HAVE TO DO EVERY GODDAMN THING AROUND HERE!

HELLO ?!

BEEP!
BEEP!
THREE MONTHS EARLIER (MAY 1973), PLANT MANAGER'S OFFICE, MICHIGAN CHEMICAL, ST. LOUIS, MICHIGAN

MISS JOHNSON, WHAT'S ON THE AGENDA FOR TODAY'S MANAGERS MEETING?

MR. WILLIAMS, THE FIRST ITEM IS THE ISSUE OF OUR PRODUCT BAGS.

OUR SUPPLIER NO LONGER SELLS COLOUR BAGS... BUT THEY'LL GIVE US A DISCOUNT IF WE SWITCH TO BROWN BAGS. THE OTHER SUPPLIER IS 20% MORE EXPENSIVE!

YES, THE NAME IS STENCILLED ON EACH BAG AS IT COMES OFF THE PACKAGING LINE.

ALL BAGS ARE Labeled WITH PRODUCT NAME AND CODE, AREN'T THEY?

THEN I DON'T SEE WHY WE SHOULDN'T SWITCH TO BROWN BAGS FOR ALL PRODUCTS.

DO YOU THINK OUR CUSTOMERS WILL HAVE ANY OBJECTIONS?

I DOUBT IT. ALL THE CUSTOMERS CARE ABOUT IS WHAT'S INSIDE THE BAGS.... AND COST.
MISS JOHNSON, PLEASE NOTIFY SALES & MARKETING IN CHICAGO ABOUT OUR SWITCH TO BROWN BAGS FOR ALL PRODUCTS.

I’LL DRAFT THAT MEMO FOR YOUR SIGNATURE RIGHT AFTER THIS MEETING, MR. WILLIAMS.

NOW THAT WE’VE BAGGED THE BAGS...

OH-HO!

HAHA!

...WHAT’S NEXT ON THE AGENDA?
TWO YEARS EARLIER (MAY 1971) AT THE NORTHWEST INDUSTRIES ANNUAL SHAREHOLDERS MEETING, CHICAGO.

LET’S NOW MOVE TO OUR CHEMICALS OPERATIONS, VELSICOL AND MICHIGAN CHEMICAL.

THIS YEAR WE STARTED PRODUCTION OF FIREGUARD PBB...THE MOST EFFECTIVE FIRE-RETARDANT CHEMICAL ON THE MARKET!

THE ONLY WAY POLYURETHANE FOAM CUSTOMERS CAN MEET THE INCREASINGLY STRINGENT FIRE-CODES FOR MATTRESSES AND SOFAS IS BY USE OF FIREGUARD!

WE EXPECT THE FLAME-RETARDANT MARKET TO GROW AT 20% ANNUAL RATE THROUGH 1970s.

“WITH PRODUCTION OF PBB, WE ARE NOW FULLY EXPLOITING THE BRINE RESOURCES AT OUR MICHIGAN PLANT. THE RECOVERED MAGNESIUM, CALCIUM, CHLORINE, AND NOW BROMINE ARE TRANSFORMED INTO HIGHER VALUE PRODUCTS RANGING FROM PESTICIDES TO FOOD AND FEED ADDITIVES... LIKE OUR NUTRIGUARD MAGNESIUM OXIDE. SLIDE PLEASE!”
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THERE IS PROBABLY NO BETTER EXAMPLE OF CREATING SHAREHOLDER VALUE THAN THAT!

There is a question!

MR. MORRIS—ARE THERE ANY RISKS WITH HAVING BOTH THE FOOD ADDITIVE AND THE TOXIC CHEMICAL PRODUCTS MADE IN THE SAME PLANT? I MEAN, ISN’T THERE ANY RISK OF CROSS-CONTAMINATION?

THESE PRODUCTION UNITS ARE PHYSICALLY SEPARATE—NOT ONLY DIFFERENT EQUIPMENT BUT DIFFERENT BUILDINGS. THE RISK OF A TOXIC CHEMICAL ENDING UP IN A FOOD ADDITIVE IS VIRTUALLY NON-EXISTENT.

Next question?

The end