

Production and Consumption of Beef in Many Developing Nations

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Editorial

Beef is considered to be a very cheap source of meat in many developing nations including India. However, the unfortunate part is that in these nations beef cattle are not reared separately. The animals are usually either milch animals or beasts of burden. It is when these animals become old and are unable to provide any source of income (like milk or carry cargo on their back) to the farmers or owners then, these are sold to certain groups of peoples who slaughter them for the meat and the leather and the owners are paid some money for this. It must be remembered that by these time most of the animals are kept starving or are diseased with some form of illness. The picture below will illustrate such incidences (Figure 1).

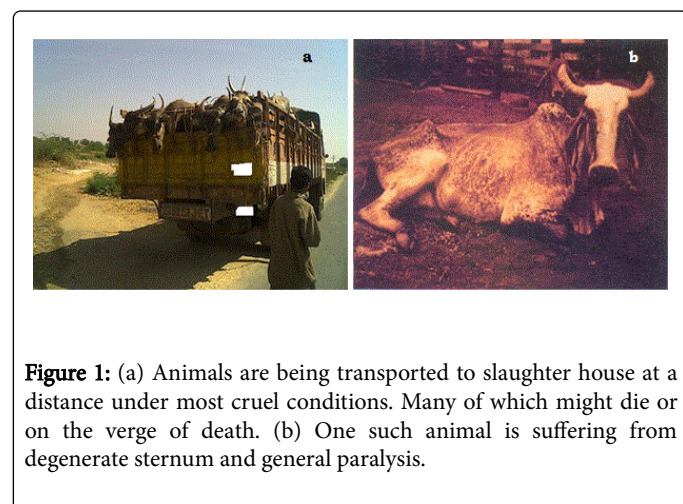


Figure 1: (a) Animals are being transported to slaughter house at a distance under most cruel conditions. Many of which might die or on the verge of death. (b) One such animal is suffering from degenerate sternum and general paralysis.

Since most of the people, who consume such cheap (costing less than one tenth of other good meat) beef, are very poor (living below the poverty line) and cannot afford to have lamb, goat or poultry meat, rarely realizes these sufferings of these animals.

Secondly, the quality of the beef is extremely inferior (so also is the leather produced from the skin of such animals). The meat is pretty

hard and would need some extra fuel to cook. Here too the cooking is compromised as these people cannot afford that extra fuel meaning that most of the time the meat is eaten partly cooked. The following picture will give a general idea of the nature of the meat (Figure 2).

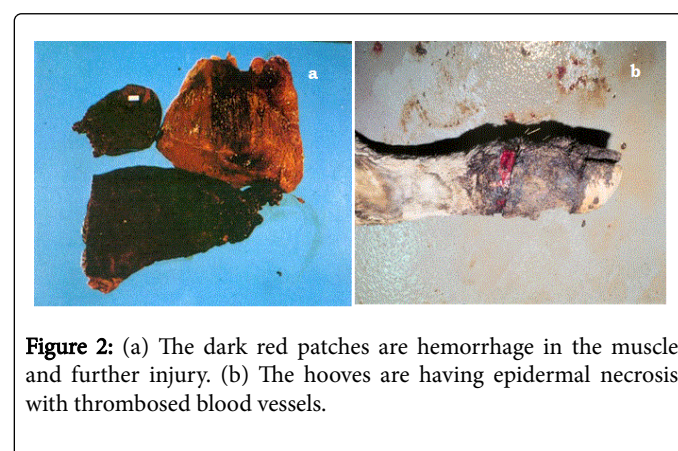


Figure 2: (a) The dark red patches are hemorrhage in the muscle and further injury. (b) The hooves are having epidermal necrosis with thrombosed blood vessels.

Consumption of such meat by humans is virtual scavenging. Now the question is what the solution to this is. The answer is that the governments must encourage both poultry farming and rearing of goat and sheep in large scale and suitably regulate the prices of such meat, to overcome such problem. On the other hand it should also educate the farmers that such infirm cattle must be killed painlessly and the cadavers be disposed of mostly by incineration. The ashes can be disposed by simple land fill procedures. A small part of the ashes can be also used to fertilize agricultural lands.

The government of my country has passed laws for such cattle slaughter but it is incomplete unless there is full comprehension of the scientific part of it. Secondly, these laws are being given political tints as the second half of it i.e., how to help the owners regarding disposing of such cattle is not yet defined, as the farmers cannot afford to feed these animals without any economic output.