

Avatar Update

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June 2015

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*A subscription newsletter
to bring you bits and pieces
that clarify understanding
as I come to learn more
in my own Rabbit Hole
discoveries*

Unintelligent Organisms

Well, we all know about organic food versus stuff sprayed with chemical pesticides. Someone sent me a YouTube recently which showed bystanders at a Monsanto protest being interviewed about whether they had heard of Monsanto and GMOs. Few had, if you can believe it (and we can!), although a Russian woman, who also spoke fluent English, said that her countrymen certainly knew a lot about GMOs and were well aware that they were bad for our health. The Americans on the scene watching the protest were the usual teenage layabouts and portly middle-agers, not concerned by and even amused at their own ignorance.

As Dumb and Dumber willingly chow down what chain restaurants serve them, local farmers markets continue to thrive. You can find one just about every single day in our larger cities, although you would have to drive a bit to get there. Still, it's worth getting to know the farmers by name, many of whom attend their stalls themselves and will tell you exactly where and how they grow their produce. The annual fee for "Certified Organic" in California is \$4000, and a percentage of your earnings too, I have heard, so many of the little guys have had to forego this privilege and assure customers they are organic in methodology and pesticide- or chemical-free. BUT – wait a minute! – you are not allowed to put up a sign that says "pesticide free" in this state; you can only explain this verbally to each person who comes to your stall. I personally watched a USDA agent order a farmer to take down his "pesticide-free" banner, with instructions never to hang it up again.

It's a racket! I just found out that the trippy Himalayan soapberries I order in bulk from a U.S. importer are certified organic in India where they are grown and harvested, but of course that does not matter to the USDA, which insists that the importer pay a certified organic fee of \$4000 per year to call label them "organic" in this country. Now, if I get the dried berries in bulk and weigh them and put them in 8-oz. bags to sell on my website, I am *not* allowed to call them

organic unless I pay the state of California \$4K per year to have this privilege. I can call them "botanical," I can call them "natural," even "100% natural," but I am not allowed to call them *organic*. Unless I pay all over again, even though the importer (located in a different state) has already had them inspected and declared "certified organic."

Who writes *these* rules, we wonder? It could only be the foxy foxes overseeing the henhouse, of course. They get you going and coming, is another way to put it, and we are by now so used to this we can really only shake our heads. No wonder the money is fake, printed out of nothing, for its use no longer has any meaning either. Nothing you buy is made to last, cars plunge in value as soon as you drive them off the lot, houses are badly built and cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, land is now near cell towers, and the vast numbers of permits, licenses, taxes and miscellaneous fees forced from us every month are like squishy monetary leeches permanently fastened to our lives. (If you have never used Himalayan soapberries to wash your clothes, you must try, for they are the best non-irritating, truly biodegradable, non-chemical, easy way to do laundry ... and cheap! Please see my website AvatarProducts.com.)

I recently learned about *primary water*, the endless stuff that forms under pressure deep beneath the earth's crust (for info go to PrimaryWater.org and PrimaryWaterInstitute.org). Wouldn't you know – *water renews itself*, and thus we have no water shortage, no matter what the foxes are shouting. There is a ton of water deep inside the earth, enough to refill the oceans three times. The stuff they have been diverting back and forth across the planet, making droughts here and floods there, is *secondary water*, based on evaporation/rain cycles that are now, of course, tremendously engineered. We are made to believe this is "all there is" and we wring our hands about if and how much it will rain. All those farmers whose lands are dry as bone, who have lost their crops to drought ... well, those farmers have plenty of water under their land, if only they would dig for it! But – wait a minute! – the foxes have got another rule: you cannot dig a well deeper than 100 feet, for *that* water belongs to the

government. The people do not have access to primary water; they are stuck with secondary water. As Kissinger is said to have said about oil and Arabs (it's far too important to allow them to control), the simple folk of the world should be allowed only to avail themselves of the small potatoes ... let them worry about stuff like rain.

This Little Matter of Chemicals

From a forgotten book called *Fateful Harvest* (author Duff Wilson, HarperCollins 2001), subtitled "The True Story of a Small Town, a Global Industry, and a Toxic Secret," you will discover that there is a dark, hidden twin to this issue of chemical pesticides—like another baby no one knew about, separated at birth and whisked off to be raised somewhere else. While the gong has banged long and loud about spraying produce with toxic chemicals to kill off bugs and yield a bigger harvest of perfect, unmarred fruits and veggies to bring to market (chemicals that end up in the soil from which the crops grow, to say nothing of in the crops themselves, and then inside us) ... no one seems to have heard of the other twin—*chemical fertilizers* laid on millions of acres of farmland over decades so that crops would grow plentifully and make farmers so proud. *Fateful Harvest* takes us to the little town of Quincy, Washington:

In June 1979, Dennis [DeYoung] put one-third cash down on the \$156,000 price of 140 acres... four miles from Quincy and 10 miles from his father's farm. [It] was one of the better pieces of ground that could be found for sale at that time.

...
Nature takes 500 to 1000 years to make an inch of topsoil from weathered rock and the decay of plants and animals. Dennis's soil was 10 to 90 feet deep in most places. The surface of the land had a gentle roll, good road access, and most important, water rights. ... Dennis held water rights to enough water to cover his land five feet deep each year. ... [He] was skilled and proud of his [farm]. He maintained all the equipment himself. When he flew overhead in the growing season, his field looked like a perfect green O. Flying higher, it was a dot among hundreds.

...
The early '80s were hard times to be a farmer in America – market prices fell to the dirt, inflation soared to the sky – but Dennis sailed through. His wheat crop was good in 1980, peas in 1981, sweet corn in 1982. Dennis's financial statements showed a net worth over \$387,000. [His] land was worth \$300,000, his mortgage was only \$100,000,

and his cash flow was as green as alfalfa. ... The next spring, Dennis planted peas, harvested them in midsummer and laid on buckwheat. Another nice crop and a happy fall. ... [His] net worth reached half a million ... he had an excellent 2:1 ratio of assets to liabilities. And he had a business plan to do \$593,000 in sales and turn \$95,000 in profits in 1985. No one doubted him.

...
It never happened. The hay drying in the field at [his second daughter's] birth marked the end. Dennis would not grow another profitable crop for 10 years.

In 1985 his pea harvest was only one-tenth of what he had been expecting. The soil was too hard and dry. The sprinkler water seemed to flow off the hillside instead of running into the ground. Then the hay crop in fall produced a paltry four tons an acre. Dennis blamed the weather. He knew these things happened in farming, and he had learned to roll with adversity. ... The rain would always come back. It was nature's law and more than anything, farmers live with nature's law.

And of course, they live with a lot of help—especially from the fertilizer company. In 1985, Dennis's unpaid bill for fertilizer, seed and other farm goods from Cenex Supply and Marketing in Quincy went from zero at the start of the growing season to \$50,912 in September. With his crops off, he couldn't keep up with the bills. Cenex had been giving Dennis a 7% discount for paying cash each month; now the company was charging him 18% interest. But that was business, and Dennis was confident he would bounce back, like so many farmers did.

It was not until years had passed that he looked back at the time his fortunes went bad and wondered about the fertilizer he'd bought in 1985. He kept all his Cenex bills. They showed a big difference in fertilizer prices that could not be explained by ordinary market forces. Dennis had paid 9 cents a pound, 4.5 cents a pound, and 2.5 cents a pound for the nitrogen content of three different fertilizers. He didn't know where they came from or why they varied so. He trusted the Cenex field man to sell him good products.

This is the really sad part, if you ask me. *He trusted the Cenex field man to sell him good products.* Don't we all? ...

trust the EPA, FDA, FCC, CDC, NIH, our senators and congressmen, corporate execs and salespeople ...that's how it's supposed to be.

Containing Our Waste

So as the story goes, before the 1980s, companies with toxic waste or "surplus chemicals" liked to pour it on vacant land. Why not? The land was just sitting there, doing nothing. But as America became more "environmentally conscious," states became more strict, mandating disposal or recycling of such wastes. (*Recycling* becomes a tricky word, as we shall see.) So Cenex built a cement-lined "rinsate pond."

The Cenex pond held 72,000 gallons. It filled up fast [with] brown liquid ... before the last frost. What was put in the pond? That was unclear. Some fertilizer. Some pesticides. Some unmarked cans of chemicals. Cenex didn't keep records of what went in the pond or what went out. The pond was tucked along the railroad track in a thicket of 10,000 gallon tanks used to store fumigants and liquid fertilizer. Some people thought Cenex used the rinsate pond to mix a variety of leftover chemicals to sell as low-grade fertilizer.

One summer Cenex hired Len Smith to work in the yard. As the new man, he was given the dirty chores. One of them was emptying rusty unmarked tins of unknown farm chemicals into the pond. Smith noticed the pond's depth fluctuated. Some nights it would be almost full to the top. The next morning, he'd be surprised to see the murky liquid had gone down a couple of feet – roughly enough to fill a tanker truck. Where did it go? He did not know. He thought it was hauled away and spread on the land somewhere. Len Smith never worried about it until he developed bone cancer some years later.

Cenex put a pump in the pond to spray the contents up in the air to speed evaporation. The fountain sprayed a shimmering mist of wastewater 20 feet high into the cobalt sky. It sprayed night and day. Sometimes the young people running around the track at the junior high school ... smelled the chemicals pickling the desert air. Sometimes the teachers did too, and complained about the smell.

John Williams, Cenex manager, handled the complaints with a stoic manner ... He didn't think

the smell was bad and he didn't think it would hurt anybody. Williams had been a Cenex man since he graduated from Quincy High School 20 years before.

The pond kept filling up. Len Smith was not the only one who said it went up and down, up and down, but Cenex had no [such] records ... and Williams didn't blink when he denied it. What was in the pond? Where did it go? Williams answered simply: *Fertilizer. Nowhere.*

Back to farmer Dennis DeYoung:

When times got tough, Cenex helped. ... They would give Dennis time to pay his bill and deliver fertilizer on account. Dennis took more of the cheaper fertilizers because he couldn't afford the better ones.

The stacks of yellow invoices from Cenex piled up on Dennis's desk. He owed for seed, fertilizer, gasoline, nuts and bolts, work gloves, and \$1.79 six-packs of soda pop ... Some months Dennis wouldn't even open the Cenex bill. He owed them \$20,000, then \$30,000, then \$40,000. The October 1987 bill said, "Please Pay This Amount: \$58,926.24" [next to] a smiley-face stamp in red ink. In all, with the bills for seed, chemicals, water, labor and equipment, the DeYoungs lost \$337,000 in 1987.

It took many painful years for Dennis to put two and two together and begin his personal investigation of the fertilizer companies. His father Jake, also a farmer, saw his barley crop die and three fields of corn turn purple. They blamed Cenex, the rinse-pond material, the so-called fertilizer. Who would have thought a company could be so creative? *It was more than a one-time deal*, Dennis told Cal Briggs, an inspector for the state department of agriculture. *Cenex had been dumping waste on him and others for years.*

Thanks to Patty Martin, the most unusual mayor of Quincy, the Cenex fertilizer scam began to get some real attention. Martin and Dennis DeYoung became fast friends and co-investigators, spending weeks and months in long discussion and trading of discoveries. This did not prevent Dennis from losing his land to Cenex itself for non-payment of his bills. *But who would want such tainted land?* ... for ruined it was from the stuff he had been using on his blighted crops in the desperate effort to make them grow.

Nature's Clean-up

Cenex planted Sudan grass on Dennis DeYoung's land. Notes the author: *Sudan grass is known as a good accumulator of heavy metals from the soil, a biological sponge.* A local Appaloosa breeder, Ruthann Keith, had been looking for grass to mix with the alfalfa and oats she fed her prize horses as they transitioned from pasture to stall for the coming winter. *You know, there's some grass hay not very far from you that Cenex has,* she was told by a counter clerk at the Cenex Supply store. *I don't think it's real expensive.* Ruthann ordered 40 tons of the dried grass, which came at a great price – \$1.50 per 70-pound bale.

She started feeding a little bit of Cenex's Sudan grass in November to wean the horses off the pasture. Then she mixed the Sudan grass with the rich alfalfa. The grass perfumed the air. She thought her Appaloosas would love it. They did. "They scarfed it right down," Ruthann said.

Some of the horses started losing weight ... suffering from diarrhea. Ruthann thought it was colic or too much calcium from the alfalfa. ... Maybe it was parasites, but after she wormed the horses, they looked worse. She didn't suspect the Sudan grass hay; in fact, she fed them more to try to fatten them up. They just got sicker. Lesions developed on their long necks and broad shoulders. ... Sunshine was the first one to get desperately sick. Ruthann put Sunshine on some bran and banamine [anti-inflammatory used for horses]. She got a little better. Then she got a lot worse. One day the horse strained so hard to move her bowels, she ruptured, and her intestines spilled out on the barn floor.

...

The day before Sunshine's death, Ma had started showing signs of distress.... The old horse worried and fretted and started straining like Sunshine had. The next morning, after one of the worst nights of her life, Ruthann knew she couldn't let Ma suffer like Sunshine had. She led the mare to the place out back where horses were buried on the farm, crying all the way. She could hardly see ... to put a bullet in the gun.

...

A horse named Missie was the next to get desperately ill. She was about 20 years old and pregnant, one of the last producing daughters of a national champion named Bear Paw. Ruthann started popping Missie with banamine and mash

and forcing fluids, but the mare lay down and stayed there. Horses and cows can lie on the ground to take a nap, but if they stay down too long, their digestive organs stop working.

...

In January, Ruthann stopped feeding the Sudan grass hay to her horses. A month or so later, she was in town [at the post office] and saw Dennis DeYoung getting into his rig. *Hey Dennis!* Ruthann hollered. ... *I understand you bought some of that Cenex hay,* said Dennis. *I knew I should have called you last fall ... we think they dumped something on that circle out there.* ... Dennis said he didn't know what. The field man Dave Nerpel had warned him. Cenex was calling it fertilizer, but the chemicals came out of the waste pit.

Ruthann went home and called her veterinarian. He'd never dealt with reactions to toxic chemicals; he suggested she call the state health department. Somebody there suggested she call the EPA, where somebody else put her in touch with a toxicologist, an expert in poisons. Ruthann described the weight loss, diarrhea, sores and organ rupture [of her horses]. She said the toxicologist told her they were classic symptoms. She asked where she could send the hay to be checked. He told her a tox screen would cost about a thousand dollars a horse unless she knew what she was looking for. *Well, I got sixty head of horses out here. There's no way I got \$60,000 to find out what's in those horses.*

Pollution, Dilution, Solution

It was inspector Cal Briggs who confirmed what DeYoung, Mayor Martin and Ruthann Keith suspected: *He said he'd found out the state department of agriculture had licensed industrial waste as fertilizer.* But nearing retirement, Briggs was not keen on investigating further, although he came to Quincy to take pictures of the dead growth on the 100-acre circle of land that Cenex had put its pond waste on. *He thought it looked like chemical damage. The soil pH had dropped in two years from 7.9 to 5.6.*

When *Seattle Times* journalist Duff Wilson (author of the *Fateful Harvest* book) got word of the Quincy farmland problem, he did a little digging and learned there was no federal regulation on what went into fertilizer:

There was a limit on the amount of lead in paint,

but not in fertilizer. There was a limit on the amount of dioxin in cement, but not in fertilizer. There was a limit on arsenic in industrial slag, but not in fertilizer. The [California Heavy Metal Task Force] notes showed manufacturers asking state officials to declare the polluted skimmings from metal smelters exempt from standards for hazardous wastes if they ... were put in fertilizer. It was agreed. They would use the loophole of calling a waste “a product.”

...

Fly ash is a waste collected from filters, scrubbers, and other pollution-control equipment in coal-fired power plants. ... Midwest and East Coast industries were cleaning up their smokestack [residues] only to lay the waste on agriculture. Pennsylvania industry alone recycled 4 million tons of coal ash and 2.1 million tons of a similar material called flue dust from smokestacks every year. Railcars packed with fly ash rumbled to the West. They dumped it on California farms ... saving the \$65 per ton cost of burying it in a landfill. California growers bought the gray chalky material under names like *Lime Plus*. They spread it around fruit crops and lawns and gardens.

...

Liming improved biological activity, nitrogen fixation and phosphorus availability in the soil. [Heavily farmed] California needed a lot of lime. [But] fly ash [was not] natural limestone and posed more risk to people. The ash contained mercury, molybdenum, selenium and dioxins, and none of the toxics were disclosed to consumers.

Chemical companies on the selling end were calling it “bulk soil amendments” and laughing all the way to the bank. They obtained the waste for cheap (or even free) and packaged it to sell to farmers. *One feature of heavy metals is that they stay in the topsoil, where plants grow. ... Agriculture is being used by some industries as a dumping ground for their hazardous waste – lead, cadmium, other heavy metals. Sources of these by-products are flue dust and baghouse dusts from zinc smelters, copper recycling plants, steel mills ... another major source is spent acids from the galvanizing industries.*

It was called *recycling*. Micronutrients. Soil naturally contains trace amounts of zinc, iron, manganese, copper boron, magnesium and dozens of other earth elements that biological organisms themselves use in trace amounts. But somebody had a brainwave ... take industrial toxic waste, skip the huge disposal fees, just spread it out all over the

land—because it’s all there anyway!

“When it goes into our silo, it’s a hazardous waste. When it comes out of the silo, it’s no longer regulated. The exact same material. Don’t ask me why. That’s the wisdom of the EPA.” Richard Camp, Jr. talking. One of the top hazardous-waste-to-fertilizer dealers in the nation. ... His father’s story was the start of the hazardous-waste-to-fertilizer business in America.

Richard Camp, Sr. was the guy with the brainwave. He had a thriving galvanizing business in Tacoma, Washington during WWII, rustproofing chains and anchors for the Navy. The steel pieces would be dipped in a vat of molten zinc, and impurities that collected from oxidation would be skimmed and dumped in barrels that sat out back. The skimmings stayed in Camp’s shop yard as his government contracts ended and he struggled to create other work. One day he saw a white powder called zinc sulfate and learned it was a fertilizer for apple trees, Washington’s top crop.

Camp, Sr. [realized] he had some wasted stuff sitting around in the barrels that he could use as a raw material to make some money. He sold an alternative to the white powder of virgin zinc. Camp started selling the processed waste to apple growers. ... When his own barrels were empty, he bought zinc skimmings from the galvanizing companies in the Seattle area. ... He developed a dry zinc product to mix with regular fertilizer for row crops. He educated the farms on zinc deficiencies. They started asking their fertilizer blenders for more zinc. And when there weren’t enough zinc skimmings around the Pacific Northwest to fill the demand, Camp, Sr. came across a new source of zinc.

It was the electric arc furnace used to reclaim steel from recycled cars. Writes Duff: *Today in the United States, 60 percent of junk cars are recycled in electric arc furnaces. The steel industry takes 45 million tons of ferrous scrap off the American landscape each year.*

Every time the steel is melted to purify its main ingredient—iron—the contaminants are concentrated in a toxic waste. The zinc, cadmium, chromium, arsenic, lead and dioxins go to fume at a lower temperature than iron melts. Up the chimney they rise. ... To prevent air pollution ... the dust is cooled and collected in a structure called a baghouse. The dust is typically 10 to 20%

zinc from galvanized parts of the car, like the door handles. It's about 3% lead, 0.5% cadmium, and sky-high in dioxins from incinerated plastic. In the end, about 1.5% of the weight of the recycled steel ends up in the baghouse. The 45 million tons of scrap metal leaves 650,000 tons of hazardous waste a year.

Fertilizing the Language

The loophole that lets toxic waste become fertilizer: *Under state and federal law, wastes that can be utilized as effective substitutes for commercial chemical products do not have to be treated or handled as hazardous wastes.* Writes Wilson:

Environmental agencies were promoting toxic waste recycling, and fertilizer companies were helping to spread it around and mix it in. They were not checking for toxic chemicals. They could not know what was safe. There was almost no scientific research on the subject. There was no way for buyers to know what they were really getting.

Illness-like cancer-developing in rural areas, afflicting people in clusters, many of whom were farmers, was termed *idiopathic*—"strange." That was it, and that is how it has remained. We hear so much about chemical pesticides and going organic to keep your body clean, but for all those decades, before the pesticide/herbicide mania, we were being sold produce grown in soil that was being laced with deadly materials from dirty industries. I guess that's how innocent people are: the farmers trust their sales reps and the consumers trust the farms and the stores, believing the watchdog agencies of the government are setting standards for things. It takes horrific personal loss for a few to wake up, as a couple of farmers in Quincy, Washington did.

In one case, Burlington Northern Railroad bragged it had saved over \$10,000 in testing and disposal costs for 1200 gallons of used sulfuric acid and 3400 gallons of caustic soda by giving it to a trucking company. No one knew what the trucking company did with it.

The farmer Tom Witte best described the practice in understandable terms: "What's crazy about the department of ecology is they are so much on the side of the companies. ... It's part of the system. This is how they get rid of the stuff. This is how they get it done. They put it on the ground. I think when you dig deep enough, you find out that

everybody is involved. EPA is involved. Everybody is involved."

We have all seen the gangsta movies with the men in black suits chomping cigars and making deals. If someone gets in the way of a deal, you "take care of him." Someone so-and-so knows will agree to a sum of money to do the *caring*. There are people you can call for that kind of thing, the movies tell us, and our study of conspiracies has also made this abundantly clear.

In the world of commerce, lots of flotsam and jetsam companies are happy to do all kinds of creative *caring*. If you can make hay out of another man's garbage, paying little or nothing at all for the *raw material*, well that's like getting gold for free! And if you can wear a cap on your head for others to see that lets them know you are in the business of *recycling*, the whole world will smile at you! There's nothing like doing what's beneficial for everybody.

He spoke so quietly, I wondered if he was afraid of being spied on in his own office. "The industry has a lot riding on saying this recycling is beneficial. If you start looking at this, you'll open a can of worms. You have to be very, very careful. These industries are very powerful. They have lobbyists who can get the federal government to change the rules to suit them."

He is a government agent the author met with. As I flip through the rest of the book (I haven't quite finished), I see that certain limits were eventually set by certain states, but those who are really in the know realize that *all that this does is legalize an unsafe practice*. It's where we are in the RFMW (wireless) world: The government's guidelines are *10 million times higher* than those recommended in the 2012 BioInitiative Report. Accepting studies paid for by the telecom industry (ha ha), the feds feel they have done their job, and our bodies continue to fry. *Fateful Harvest* was released by the giant HarperCollins in 2001, but was instantly eclipsed by that other big event of the year (you have one guess). And so this ugly practice continues as we rattle on in our *cage aux folles*, rolling through the universe in tar of karma we can't seem to get out of.