

Risk Communication Risk Perception and Human Behavior



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Free Trade has to be Safe Trade



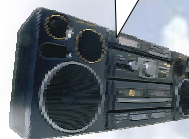
Sunday Times

27/02/2005



Evidence Based Policy?

Carcinogen in
Baby Food



Political response in proportion to
media interest rather than risk

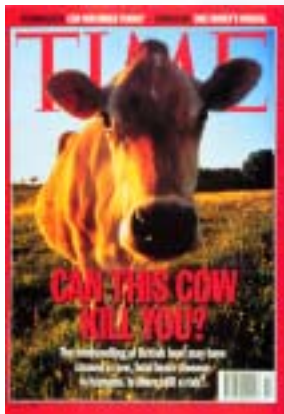


1990-"There is no risk to public
health from British beef!"

TRUST?

Mr John Gummer UK Minister of
Agriculture and his daughter





Media and Risk Amplification



Why do people worry about certain risks and ignore others?

How people process and internalise risk?

SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY

By
Patrick Wall



- Involuntary
- Catastrophic outcome-Dread factor
- Disproportionate affect on children
- Inevitably fatal consequences
- Scientific uncertainty
- Government miss-management

Slovic 1989

Nuclear power

The Sequel:- BSE in sheep



BSE Was the Switch



Food Safety Agencies



EU Purchase for Destruction Scheme Jan – June 2001



278,000
animals

90,500 tonnes
carcass beef

>400 Million
Euros

Belgian Dioxin Crisis 1999



1st They Lost £1.5 Billion – Food Ind. “Freefall”

2nd They Lost Two Ministers

3rd They Lost a Government

4th US banned certain food lines from entire EU

Food Safety Authority withdraws Belgian chocolates



“The FSAI has been in existence
two years, are the turkeys safer
this year than they were last year?”

Turkeys can be
contaminated with
Salmonella and
Campylobacter

Risk communication on its own- not enough

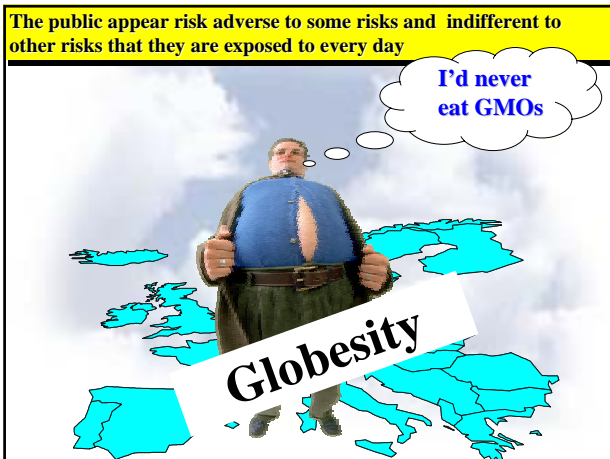


Don't tell me about
risks tell me that
you have
eliminated them

I Wonder will I get
Creutzfeldt Jakob
Disease from this
stuff?

What a Mouthful!





Risk communication

- Crisis communication V “Peace Time” communication
- Communication to citizens to enable them better manage their individual risk
- Communication to politicians and policy makers to enable them better manage societal risk

Risk Communication in EU?

Science based?



27 member states with different:

- Attitudes to Food
- Attitudes to Food Safety
- Attitudes to Risk
- Attitudes to Regulations
- Attitudes to Compliance
- Attitudes to Awareness Campaigns



- What is the relationship between risk perception and behaviour?
- If you change peoples’ risk perception do you change their behaviour?
- Do people have insufficient information to make optimal decisions?

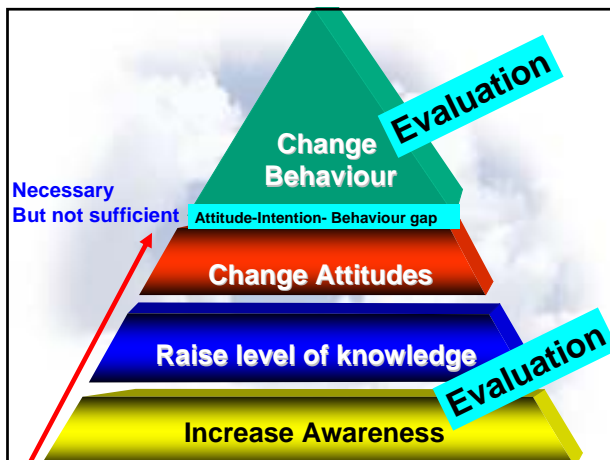
Risk behavior different in different domains



Binge drinking

Knowledge no guarantee for less risk taking

- Social lubricant
- Culture
- Peer pressure
- Others behaviour-cue for Acceptability
- Unrealistic optimism



Risk and Research Funding? Scientists



Confused Risk Managers & Frightened Consumers

Safe

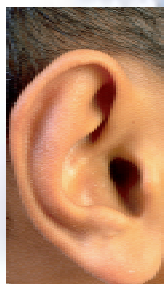
Dangerous

- Evaluation of risk communication strategies?
- Meaningful risk perception metrics?
- Why certain risks in society are neglected and others given extreme attention?
- Risk communication/ PR/spin/2 way?
- **Risk managers response crucial!**

We might succeed with the younger generation



Engaging the public



Listen...

Internet panels

<http://geary.ucd.ie/behaviour>



Build the “Brand”



European Food Safety Authority



<http://www.efsa.europa.eu>