

Risk Communication Risk Perception and Human Behavior



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Free Trade has to be Safe Trade



Sunday Times

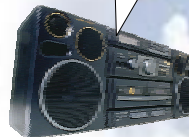
27/02/2005

SUDAN 1: THE BUNGLES THAT PUT POISON ON OUR PLATES

Analytical capability
Parts per Billion

Evidence Based Policy?

Carcinogen in
Baby Food



Political response in proportion to
media interest rather than risk

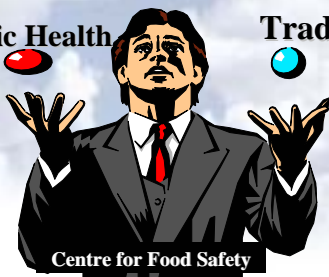
Consumer Confidence

Science

Politics

Public Health

Trade



Centre for Food Safety

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

TRUST?

Mr John Gummer UK Minister of
Agriculture and his daughter





Why do people worry about certain risks and ignore others?
 How people process and internalise risk?

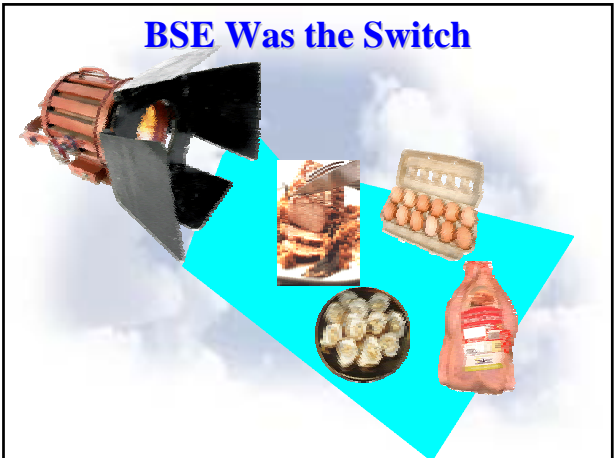
SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY

By Patrick Wall

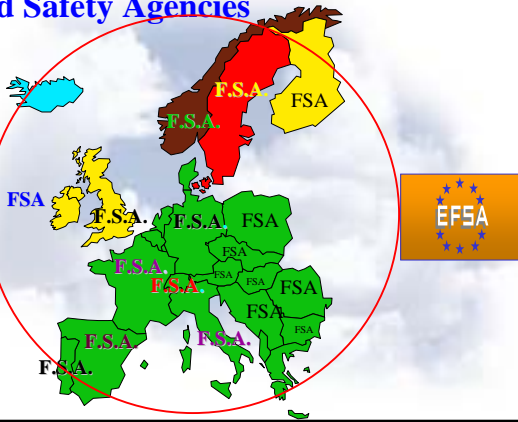
- Involuntary
- Catastrophic outcome-Dread factor
- Disproportionate affect on children
- Inevitably fatal consequences
- Scientific uncertainty
- Government miss-management

Slovic 1989

Nuclear power



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



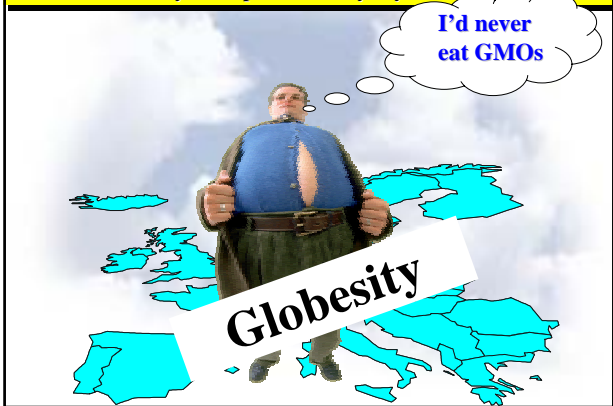
Don't tell me about risks tell me that you have eliminated them

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

What a Mouthful!



The public appear risk adverse to some risks and indifferent to other risks that they are exposed to every day



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?

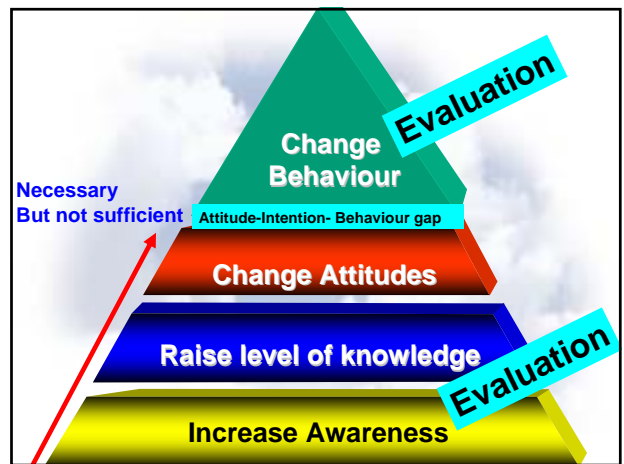
Risk behavior different in different domains

Knowledge no guarantee for less risk taking

eg Excessive alcohol consumption

Binge drinking

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



Risk and Research Funding? Scientists

No risk:
No
money!

High
risk!

**Confused Risk Managers &
Frightened Consumers**

Safe

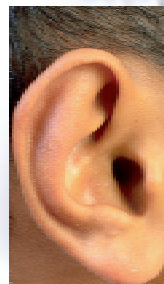
Dangerous

- 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>