

For immediate release
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HOW MANY IN THE NUCLEAR SACRIFICE ZONE?

In response to the rising possibility of a disaster greater than Chernobyl, the USA and EU are considering raising the allowable level of radiation in food. As it presently stands, the allowable level of nuclear radiation exposure does not protect the most vulnerable populations, the fetus, the infant and small child, the adolescent, women especially if pregnant, the elderly and immune compromised. Only fatal cancer is considered in calculating health risks by those who follow the suggested dose limits developed by the International Commission on Radiation Protection (ICRP), even though there is a long list of health effects from nuclear radiation, in addition to cancer. Effects of cumulative exposures are ignored. Evidence of damage from very low doses of ionizing particles from the fission process in nuclear reactors is also ignored.

To arbitrarily increase the allowable level in food will greatly increase the damage to the health of every individual throughout the prodigious area of fallout from meltdowns and resulting explosions at Fukushima.

On April 8, Reuters reported that “the core of Fukushima's nuclear reactor may have melted through the reactor core pressure vessel.” There was nothing on the newscasts on the CBC on that date. However, it was mentioned by U.S. Rep. Edward Markey at the hearing on the disaster in the American House of Representatives. He said that he was informed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) that the core had gotten so hot that part of it was probably melted.

Serious danger still exists at Fukushima Daiichi reactors from the threat of criticality and serious meltdowns. The molten core material could burn uncontrollably through the concrete foundation accessing ground water that would turn it into steam from the extremely high heat in a confined space.

On the same date, Mary Olson, of the Nuclear Information and Resource Service (NIRS) quoted from Al Jazeera “People are acting like the worst is over and that is just not understanding the real issues here as far as the radiological impacts.” On April 9, Mary Olson pointed out that “since Unit two is showing signs of fission happening, the chances of something more catastrophic happening at that site are increasing.” She also fears that if core meltdowns get to the groundwater under the plant, “there will be an explosive force that is like putting dynamite under the site. The problem is, if you get this molten fuel into that water, it could cause a steam explosion.” She also pointed out that the fuel pool in Reactor Unit three is gone. “There is no fuel there. Where did it go?”

While Japan is about 8,000 kilometres (5,000 miles) from Canada and the continental USA, and while Alaska is closer, a serious accident at Fukushima is likely to send radioactive plumes that could reach North America within about 36 hours. Heightened levels of nuclear radiation, particularly Iodine 131, have already been detected in a number of states in the USA and in British Columbia, Ontario, New Brunswick and Newfoundland in Canada.

How can it be justified to attempt to dismiss the danger of radiation to such huge populations by raising the allowable level of radiation in food?

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