

Dairies cut synthetic hormone use

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- Consumer complaints are prompting dairy farmers to halt the use of synthetic growth hormones, say firms such as Wal-Mart and General Mills.

The move by the \$110 billion dairy industry is overdue, said Marion Nestle, a nutrition expert and author of the book "What to Eat."

"Why screw around with milk, of all things?" Nestle said to USA Today.

Recombinant bovine somatotropin has been used for years to spur cows to produce more milk. While federal food and drug officials say there is no health risk to humans, studies show the synthetic hormone may harm cows, USA Today reported Monday.

Monsanto made the hormone until selling that part of its business to Eli Lilly (NYSE:LLY) in 2008. General Mills, Dannon and Wal-Mart say their milk producers are eliminating the hormone because of rising consumer fears over food safety.

"Companies do bow to the will of consumers," Gary Hirshberg, chief of Stonyfield Farm, which has never used synthetic hormones, told USA Today.

Japan, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and many European countries ban the use of synthetic growth hormones in milk products, the newspaper said.

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