

# The consequences of nuclear energy:

Flying and swimming radioactive waste, caused by Sellafield  
Radioactive sheep and mushrooms, caused by the Chernobyl disaster

## Activist blockade start congress on new nuclear power plants Contaminated food from nuclear hotspots distributed

On this moment 15 activists from the Dutch National Platform Against Nuclear Energie (LPTK) blockade the entrance to Fort Kijkduin (Den Helder) where more than 100 participants gather to start a three day congress on new reactor technology, organised by the Dutch Energy Centre (ECN). Motto: **'no safe place for nuclear lobbyists'**

### On the menu: fish!

Since 1994, there has been regular sampling of **fish** in Norwegian territorial waters. During this period, no marked development in the concentration of caesium-137 has been found in the fish. However, there has been a slight geographical change: lower concentration in fish from the Barents Sea and higher concentration in fish from the North Sea. This is, in particular, due to a higher concentration of cesium-137 in the water in the North Sea, which originates from the Irish Sea sediments as a consequence of discharges from Sellafield.

### On the menu: pigeons!

On February 11, 1998, more than 150 **pigeons** living near to its reprocessing plant in Sellafield were found to be radioactive. The alert started when an inspector was called in to cull some birds at a pigeon sanctuary in Seascale (2 miles from Sellafield) and decided to send some for analysis at British Nuclear Fuels Ltd (BNFL), the owner of Sellafield. A BNFL spokeswoman confirmed they had tested around 150 of the dead birds and found significant levels of radiation. One month later Greenpeace tested a number of birds removed from the pigeon sanctuary. The tests at a laboratory in France found "dangerously high" levels of radioactive chemicals, including caesium. High levels of plutonium were also found in the feathers of the birds. "A health threat to anyone handling the birds" (University of Bremen). The Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment (Comare) and the Radioactive Waste Management Advisory Committee say: "It is unacceptable that the Sellafield site has been managed in a way that pigeons became contaminated to the extent that property away from Sellafield also became significantly contaminated." Other UK government agencies warn that other wildlife, such as insects, may also spread nuclear waste from nuclear sites into people's homes and gardens. Eight different Government departments, regulators, advisory committees and the local council have been involved in producing a whole stack of reports, yet no sanction has been imposed on BNFL for its failure to contain its wastes – possibly for long as 20 years or more. BNFL has clearly failed in this responsibility, and the regulators have failed for many years to check them. The reports document actions to cull the pigeons and prevent them reaching radioactive waste, but they do not explain why

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BNFL and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) took no action to stop the spread of nuclear contamination by wildlife in the past. The reports calculate that the dose to the women who fed the pigeons at Seascale was around 600 microsieverts in the year before the contamination was discovered. This is more than twice as high as the official estimated dose from Sellafield to the "critical group" (the people expected to be those most exposed to radiation from the plant).

### **On the menu: cheese!**

The radioactivity from the Chernobyl nuclear disaster continues to impact not just the people of the Ukraine but those who live many thousands of kilometres away from the infamous power station. In the UK, restrictions have been placed on almost 400 farms - most of them in Wales - controlling the movement of **sheep**. Britain's Food Standards Agency (FSA) warned that the measures, which are designed to prevent contamination of other livestock and the human food chain, could continue for another 15 years at least.

### **On the menu: mushrooms!**

"When speaking about Chernobyl and the worsening health situation of the population in Belarus, one should not consider the radiological factor alone. Other things should be also seriously considered. First of all, stress and confusion related to the forced evacuation - whole communities had to leave forever their native places, where they had spent their lives and where they had to leave behind the graves of their loved ones. Second, after the accident the lives of the people were limited by a series of restrictions - they couldn't walk in the forests, swim in the lakes or pick **mushrooms** and wild berries. Third, people simply didn't know anything about radiation and didn't understand the danger. They were very scared and confused. So, this added greatly to the stress and shock and influenced badly their health ", says Vladimir Masyakin, Chief of the Mobile Units of the Gomel regional specialised dispensary (Radiation Medicine Centre).

**STOP NUCLEAR ENERGY!**

**END ALL NUCLEAR INITIATIVES!**

**Return home and don't go to the conference!**