

Depression, vitamins and healthy soil

Why farmers have such a vital role

By ANON

On Tuesday December 7, 2004, an article appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (page 3) that was frankly very worrying. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, hypertension is the most common chronic health problem faced by patients followed by depression, diabetes, lipid disorders and osteoarthritis.

Furthermore, the statistics show that these chronic problems have been steadily increasing since 1999. In this article I want to discuss the relationship between depression and nutrition and why soils rich in soil humus, vitamins and minerals play such an important role in providing humanity with the best health care possible – namely wholesome food.

DEFICIENCIES LINKED TO DEPRESSION

Quality food, rich in minerals and vitamins, has a vital role to play in providing the means to achieve good health. There has been a lot of research and evidence to suggest that deficiencies in the fatty acid Omega 3, Vitamins (B1, B5, B6 and H) and a number of nutrients (lithium, chromium, vanadium, magnesium, selenium, calcium and iodine), can exacerbate depression.

For example, in one study conducted by Schrauzer in 1990, suicide rates across 27 counties in Texas, USA, between 1978-1987 increased from 8.7 to 14.8 per 100,000 as the lithium concentration in the drinking water supply dropped from 70-160 to 16-60 ug/L (statistically significant). It is also interesting to note that lithium deficiency is aggravated by high sugar consumption.

FOOD TYPES

There are a number of food types that contain greater amounts of vitamins than others (see table)

It is interesting to note that the better the soil humus development and mineral balance, the higher the levels of Omega 3 in the pasture-fed beef.

EFFECT OF HUMUS

In a number of studies between 1935 and 1955, Russian researchers made startling discoveries linking the vitamin levels in food with microbial activity and humus levels of the soil. Some of the results concluded that:

- more B group vitamins are found in plants grown on humus rich soil;
- the greatest accumulation of vitamins occurred in leguminous plants;
- highest amino acid levels found in lucerne crops grown with manures;
- cultivated soils contain more vitamin B1 and vitamin H than virgin soils;
- vitamins (B1, B5, B6 and H) and folic acid are produced by a wide variety of soil microbes;
- these vitamins are absorbed by crops – especially vitamins B1 and B6;
- vitamins produced by micro-organisms persist in the soil from three to 20 days;
- vitamin B1 increases root growth in linseed, whiteclover, buckwheat and lucerne by up to 50%;
- vitamin B6 stimulates sunflower growth, and
- vitamin B1 also increases spinach leaf size.

These results indicate the importance soil humus has in creating an environment favourable to healthy plant growth. Soil humus provides a stable environment for beneficial fungi and bacteria to naturally establish. When this occurs, these microbes then produce a wide array of amino acids and vitamins that are quickly absorbed through the roots by the young crop.

Some people are sceptical about the relationship between nutrition and the onset of depression. They prefer to take prescription drugs like Prozac that boosts the amount of serotonin in the brain.

I believe prescription drugs should only be used as a last resort as they often treat the symptom and not the cause of the problem. In addition, these drugs can often pass through the septic system to potentially damage the environment. I think food produced from humus-rich soil is under-rated and can play a significant role in reducing depression and other chronic diseases. After all, you are what you eat. ■

ELEMENT	WHICH FOODS
Omega 3	Linseed, walnuts, pasture-fed beef, fish, green leafy vegetables
Vitamin B1 (Thiamine)	Pork, poultry, milk, whole wheat and rice
Vitamin B5 (Pantothenic acid)	Legumes, vegetables, whole wheat
Vitamin B6 (Pyridoxine)	Fish, meat, leafy vegetables, potatoes, fruits, whole wheat
Vitamin H (Biotin)	Egg yolk, cheese, spinach, nuts, green herbs, whole wheat