Process Paper

Linnea already had plenty of interest in prions before; her father had studied them for several years, and her mother had given a book on the subject. The book, *The Pathological Protein*, by Philip Yam, was our gateway to understanding the science and history of prion diseases. So Linnea turned to Mad Cow disease as our topic, one she could happily explain to the people around me. Benjamin had limited knowledge on the subject, but was eager to learn .

Our research started long before this year, when Linnea first read Philip Yam’s book in 2013, ten years after it was published. Linnea did further research online, but it was not until this year when Linnea started our project that we began to look deeper into the history. We were desperate to find primary sources, so we turned to looking up what Mr. Yam had cited in his book. That enabled us to reach far into government sources from the UK and US. We collaborated on taking notes and deciding the value of our sources. Benjamin found a wonderful source with some of the statistics we had been looking for.

Since we were limited in what we could do in the classroom, and had few pictures to support our story, we decided to create a website. But we did not have greatest time designing it, as we soon found that primary photographs are hard to come by. There are actually plenty of pictures, microscopic and detailed slices of spongy brains from cows, mice and humans. We did, however, have a tough time finding photographs of affected cows and the symptoms they presented.

Finding out how our topic relates the current theme was not difficult, once, it was explained what ideas could have connections to each part of the theme. Exchange was easy; Mad Cow Disease started in the UK in the 1970s, and through lack of oversight, no extensive knowledge of its dangers to humans, it eventually spread to countries around the world, leading to bans on exports and products from the UK. The exchange was not just in goods, but also in words. The European Commission and countries everywhere reacted to a new and very real threat. Consumers changed what they bought and ate, and their decisions prompted change from their governments. Expansion also links to the exports and the disease’s spread across the globe. Exploration has been one of the most fascinating. The disease was new, unlike the scrapie or CJD, but it was just as dangerous. Researchers and experts hastened to find whether the disease was a threat to humans. It was, and the deaths of young people in the UK caused even more research to begin.