

Scared to Death

From BSE to Global Warming: Why Scares are Costing Us the Earth

This book for the first time tells the inside story of each of the major scares of the past two decades, showing how they have followed a remarkably consistent pattern. From salmonella in eggs to BSE, from the Millennium Bug to bird 'flu, from DDT to passive smoking, from asbestos to global warming, 'scares' have become one of the most conspicuous and damaging features of our modern world. This book for the first time tells the inside story of each of the major scares of the past two decades, showing how they have followed a remarkably consistent pattern. It analyses the crucial role played in each case by scientists who have misread or manipulated the evidence; by the media and lobbyists who eagerly promote the scare without regard to the facts; and finally by the politicians and officials who come up with an absurdly disproportionate response, leaving us all to pay a colossal price, which may run into billions or even hundreds of billions of pounds. The book culminates in a chillingly detailed account of the story behind what it shows has become the greatest scare of them all: the belief that the world faces disaster through man-made global warming. In an epilogue the authors compare our credulity in falling for scares to mass-hysterias of previous ages such as the post-mediaeval 'witch craze', describing our time as a 'new age of superstition'.



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