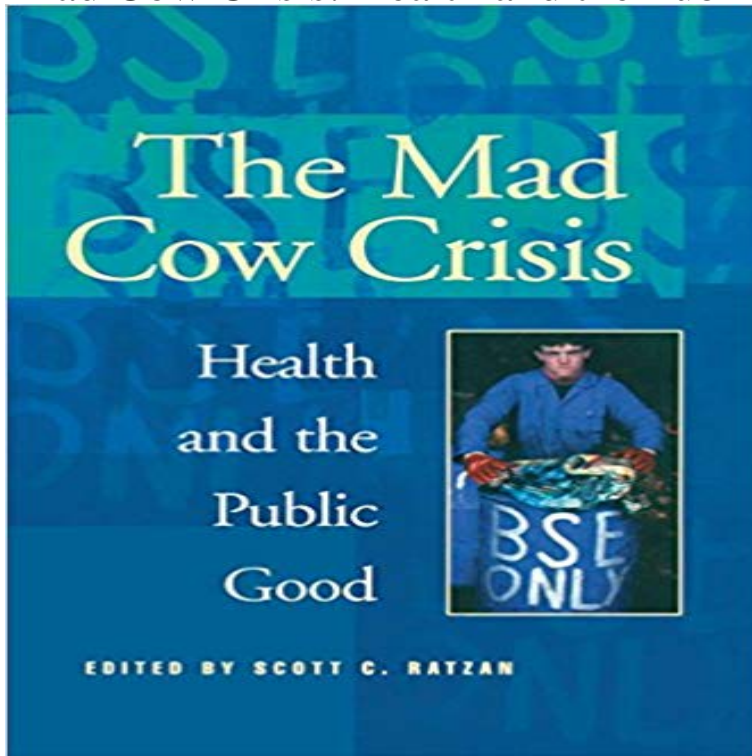


Mad Cow Crisis: Health and the Public Good (Intellectual History)



In the spring of 1996, when numerous reports of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, popularly known as mad cow disease, coincided with an outbreak of a similar neuropathological disease in humans, a panic spread across Britain, Europe, and subsequently to the United States. Described as the biggest crisis the European Union ever had, the mad cow controversy raised important issues about the ways in which risks to the public health are assessed, disseminated, and controlled. Was the epidemic merely a failure of management, the lessons of which could be incorporated into a new strategy for dealing with public anxiety? Was it an isolated case of poor decision-making in a highly volatile economic sector, or was it the kind of nightmare that could face any government responsible for public safety? And what role did the media play in exacerbating an already spiraling crisis? Divided into four major sections—Scientific/Historical Perspectives; Politics as Health; Understanding the Crisis; and Lessons and Possibilities—*Mad Cow Crisis* assembles the perspectives of a range of experts on this strange and frightening phenomenon, with a view to helping us comprehend how and why such crises occur. Both a careful consideration of how we interpret risk and uncertainty and a step-by-step guide to managing public fear, this important book will interest anyone concerned with public health, communication, science, economics, and medicine.

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