

Hydrofracking

Good water no longer available...

I live on a small farm bordering the picturesque Rosebud River in Alberta. I live always in a glass house. It's a tough slog to make a living as an old fashioned farmer, as a person who sees land as a precious gift over which we have been given stewardship and sees the soul in every one of our cattle's eyes. The economy is not our god. It is something we must mind and manage. We are grateful for the gas wells on our land which have kept us farming when crops have failed and BSE crippled the cattle business.

In the spring of 2004 EnCana shot big cracks into a groundwater aquifer approximately 800 meters from our home. This permeable, coal aquifer supplies our water well and produces drinking water for most of my neighbours. The goal of EnCana's fracturing operations is to produce natural gas. None of us living here knew the first thing about hydrofracking. There was no public consultation, no private notification to those of us who drink from this source. After four months of production from this zone, EnCana plugged the gas well with cement. This doesn't mend the fractures blasted into the aquifer. Since 2004 Alberta Environment received complaints about water quality from five landowners proximal to this well. I was one of them. My well water is contaminated.

I called Alberta Environment to ask if energy developments could be responsible for the recent massive influx of methane gas in my water supply. I was told there was no proof that coal bed methane had ever had an adverse effect on groundwater. There are hundreds of personal testimonials from ordinary folks across North America with contaminated water wells after fracturing took place in their area and yet there is no proof. It could be because fracturing companies can keep their chemicals in the never land of proprietary information. It could be because any scientist who comes too close to proving a connection between hydraulic fracturing and groundwater contamination is removed from the job by firing or transfer. The government continues to withhold critical information relevant to my case. Proof is hard to come by when there is no political or economic will to face the truth. The resource has been sold. The natural consequences denied. The economy thrives on such malignancies.

I live in a glass house and I thirst for clean water.

Writer Fiona Lauridsen appears in the CBC documentary Burning Water produced by Bunbury Films.

It can be viewed online at

http://www.cbc.ca/video/#/Shows/The_Passionate_Eye/1274903384/ID=1619380195

It is available from www.bunburyfilms.com Oscar nominated "Gasland" can be viewed and purchased online.