

KATIE THE GOAT – NUCLEAR WHISTLEBLOWER SUCCUMBS TO CANCER

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Katie the Goat, whose milk contained high levels of radioactivity when she lived near the Millstone Nuclear Power Plant in Connecticut and who was stricken with inoperable cancer, died on Sunday, August 12, 2012, at her Redding, Connecticut home.

Katie became a news media celebrity, participating in events that took her from the State Capitol in Hartford in 2006 to the White House on March 11, 2012, the first anniversary of the Fukushima triple nuclear meltdown.

First Lady Michelle Obama pronounced Katie's invitation to donate a granddaughter to the First Family to serve as a White House pet as well as radiation monitor "a fantastic idea."

With a concentration of 55 picoCuries/liter in 2001, it is believed that Katie's milk contained the highest level of strontium-90 ever detected in milk in the state of Connecticut, perhaps the nation. That number was twice the highest concentration recorded in milk sampled in Connecticut during the peak of atmospheric nuclear weapons testing in the 1960s.

Most samples of Katie's milk, taken when she lived five miles northeast of Millstone in Waterford, Connecticut, from the late 1990s until 2003, had elevated levels of strontium-90, as well as strontium-89 and cesium-137. All are potent carcinogens.

Katie became a news media celebrity when she first ventured to the State Capitol in 2006 after anti-nuclear activists became aware of the high concentrations of radioisotopes in her milk, as reported by Millstone's owner, Dominion Nuclear Connecticut, Inc. Dominion had assured Katie's owner that her milk was safe to drink and its environmental reports containing the milk measurements had not been publicized.

There is no federal or state standard for strontium-89 or strontium-90 levels in milk nor do federal regulations limit the volume of strontium-89 and strontium-90 that nuclear power plants may release to the environment, according to Nancy Burton, co-director of the Mothers Milk Project, which collects milk from dairy cows and goats as well as humans and has it tested for levels of radioactivity.

Katie, a white nanny goat of Saanen and Nubian descent, was believed to be in her late teens.

Katie's 2006 press conference on the lawn of the State Capitol forced then-Governor M. Jodi Rell to direct the state Department of Environmental Protection to investigate the cause of high concentrations of strontium-90 in Katie's milk.

DEP Commissioner Gina McCarthy released a report absolving Millstone from any role in the milk poisoning but failed to provide a credible alternative explanation, Burton said.

"Two qualified scientists studied the DEP report and rebuked it as junk science," Burton said.

Both experts tried to meet with the DEP authors of the study to correct what they perceived to be gross errors, but to no avail.

(McCarthy now serves as President Obama's appointee as the federal Environmental Protection Agency's assistant secretary for air and radiation, where her responsibilities include protecting the public from radiation hazards.)

Katie's milk was tested once she moved to Redding, which is located about 25 miles downwind from the Indian Point Nuclear Power Station in Buchanan NY. Frequently, radioactive strontium was detected in her milk far above national averages.

Katie became a familiar presence at anti-Millstone rallies near Millstone and elsewhere around the state. She appeared next to Ralph Nader, longtime anti-nuclear advocate, in Willimantic. She offered up a sample of her milk at a "Clean Beaches" rally in East Lyme where activists gathered to protest Millstone waste discharges to Niantic Bay, a popular recreational site for swimmers. She wore a "Got Strontium?" sign at a rally supporting a Millstone whistleblower who was fired after reporting to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission that Dominion routinely deliberately deactivated its perimeter security system.

Katie was diagnosed with inoperable soft tissue sarcoma in her left shoulder in February 2012. The medical condition is associated with radiation exposure, Burton said.

A Farewell Tour was planned.

Katie returned to the State Capitol for a press conference. Though invited, Governor Dannel Malloy refused to meet Katie and his office issued a statement that he would not meet her in the future.

Katie's keeper, Burton, communicated with the First Family, asking it to adopt one of Katie's granddaughters to serve as a White House pet as well as an onsite radiation monitor. Through her press office, First Lady Michelle Obama replied:

"Dear Ms. Burton,

Thank you for your interest in the First Family. Your offer is extremely generous and seems like a fantastic opportunity, it is truly appreciated. Unfortunately, we are unable to satisfy your

request. We apologize that we could not be more helpful. Again thank you so much for such a kind gesture. We wish you well in the future.”

Undeterred, Katie and 3-month-old Dana Blue-Eyes headed to Washington DC and strolled in front of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue on March 11, attracting attention to issues of nuclear power hazards.