A progressive biologist from Portland is one of the nation’s leading advocates for ivermectin.

BY ANTHONY EFFINGER

**The loudest COVID-19 vaccine skeptic in Oregon?** You might think it’s pistol-packing, Trump-loving talk radio host Lars Larson, or Baker City Mayor Kerry McQuisten, whose opposition to mask and vaccine mandates is stoking her run for governor.

You’d be wrong.

Instead, the loudest voice may be that of a Toyota-driving Bernie Bro who lives near Lewis & Clark College, an evolutionary biologist with a Ph.D. who studied and taught at two of the nation’s most liberal universities and participated in Occupy Wall Street.

His name is Bret Weinstein, and he makes his living preaching the dangers of COVID-19 vaccines while extolling ivermectin, the controversial drug often used to deworm horses.
I know that shareholder value must be driving things behind the scenes,” Weinstein told Rogan.

Weinstein, 52, is no dummy. He has a Ph.D. in biology from the University of Michigan and, until recently, held a tenured professorship. Weinstein declined to be interviewed for this story, saying he would not be treated fairly. But Weinstein and Heying reveal much in their pro-
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mile megatrends.
FARM PHARMA: Linnton Feed & Seed experienced a run on ivermectin.
June. “And the data—shocking as this will be to some people—suggest that prophylactic ivermectin is something like 100% effective at preventing people from contracting COVID when taken properly.”

Weinstein likes ivermectin, he says, because it has a stellar safety record (it does) and it’s cheap (it is, at about $5 a pill). Vaccines, meantime, are the opposite. They aren’t proven to be safe yet, Weinstein says, and they’re more expensive (for the governments who purchase them).

Weinstein prides himself on being an iconoclast. He calls DarkHorse “a show for curious minds and freethinkers.” On COVID and ivermectin, he is definitely bucking the establishment.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization have endorsed use of the COVID-19 vaccines. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration gave full approval to the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine on Aug. 23.

For ivermectin, it’s the opposite. The FDA has warned people not to take the drug because there is scant evidence it works against COVID-19. One promising Egyptian study was pulled amid charges of plagiarism and flawed data. Critics of the Australian study say the concentrations of ivermectin used in the petri dishes would be toxic in humans, and, indeed, people are poisoning themselves with the stuff.

In humans, ivermectin cream is used to treat head lice and the skin condition rosacea. Tablets are used for intestinal worms. The human formulation requires a prescription, but formulations for horses are widely available in farm stores and on Amazon, and people are taking them.

Poisonings are on the rise across the country, including in Oregon, as people ingest ivermectin in amounts intended for 1,000-pound animals. On Aug. 24, Oregon Health & Science University warned people not to use ivermectin to prevent or treat COVID. The Oregon Poison Center managed 21 ivermectin cases in August after handling just three in all of 2020, OHSU said.

Nationally, ivermectin exposure cases jumped 163% to 1,143 in the first eight months of this year, according to the American Association of Poison Control Centers.

People who take horse-sized doses of ivermectin can be in for a wild ride. One patient, for example, drank an injectable form of ivermectin for cows and ended up in the hospital for nine days, dazed and confused with hallucinations, rapid breathing, and body tremors, according to the CDC. More mundane symptoms include nausea, diarrhea, low blood pressure, and hives.

The FDA tweeted an unusually blunt warning on Aug. 21: “You are not a horse. You are not a cow. Seriously, y’all. Stop it.”

Weinstein appeared unmoved. His response on Twitter: “Just say neigh.”

Tyler Blach, a sales associate at Linnton Feed & Seed just west of the St. Johns Bridge, says the store has no more of the paste form—flavored with apple—that’s used for horses and has proven popular with vaccine-skeptical humans.

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“Bret is easily the greatest professor that I have had,” one student wrote.

He went another email on March 15, 2017, protesting plans for Evergreen’s annual Day of Absence protest. In past years, people of color would stay away from Evergreen for a day to show what the campus would lack without them. In 2017, Evergreen flipped the script and proposed that white people leave. Weinstein said whites were coerced.

“It drove Bret insane,” Koppelman says. “He called it a day of racial segregation.”