

Rifkin cajoles students to preserve environment

*The fate of the earth
is in their hands,
activist tells audience*

By RALPH D. OLIVE
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Waukesha — Jeremy Rifkin does not want a passive audience, and he did not have one Wednesday at Carroll College.

Rifkin — author, activist and philosopher — is the 1993-'94 distinguished lecturer at Carroll. His speech in Shattuck Auditorium was "Prospects for the 21st Century," a topic broad enough for Rifkin to cover subjects from English farming in the 15th century to global warming today.



RIFKIN

Rifkin's animated style put him in touch with his audience. He paced the aisles, stopping to ask students their names and involving them in dialog.

Rifkin came to Carroll with a message, one he is delivering nationwide: that the environment is in grave danger and today's college generation needs to do something.

"We need a transformation of consciousness by the generation sitting in this room," Rifkin said. "Your generation will face the most critical challenge for survival in world history."

Until the 15th century, Rifkin said, farmers used the land to raise food for their families, and the earth was given time to re-

new. Then, in England, the demand for wool grew and sheep were put out to graze, he said.

The philosophy of replacing farmland with more profitable ventures continued to expand, and forests, lakes and farms have suffered severe environmental damage as a consequence, Rifkin said. One result is global warming, he said.

"We spent 500 years attempting to enclose the planet for our own gain, and now the planet is enclosing us with its gases," Rifkin said. "We call this the age of progress but it has been progress for only a few in the United States, Canada and Western Europe."

The US, Rifkin said, uses 40% of the world's resources. While America devotes large amounts of land for raising animals, underdeveloped countries do not have enough land to produce food for their people.

BGH BOYCOTT

At an afternoon news conference Wednesday, Rifkin reviewed plans to boycott use of bovine growth hormone (BGH) products. Rifkin is president of the Pure Food Coalition, based in Washington, D.C.

The coalition serves as a coordinator for groups throughout the country that are organizing boycotts and protests to stop the use of BGH. The hormone is a health hazard, Rifkin said, and will also hurt farmers because milk will flood the market and reduce agricultural profits.

Wisconsin, as the No. 2 state in the production of dairy products (after California), should be a leader in fighting BGH, Rifkin said.