

Sent: Tuesday, January 29, 2002 1:24 PM

Subject: THERE'S MORE IN YOUR BEER THAN MEETS THE EYE !

Environment - 1/29/2002 12:30:52 PM

Fowl droppings could foul water, then beer

BRUSSELS, BELGIUM — A monastery that has brewed a famous Belgium beer for the past 400 years is worried that the spring water it uses may be polluted by droppings from a nearby poultry farm.

Monks at Saint-Remy monastery in southern Belgium, which produces Rochefort beers, have asked Liege University to study the permeability of the land around the monastery, Reuters news service reported.

The monks are concerned that plans to expand the poultry farm will lead to extra droppings that will pollute the spring water, the news service said. Records show that the monastery had a brewery as far back as 1595, when barley and hops were grown in the grounds.

But, as every beer lover knows, the secret is in the purity of the water.

The news service said a spokesman for the 16 monks who continue to brew the famous Rochefort trappist beers said if the water quality changes, it could adversely affect the beer. Since plans for the bigger poultry farm were drawn up, the council has received about 100 complaints from local residents concerned about possible damage to the environment.

In the United States, waste from poultry farms, as well as other animal farms, has created an environmental controversy. Such operations are being blamed for pollution of water supplies, particularly through stormwater runoff that can carry pollutants from animal operations to nearby water supplies.