

I do not know the extent of his lecturing at Yale. I do know that Francisco Duran-Reynals was a great teacher and a wonderful human being.

MICHAEL KAPLAN Experimental Psychology Laboratory, Creedmoor Institute for Psychobiologic Studies, Queens Village, New York

#### **Balance in Cultivated Ecosystems**

In their very interesting article on "Acrolein for the control of water weeds and disease-carrying water snails" [Science 129, 335 (1959)], Overbeek et al. describe their experiments in ridding irrigation ditches of water weeds and fresh-water snails by the addition of small amounts of acrolein to the irrigation water. They state, "Treated water, when used for irrigation, did not harm crops. Further studies, on possible acrolein residues in crops and on the toxicity of treated water with respect to farm animals, are being made."

It is reassuring to know that attention is being given to possible toxicity to human beings and farm animals. It would be interesting to know, further, if any studies are contemplated on the effect of this treated water on the soil microbiota in the land that is being irrigated. Soil scientists reiterate constantly the importance of the soil fauna and flora in the development and maintenance in good condition of soils. It would be disastrous indeed to discover, after a few years of ditch-cleaning with this highly toxic substance, that the essential soil biota had been destroyed and that permanent or long-term impairment of large areas of irrigated soils had taken place.

Ecologists interested in the maintenance of a healthy balance in cultivated ecosystems should be much concerned about matters of this sort.

F. R. Fosberg

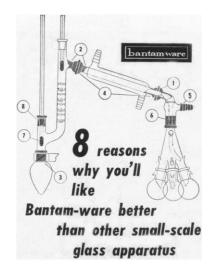
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Fosberg will be glad to learn that in addition to tests of the effect of treated irrigation water on crops, soil microbiological tests have been made and are continuing.

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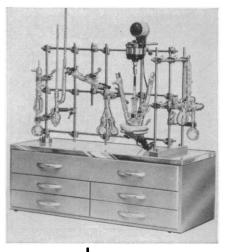
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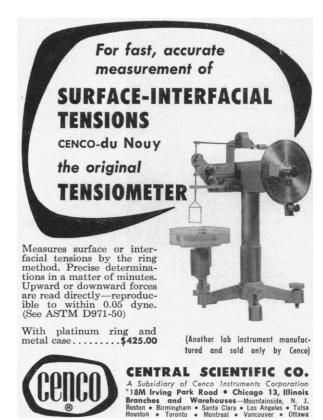
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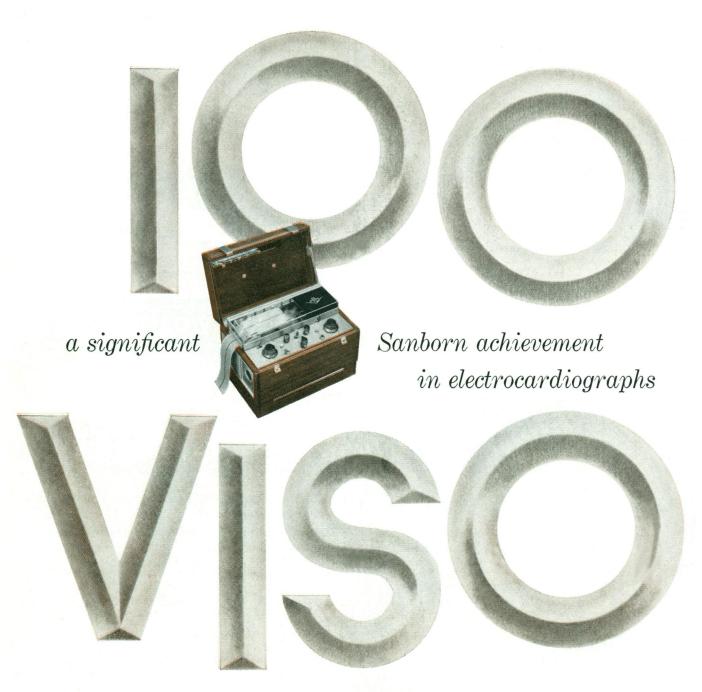
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