

debrand's have strongly influenced the research proposal evaluation panels of numerous federal agencies.

It is interesting to step back from the specific scientific issue and view anomalous water as an example of research judgment: It is concerned with the possibility of a genuinely new phenomenon of widespread potential importance; the subject has relevance to many currently active research areas; specific research questions can be clearly identified; effective research can be carried out with simple and inexpensive equipment. It almost seems like a model for the ideal research topic that one always tells one's bright young students to be looking for.

LELAND C. ALLEN

Department of Chemistry, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey 08540

References

1. D. L. Rousseau and S. P. S. Porto, *Science* **167**, 1715 (1970).
2. W. Sullivan, *New York Times* (24 June 1970), p. 24; *ibid.*, (28 June 1970), sec. 4, p. 7.

Radiochemicals: Quality Control

Recent letters from D. M. Prescott (12 June) and I. Goldman (16 Jan.) concerning problems with radiochemicals prompts me to relate our approach to this problem. It originally began when one of our scientists, who was using a commercial ^{14}C labeled sample, questioned the low count rate in the ^{14}C channel of a liquid scintillation spectrometer and the high count rate in the ^3H channel. Eventually, the " ^{14}C " sample was shown to contain both ^3H and ^{14}C .

After this experience, our practice has been to assay, before use, all commercial samples that can reasonably be examined, for: (i) total radioactivity; (ii) chemical and radiochemical purity, usually by a chromatographic separation and detection, followed by a radio-scan; and (iii) the radioisotopic purity by examining either the beta-ray spectrum, which results by coupling a liquid scintillation spectrometer to a multichannel analyzer, or the gamma-ray spectrum using a multichannel analyzer. It is possible to detect about 1 percent ^3H or ^{14}C in the presence of the other by comparing the sample spectrum to that of known mixtures.

The problems that we encountered generally have been corrected promptly when brought to the supplier's attention. It is important to recognize that these

problems are not unique to radiochemicals. As has been stated many times in the past, to avoid surprises, *all* chemicals should be examined prior to use.

EDWARD J. MERRILL

Warner-Lambert Research Institute, Morris Plains, New Jersey 07950

FDA: Maligned "Giant"

There may be many who agree with Muzik (Letters, 19 June) that "the current view of the general populace is that the Food and Drug Administration is an irascible, irresponsible, and dictatorial giant. . . ." But Muzik's statement is based on several misconceptions about the FDA:

1) The decision to ban the sale of foods containing cyclamates was not an FDA action, but was made by the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare after consultation with a number of authorities both within and outside the FDA.

2) The FDA has no power to ban or even curtail the use of DDT, 2,4,5-T, or any other pesticide. The authority to prohibit the registered use of a pesticide is vested solely in the Department of Agriculture.

3) The "Delaney Amendment" of the Food Additive Amendment to the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act *compels* the FDA to proscribe the use of *any food additive* which is carcinogenic to any test animal at any level, including "astronomically high doses."

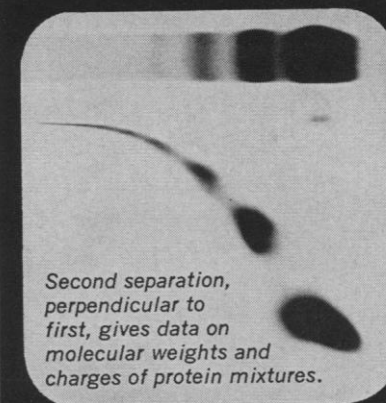
4) Unfortunately, the FDA can hardly be called a "giant." Its current budget is approximately \$80 million and much of this is budgeted for programs not directly related to the enforcement of the FDC Act. Compare this modest sum with the \$100 million or more annually allocated for meat inspection, or the \$1 billion recommended for the next fiscal year for air and water pollution control activities. The only "giant" is the nearly \$100 billion industry which must be regulated by the FDA.

5) The FDA has the enormous responsibility of protecting the American consumer with inadequate funds and with authority which is susceptible to reversal by at least two administrative levels between the office of the Commissioner of the FDA and the office of the Secretary of HEW.

WILLIAM S. COX

8500 Thames Street, Springfield, Virginia 22151

With E-C Gel Slabs



Your Bonus Is Two-Dimensional!

Two-dimensional electrophoresis, that is. It's one of the seven "pluses" you get with E-C vertical slab polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis:

1. fast slabbing; one mold
2. uniform conditions for multiple samples; accurate comparison
3. stacked and composite gel systems
4. fast de-staining without artifacts
5. flexible slabs handle easily
6. easy scanning and integration
7. two-dimensional electrophoresis; more data from a sample

With E-C polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis, you can make your samples work twice as hard for you. Make us work, too. Call Technical Service at 215 382-9100 (collect) for details. Or write for a copy of "Vertical Gel Electrophoresis". E-C Apparatus Corporation, 755 St. Marks St., University City, Phila., Pennsylvania 19104.



E-C Apparatus Corporation
A Milton Roy Company