

the exchange of ideas for the mutual resolution of air pollution problems.

The quote of some unnamed EPA official that "The only thing worse than an unemployed aerospace engineer . . . is an unemployed aerospace engineer who has gone to work on the environment" only belies the fact that quite a few former "aerospace engineers" are currently applying their professional skills within EPA and its state counterparts and within the ranks of its contractors. The technical community is trying to respond to national needs. EPA should be encouraging the participation of talented people, regardless of what they may have been involved with at some earlier time. It might lead to useful innovation. Fortunately some leaders in EPA recognize this.

Finally, the suggestion that the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences should become a "third party" for resolving conflict in auto emissions research would be acceptable for the health effects aspects, but clearly inappropriate for the issues related to technology. In this respect, it is interesting to note that EPA, through an interagency R & D agreement, has given NASA's Lewis Research Center in Cleveland, Ohio, a major role in developing alternative power sources for automobiles.

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### Screwworm Control

In their article "Genetic control of insect populations" (15 Dec. 1972, p. 1164) Smith and von Borstel assert that "Ten billion irradiated adult *Cochliomyia* are now released yearly along the Mexico-Texas border, effectively controlling the natural screwworm [fly] population on both sides." This was true in 1971, but not in 1972. In 1971, there were 473 confirmed screwworm cases in American livestock. The total for 1972 exceeded 90,000 (1), and infestations were found not only in Oklahoma, but even in Kansas and Arkansas, hundreds of miles from the Rio Grande. Clearly, a massive breakdown in the "sterile male release" program occurred. And just as clearly, no one has gotten to the bottom of it.

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#### References

1. *Coop. Econ. Insect Rep.* 23, 155 (1973).

As Calman points out, serious outbreaks of screwworm infestation occurred in 1972. Even when the release of sterile males was doubled along the Texas-Mexico border, control was not accomplished (1). It is important to emphasize, however, that the fault is not due to a failure of the sterile male principle, but to a failure in its application. In our article we predicted that sexual isolation or incompatibility could occur in the screwworm fly and result in an outbreak of screwworm infestation. In this case three alternatives seem possible: (i) The wild population contains genetic types which no longer mate with released flies. These flies would have a tremendous selective advantage in nature. (ii) Laboratory flies are no longer adapted to wild conditions because of the pressures imposed by rearing constraints. (iii) Both populations are evolving simultaneously in these opposing directions. Established genetic methods should be utilized to monitor both wild and laboratory populations to ascertain when genetic changes occur. The lack of genetic monitoring is a major defect in most sterile male programs at this time.

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#### References

1. *Nature (Lond.)* 242, 493 (1973).

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