that their life expectancy was less than ours. Actually, the rejection of saturated fats is a recent fashion; our great-grandparents were great consumers of butter, cream, fat pork, lard, suet, and beef drippings. They ate starch, which, like refined sugar, is converted to glucose in vivo. If they ate broccoli, they had enough sense to cook it so it would be digestible. Wheat germ is a great food, even though it contains an estrogen that gives it a potency equivalent biologically to about 400 parts per billion of diethylstilbestrol as measured by the mouse uterine response (*2*). Yogurt is milk is yogurt. It is easy to use the term "junk food" in a subjective manner.

The statement that the "standard" diet "can contribute to obesity, tooth decay, heart disease, intestinal cancer, and diabetes" is an erroneous oversimplification. These are complex problems, involving heredity, hormonal balance, fluoride deficiency, dental hygiene, and even virus diseases. Overeating is paramount to obesity, but, alas, the degenerative diseases will not be arrested by going on a diet of cracked wheat, pumpkin seeds, and dried seaweed.

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1. Committee on Dietary Allowances, Food and Nutrition Board, National Research Council, *Recommended Dietary Allowances* (National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D.C., ed. 8, 1974), p. 33.
2. A. N. Booth, E. M. Bickoff, G. M. Kohler, *Science* **131**, 1807 (1960).

AGRIS

One rather unfortunate misunderstanding might arise from the otherwise excellent article "AGRIS" by Joseph F. Caponio and Leila Moran (24 Jan., p. 233). In the section entitled "Discussion," the authors state, "AGRIS represents the first big international effort to coordinate and to consolidate a spectrum of information activities." This does less than justice to the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its member states in their creation of the International Nuclear Information System (INIS).

INIS came into operation in May 1970 and was the world's first computer-based documentation service for which input is prepared on an internationally decentralized basis. The first discussions in the IAEA secretariat, which ultimately led to the implementation of INIS, were initiated by the United States and the Soviet Union in the summer of 1966. R. K. Wakerling of the United States and L. L. Issaev of the Soviet Union, acting as consultants, drew up the first description of the system. Their report was reviewed in December of that year by a working group consisting of experts from 16 countries and three international organizations. Agreement was reached in 1966 on a number of important aspects of INIS which have endured through subsequent years.

In particular, it was decided to adopt a "network" concept for the organization of INIS. Each country or regional organization would scan the literature for the area for which it was responsible and prepare the input data for the system; the IAEA would merge this data to create a master file and would distribute the file in agreed forms (conventional printing, microform, and magnetic tape) for the use of national and regional information services.

INIS is now a well-established and highly efficient system. It has demonstrated that a system based on decentralized input can produce timely and consistent information services.

It may be of some interest to note that the implementation of the AGRIS Level One system—which became operational this year—has been achieved in close collaboration with INIS, making use both of the experience and computer software of the latter system. Further, all computer processing of AGRIS input is being performed as a joint operation with the computer section of the IAEA in Vienna. That this collaborative effort is working smoothly is a further tribute to INIS "know-how."

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Miles-per-Gallon Indicator

In his review of energy conservation (Research News, 23 May, p. 820), William D. Metz should have used the indicative rather than the subjunctive mood in referring to a miles-per-gallon indicator for automobiles. Such an instrument has been available for some time from SpaceKom, Inc., a small company in Santa Barbara, California. It costs about as much as 70 gallons of gasoline.

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