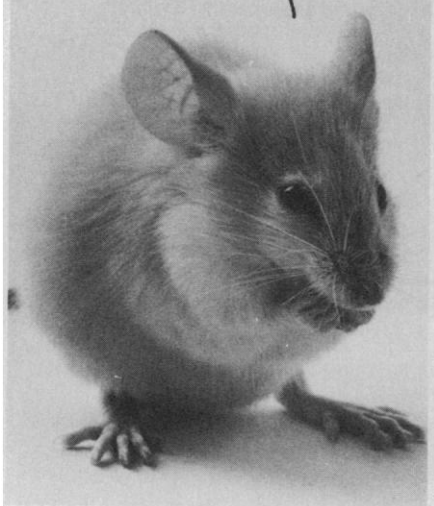


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Crop yields in this province are up markedly, producing up to 7 tons of rice per hectare from three rice crops, as well as one vegetable crop per year. The basic equipment to set up these laboratories is not too expensive, but soil experts must visit Vietnam in order to assist Vietnamese in the choice of the right kind of standard "tropicalized" equipment items.

Vietnamese authorities at all levels have expressed a strong desire to convert the enmity of the recent past to a new era of cooperation. During a recent interview, Prime Minister Pham Van Dong referred to Albert Einstein's concern for making "science without frontiers" a common depository for all peoples, from which all can benefit. The Prime Minister felt that the scientific and technical development of Vietnam should have a high priority, since scientific and technical innovation can bring about changes in attitudes, in addition to improving living standards. This in turn can lead to friendship, mutual respect, and trust, which is most important if different societies are to avoid conflicts with each other in the future.

E. COOPERMAN

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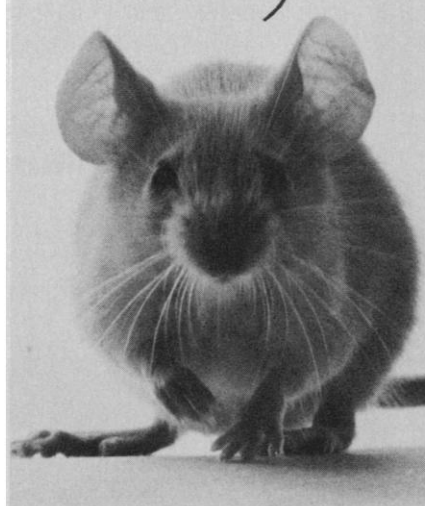
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Nuclear Industry: Safety Record

I would like to provide my personal comments on Donald Parsons' letter in the 6 July issue of *Science* (p. 122). Parsons cites several statistics regarding nuclear power that are incorrect. The first error is his statement: "... the nuclear generating industry record is *no* fatalities after 20 years of operation." This statement should read "... no acute radiation-induced fatalities ..." or "... no directly observable health impact on the general public ..." in order to be completely accurate. The statement regarding the safety record of the commercial nuclear power plants does appear in the article by (former Nuclear Regulatory Commissioner) Mason (*1*) that was cited by Parsons, but in the cited article it is correctly qualified as pertaining to radiation deaths. Two workers at the Surry nuclear plant died as a result of a steam valve failure that occurred on 27 July 1972. Although this accident did not involve radiation overexposure and could

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Much of what you've said over there (←) about Ab-Sorb-Dri applies to Pine-Dri also, except that it's made exclusively of Northern White Pine. Same heat-treating to reduce moisture content, and aspiration to remove dust. And contamination is also minimal and the additives absent. In use it's similar, too. Some differences: it's somewhat easier to handle and tends to last longer because it's more absorbent (absorbs 2.5 times its own weight in liquid). Available from those same distributors in 27 lb., 3-ply, autoclavable, heat-sealed bags containing 3 cu. ft. of bedding.

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have happened at a fossil-fueled power plant, it did occur at a nuclear plant and therefore makes Parsons' statement, as it was printed, inaccurate.

The statements concerning the potential health impact of the Three Mile Island accident are also inaccurate. The potential *lifetime* impact of that accident, estimated by an interagency task group (2), was less than two fatal cancers and two nonfatal cancers to the entire population within 50 miles of the Three Mile Island site (approximately 2,164,000 people) and not per 100,000 individuals as Parsons and the footnote in Mason's article stated.

The total number of cancer deaths that would be expected to occur normally over the lifetime of the 50-mile enclosed population would be approximately 325,000. This total number is a more appropriate statistic for comparison with the lifetime risk of the accident than the annual cancer death rate (4500 cancer deaths *per year*) cited by both Parsons and Mason.

HAROLD T. PETERSON, JR.*
Office of Standards Development,
Nuclear Regulatory Commission,
Washington, D.C. 20555

References

1. E. A. Mason, *Chem. Eng. Progress* 75, 25 (May 1979).
2. L. Battist, J. Buchanan, F. Congel, C. Nelson, M. Nelson, H. Peterson, M. Rosenstein, *Population Dose and Health Impact of the Accident at the Three Mile Island Nuclear Station* (Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1979).

* Member, Ad Hoc Interagency Dose Assessment Group for the Three Mile Island Accident.

Weather Prediction

With regard to the cover of the 29 June issue and the caption thereto on page 1365 reporting Seasat data for 14 September 1979 (at 17:15 G.M.T. no less!), I can only exclaim, "Wow! *That's* weather prediction!"

Or I might perorate with these words of Thomas Hood (*The Plea of Midsummer Fairies*, XCII):

We will not woo foul weather all too soon,
Or nurse November on the lap of June.

ROBIN WILSON
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Ohio State University,
Columbus 43210

Erratum: In the issue of 22 June, in the News and Comment article, "Congress says bioassay reports are stalled" (p. 1288), Philippe Shubik is identified as the "former director" of the University of Nebraska's Eppley Institute for Research in Cancer. Shubik is in fact on leave from that post until 1 July 1980. Norman Cromwell has been named acting director while Shubik is on leave.

10 AUGUST 1979



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