

number of places. It is possible, Foote adds, that someone planted the flies in the trap deliberately "just to confuse the issue." There have been mysterious and unexplained fly-catchings in the past, suggesting that there may be a Medfly hoaxer in our midst.

Nevertheless, Foote says, the Floridians are perfectly right to suspect that California was the original home of the parents of these insects. And he mentions that growers in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas are also bracing for a visit from the West Coast.

—**Eliot Marshall**

Battle Renewed Over Coyote Poison

Environmentalists are worried that the federal government may reverse the 1972 ban on compound 1080, a powerful poison that has been used to kill the coyotes and wild dogs that prey on sheep and cattle.

In 1972, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) banned all predator control pesticides containing sodium monofluoroacetate (compound 1080), sodium cyanide, and strychnine after finding that the products, as then used, posed unreasonable risks to humans and wildlife. Bobcats, badgers, foxes, raccoons, vultures, hawks, and eagles were among the victims of the slow-acting poisons.

The National Woolgrowers Association and the National Cattlemen's Association, citing "emergency-level" losses from predators, have now asked EPA to consider re-registering compound 1080 for use in the form of a protective poison collar.

Russell E. Train, former head of EPA and now president of the U.S. branch of the World Wildlife Fund, has protested in a letter to Anne M. Gorsuch, head of EPA. "I see no benefit to the American people in reopening this costly process in an attempt to reverse a decade of evolving public land policy and progress in the field of wildlife management." Train contends that the livestock industry's economic difficulties are due to other factors and cites a 1981 Senate committee report on the industry's woes that does not even mention predation. The toxic collar has serious drawbacks, Train

claims, because if it breaks or is punctured, the poison can be absorbed through the skin of the animal wearing the collar. Train condemns compound 1080 as "a deadly, nonselective—and thus ecologically unsound—threat to wildlife." The World Wildlife Fund opposes its use on private or public lands.

The EPA held information-gathering hearings in late July as the first step in determining whether compound 1080 pesticides should be re-registered. Material submitted at the hearings will be reviewed by an EPA panel that will then make a recommendation to Gorsuch as to whether adjudicatory hearings should be held. The final decision rests with the EPA administrator.—**Scherraine Mack**

Caribbean Med Schools: Paradise May Soon Be Lost

The expanding ranks of ill-educated physicians who return to the United States after study in certain foreign medical schools "poses a real threat to the future quality of medical care in this country," according to a position paper released on 22 July by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC). To curb the problem, the AAMC has called on accrediting agencies to radically beef up the exams that allow these students entry into U.S. medicine.

The number of U.S. citizens seeking certification from just one of these accrediting agencies, the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG), increased fourfold between 1970 and 1980, rising from 486 to 2155. Many of these medical graduates came from a handful of new Caribbean-based schools that operate for profit and predominantly cater to U.S. citizens (*Science*, 23 February 1979, p. 724). The General Accounting Office in 1980 released a study of six of these schools pointing out numerous flaws in their curricula, teaching, and facilities, and concluding that they "do not provide a medical education comparable to that obtainable in the United States." The GAO report is the raw material on which the AAMC relied in making its criticism of the proprietary schools. The AAMC

position paper, which will be published in the November *Journal of Medical Education*, is a first. Although the rise in Caribbean students has been a continuing concern for the AAMC, the association has been slow to take a public stance on the issue.

In one of its main recommendations, the AAMC calls on the ECFMG to expand its 1-day, 360-question examination to include a "hands on" evaluation of a student's clinical skills. With the current situation, the passing of this single exam is all it takes for a Caribbean-educated student to apply to U.S. graduate medical programs or for state certification. The AAMC notes that the current exam has only 60 basic science questions. In contrast, alien foreign medical graduates must pass a 2-day exam administered by the National Board of Medical Examiners which contains 950 questions, 500 of them in the basic sciences. Says the AAMC paper: "It is difficult to understand why U.S. citizens should be accorded certification on the basis of a lesser evaluation."

—**William J. Broad**

OSHA Reverses Itself On Infante Case

Thorne G. Auchter, the head of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), has scrapped a controversial proposal to fire one of the agency's scientists, Peter F. Infante.

Infante received a dismissal notice several weeks ago after he wrote to another scientist that formaldehyde was an animal carcinogen, a view widely held among researchers. Critics of the firing charged that in threatening Infante, OSHA was bowing to pressure from the formaldehyde industry (*Science*, 7 August, p. 630).

In a 7 August letter to Infante, Auchter said that he did not find sufficient evidence to substantiate the charges of insubordination and misrepresentation. Auchter went out of his way in the letter to say, "... I want to make clear that it is my policy not only to permit but to encourage full and free debate on OSHA issues."

—**Marjorie Sun**