

intermediate forum such as the United Nations.

Reagan Administration officials have been tight-lipped about the policy. "It is unfortunate that this draft became known," says Mary Hoinkes, a deputy assistant secretary of State for environmental and health matters. "It has no business being discussed in the public because the process is not completed." Similarly, Bo Denysyk, the assistant secretary of Commerce for export administration, says that "it is unfair to the U.S. government and to the people to discuss something that has not been decided. I'm not going to comment on it, and neither is anyone on my staff." He said it would be several weeks before a final policy was approved and announced.

—**R. Jeffrey Smith**

Nader Group Sues to Have Drugs Reformulated

Public Citizen Inc., one arm of the Ralph Nader conglomerate, is suing the Food and Drug Administration in an attempt to get what it considers ineffective nonprescription drugs removed from the market. Rather than attacking specific brands, the organization is taking aim at claims made for certain ingredients. Victory would mean removal of hundreds of ingredients from the market and would compel massive reformulation of nonprescription drugs.

In the 300,000 over-the-counter products available, fewer than 1,000 ingredients are used. FDA studies obtained by Public Citizen through the Freedom of Information Act showed that there was no evidence of efficacy for 69 percent of the uses to which these ingredients are put, and evidence of safety was not available for 32 percent of them.

Public Citizen president Sidney M. Wolfe, in a letter to FDA commissioner Arthur Hayes, listed several examples of drugs that would have to be withdrawn or reformulated. They include such familiar preparations as Solarcaine, which contains phenol, said by Wolfe to be both unsafe and ineffective; Dristan (contains caffeine, allegedly ineffective); and Robitussin (contains guaifenesin, of unproven effectiveness).

The suit is based on the 1962 law which says drugs must be effective as well as safe in order to obtain FDA approval. Wolfe says his group has already sued over the issue and won, but FDA has not been complying. This time he says he expects the court to put the agency on a tight enforcement schedule.—**Constance Holden**

The Life and Times of an Academic Scientist

When is a researcher not a researcher? Most of the time, apparently.

Scientists and engineers on the faculty of graduate schools in the United States spend an average of only 16 hours a week on research, according to a survey by the National Science Foundation (NSF). The bulk of their workweek is taken up by such tasks as teaching, administration, sitting on faculty committees, and attending scientific meetings.

All of this must keep academic scientists pretty busy, for they put in relatively long hours. Life scientists reported the longest workweek, with 51 hours the norm, but researchers in most other disciplines averaged at least 48 hours a week on their professional activities.

In spite of this busy schedule, scientists and engineers spend 3 to 5 hours a week on activities that bring in some outside income. "Such supplementary income," says the NSF study, "may have become more important because of the declining purchasing power of academic salaries." Writing books and articles for compensation is the chief activity in this category, and consulting is the next most time-consuming occupation.

In general, the NSF survey found that the typical academic scientist or engineer spends about one-third of his or her time on research and related activities. Teaching, preparing for classes, grading papers, and so on, account for another one-third. Administration and public service consume one-fifth of the workweek. Earning supplementary income accounts for just under one-tenth, and professional activities, such as reading journals and attending workshops, take up about 8 percent.

Charles H. Dickens, the director of the study, says that the survey was undertaken to get a better idea of the size of the total research effort in the universities.—**Colin Norman**

TV Debate on Creationism

The Reverend Jerry Falwell, leader of the Moral Majority, is planning a "great debate" on evolution versus creationism, to be aired on prime-time television some time in the fall. The protagonists will be Duane Gish, who has a doctorate in biochemistry from the University of California at Berkeley and works for the Institute for Creation Research in San Diego, and Russell Doolittle, a protein chemist at the University of California in San Diego. The 50-minute debate, sponsored by Falwell's "Old Time Gospel Hour," will be taped on 13 October in Lynchburg, Virginia, home of the Moral Majority; Falwell will be the moderator. Cal Thomas of the Moral Majority says the show will be syndicated and aired on time purchased from local television stations around the country.

Doolittle said he consented to make the case for evolution on the show because he has debated Gish several times before and is familiar with his arguments. Doolittle says Gish is fond of invoking the second law of thermodynamics to prove that life began with a high degree of order, rather than from random events as the evolutionists say. Gish also argues that it is statistically impossible for proteins to have arrived at their present precise structures through evolution.

Doolittle said he would have declined the invitation to appear if he thought that would result in cancellation of the planned debate about which he still has "great misgivings." He has stipulated in his contract that the show cannot be edited and that people who write in requesting transcripts not be put on the Moral Majority's mailing list.

Creationists have been making headway in state legislatures in their drive to have creationism taught as an alternative scientific theory to evolution. So far, two states, Louisiana and Arkansas, have passed "equal time" laws. Georgia may do so in January.

—**Constance Holden**