

3. C. Ochsenius and R. Gruhn, Eds., *Taima-taima: A Late Pleistocene Paleo-Indian Kill Site in Northernmost South America—Final Reports of 1976 Excavations* (Mongrafías Científicas, Programa del Centre de Investigaciones del Paleolítico y Cuaternario Sudamericano, Universidad Francisco de Miranda, Coro, Venezuela, 1979); R. Gruhn and A. L. Bryan, in *Quaternary Extinctions: A Prehistoric Revolution*, P. S. Martin and R. G. Klein, Eds. (Univ. of Arizona Press, Tucson, AZ 1984), pp. 128–137.

Computer-Guided Fertilizer Application

Philip H. Abelson's editorial "Dialog on the future of agriculture" (3 Aug., p. 457) alludes to the potential of computer-guided fertilizer application. While theoretically an excellent idea, an accurate soil quality data base is presupposed. My parents sent four different labs soil samples from their California farm and received four statistically different values for *each* of the minerals analyzed. Until these labs provide reliable data, farmers will have to rely on the tried and true method of visually appraising their crops and fertilizing by memory.

JOHN T. BAKOS

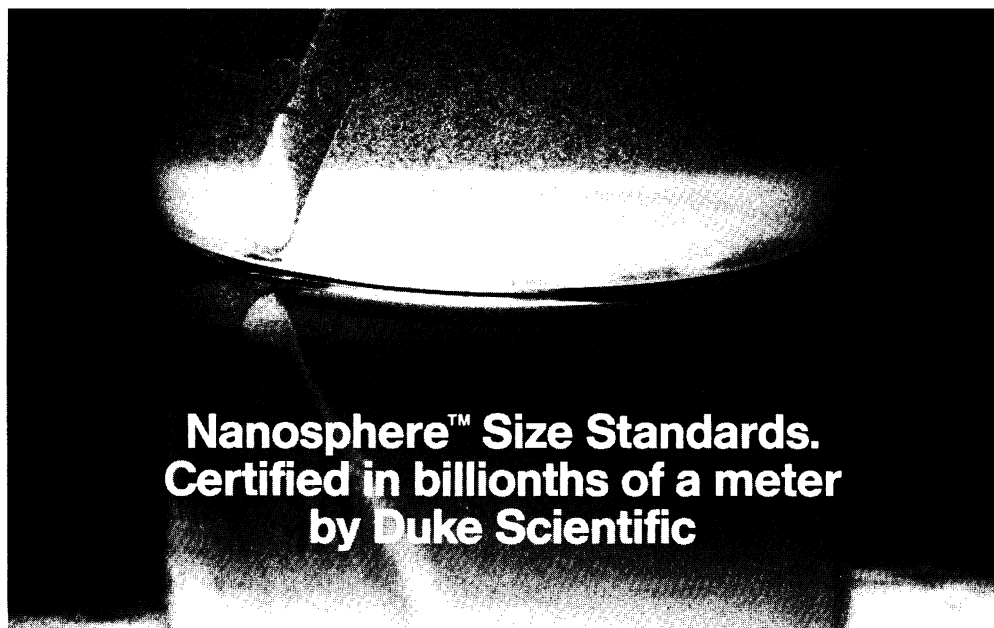
Department of Human Biological Chemistry
and Genetics,
University of Texas Medical Branch,
Galveston, TX 77550

EPA Scientific Advisory Panels

I believe it is important that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) confirm its support for the public service performed by the scientists serving on the agency's many science advisory committees. All of us, both inside and outside of EPA, benefit from the fact that these scientists, representing some of the country's foremost authorities, are willing to serve despite the sacrifices that public service often entails.

I personally am very appreciative of the contribution that EPA's independent science advisors make to the agency. In the Senate hearings on my confirmation as EPA Administrator, the first criterion that I mentioned for an effective environmental policy was "respect for science." I remain convinced that if EPA's decisions are to be accepted as credible by the public, Congress, environmentalists, and the regulated community, they must also be perceived as being based on sound scientific principles. Our science advisory committees play a crucial role in ensuring that EPA's actions are scientifically reasonable.

Unfortunately, a number of questions have been raised about financial relationships between members of EPA science ad-



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visory committees and the institutions that the Agency regulates. Such questions must be dealt with promptly and decisively; otherwise public confidence in our work is jeopardized.

Science was one of the first publications to raise questions about conflicts of interest on the part of certain members of EPA's Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) who reviewed the agency's scientific assessment of the decision on the controversial pesticide Alar (daminozide) (News & Comment, 7 July 1989, p. 23). It is therefore vital that the facts concerning the Inspector General's investigation of these allegations be made public.

In his initial response to the Senate Subcommittee on Toxic Substances, Environmental Oversight, Research and Development, the Inspector General provided the results of a Preliminary Inquiry (16 August 1989) which indicated that no conflict of interest violation had occurred for six of the eight panel members who reviewed Alar in 1985. He stated that there were separate investigations involving possible violation of postemployment restrictions by Christo-

pher Wilkinson and Wendell Kilgore, whose cases were referred to the Public Integrity Section of the Department of Justice. The Department of Justice concluded that the "facts do not merit prosecution" for either scientist. In response to further inquiry from the Senate Subcommittee, the Inspector General clarified in detail the findings of the Department of Justice. The following relevant paragraphs are excerpted from that 26 February 1990 letter.

The statement of Dan Schiese, attorney, Public Integrity Section (Department of Justice), included in our Report of Investigation, indicated that his office declined to prosecute Wilkinson because the issues and matter concerning Alar handled by the SAP, while Wilkinson was a member, were different than the issue Wilkinson handled while he was a consultant to Uniroyal. In addition, Schiese advised that the matter Wilkinson handled for Uniroyal was one with which he had no involvement while serving on the Panel. Thus, Schiese advised that no violation of the conflict of interest statutes occurred.

Regarding the Kilgore case, Schiese advised that no violation by Kilgore was indicated.