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Trouble. *Ixodes* ticks transfer the Lyme disease organism humans.

Lyme Disease Contract Bugs Activists

The rising temperatures of summer herald another cycle of ticks, tick bites, and Lyme disease. But the heat is also provoking another species—the Lyme disease community—into a resurgence of backbiting, with a pending federal research grant as their target.

The latest scuffle involves an attempt by activists to block a multimillion-dollar study of Lyme disease. A federal contract for the work was scheduled to be announced as *Science* went to press, by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID).

According to Lyme disease researchers, the contract is scheduled to go to Tufts University. But activists have been lobbying

Congress to block the award because they dispute the views of a member of the Tufts group, pioneering Lyme disease researcher Allen Steere.

The Tufts proposal, according to NIAID staffers, lists Mark Klempner as the principal investigator and states that Steere's contribution will amount to only 12%. But even that small share is too much for some activists, who reject Steere's stance that the Lyme spirochete rarely causes long-term infection. They believe long-term infections are common and require long-term antibiotic therapy (*Science*, 13 October 1995, p. 228).

The activists have showered Senator Alfonse D'Amato (R-NY) with mail in an effort to get him to intervene and block the scheduled award. They hope to redirect the contract to a research group that competed and failed to get the contract at the State University of New York, Stony Brook, on D'Amato's home turf.

The director of the Lyme disease program at NIAID, Philip Baker, says he's aware of the furor, but hasn't received any calls from D'Amato or anyone else in Congress. He predicted the contract would be announced this week, despite attempts to stop it. "We knew that this would be a controversial issue," Baker said, "so we took great pains to see that everything was done correctly."

Biologists Weigh In Against Forests Bill

Congress could soon take up a bill that may threaten the well-being of federal forests, according to some of the nation's leading ecologists, who have banded together to declare their opposition to the proposal. More than 100 biologists argue that the plan, which would protect forest health by allowing expanded logging, is "not based on sound science," applies a "narrow conception" of forest health, and could do more harm than good.

The bill, sponsored by Senator Larry Craig (R-ID), aims to "arrest the dramatic decline in forest health on the Federal lands" by allowing measures such as "salvage" logging and prescribed burning in "emergency areas" of at least 500 acres in which half or more of the trees are dead or dying, and in areas at "high risk." A Senate panel approved the draft bill last week.

The problem, say the 111 signers of a 19 June letter to President Clinton—who include Missouri Botanical Gardens chief Peter Raven and Reed Noss of Oregon State University—is that "forest health implies much more than [the health of] trees." Forests also need dying trees, which "are critical" to supporting biodiversity and controlling pests. Interactions among soils, streams, plants, and animals are also important, notes the letter,

which was drafted by James Karr of the University of Washington. Using only tree surveys to assess forest health, says David Perry of Oregon State, "risks exacerbating the problems that we already have." A Craig staffer responds that the bill also considers factors such as habitat loss and erosion.

A plan more to scientists' liking could emerge. Senator Bill Bradley (D-NJ) is working with Craig on a compromise bill, and a Bradley aide says "if we do not reach a deal, I cannot imagine this will go to the [Senate] floor."

Liebowitz Is Out, Tanenbaum In

Harold Liebowitz's troubled tenure as president of the National Academy of Engineering (NAE) has finally come to an end, with members voting to oust him by a margin of 1179 to 179. NAE Vice President Morris Tanenbaum has taken over temporarily, but he says that "other commitments" prevent him from succeeding Liebowitz for long. Because a new election may not take place until next spring, the council likely will soon name another acting president from among its ranks.

The first head of a national academy to be removed, Liebowitz took office 1 year ago promising to reform the 32-year-old organization. But his actions upset NAE officials, who complained about Liebowitz's inability to work with academy staff and his attempts to win federal monies for NAE studies in competition with its sister group, the National Research Council. Liebowitz could not be reached for comment.

Despite the vote, the council may not be done with Liebowitz. Several NAE sources say he has threatened to sue the organization. To avoid that, the council is considering paying him all or part of his salary for the rest of his 6-year term. At \$250,000 a year, the tab could add up to a cool \$1.25 million.

Too Much Gusto at CERN?

For years, the makers of Heineken beer boasted that their brew "refreshes the parts other beers cannot reach." Last week, physicists eager to begin experiments on the LEP2—the world's most powerful electron-positron collider, located at the CERN particle physics lab near Geneva—were unpleasantly reminded of this advertising slogan. After several days of trying to figure out why LEP2 wasn't working, technicians traced the problem to two empty Heineken bottles left inside LEP2's 27-kilometer-long, circular high-vacuum "beam pipe."

CERN officials don't know whether the unwelcome deposit in the 10-centimeter-wide chamber was due to carelessness, sabotage, or someone's idea of a bad joke. But they suspect it wasn't an

accident and have called in the Swiss police to bolster CERN's own investigation. Nor did the episode amuse particle physicists hoping to use LEP2's recently enhanced power—now at 162 gigaelectron volts—to create W particles, which are key to linking the so-called weak force to electromagnetism. CERN spokesperson Neil Calder says the shutdown has cost 10% of LEP2's experimental run time for 1996.

Moreover, the beer bottle caper is just one of a series of recent security lapses at CERN, including an incident in which environmentalists managed to enter locked areas (*Science*, 3 May, p. 655). The lab has beefed up security, but Calder says "we don't want to turn CERN into a fortress," adding that the facility prides itself on being "an open institution."