Rabbit Control in New Zealand

In view of the conflicting scientific views relating to rabbit viral hemorrhagic disease (RHD) [or rabbit calicivirus disease (RCD), as it is called in Australia and New Zealand] and the general lack of sound data relating to the virus (it has not been successfully grown in cell culture), the so-called "scientific testing" program conducted by the Australians for the purpose of detecting cross species transmission (D. Drollette, News & Comment, 10 Jan., p. 154) is highly suspect.

Fortunately, the New Zealand Department of Agriculture has instituted a further discussion period and is requiring interested parties to put forward their views. It is important that discussions are based on sound science, with the least possible bias. It is hoped that wise counsel in New Zea land will decide to not introduce the disease, but to watch the Australian experiment with interest for the next 10 years. At the end of that time, perhaps claims can be made with some degree of certainty, on the basis of scientific fact.

Trevor H. Duston
Director,
Rabbit Harvesting New Zealand,
Post Office Box 36-101,
Christchurch, New Zealand

Drolette states that "most scientists do not see any drawbacks to the use of RHD." This ignores the concerns expressed by international experts and the strong opposition expressed by many New Zealand scientists, including the New Zealand Association of Scientists. In his submission to the decision-making process, the president of the latter association, C. H. Sissons, states

> The reason for Association concern is that we believe that the application to import RCD virus preparations and use them as a biocontrol agent promotes premature action . . . where scientific knowledge for necessary safety and effectiveness is lacking and the controversial and compromising process of evaluating it threatens the credibility of all scientific input into crucial issues.

He warns

> The liability which [the New Zealand] Government faces from possible catastrophic consequences of unknown risk level if it authorises an ill-defined, exotic lethal virus in the face of strong opposition and warnings, may be extremely high. . . .

Yvonne van Roy
Commercial Law Group,
Faculty of Commerce and Administration,
Victoria University,
Post Office Box 600,
Wellington, New Zealand

Curing Rat Glioblastoma: Immunotherapy or Graft Rejection?

It has been reported by J. Trojan *et al.* (1 Jan. 1993, p. 94) (*1*) that antisense insulin-like growth factor I (IGF-I) messenger RNA induces curative immunotherapy of glioblastoma (*1*). We have determined the haplotypes of the glioma cell line and of the recipient rat strain used in this study (*2*). We found that they were not syngeneic, as stated by Trojan *et al.* Instead, all major histocompatibility (MHC) antigens that we tested (MHC I and II) were mismatched. Because MHC expression is up-regulated by antisense IGF-I in C6 cells (*3*), this mismatch may be a key to understanding the unknown mechanism that underlies this unexpected case of tumor rejection.

Andreas S. Beutler
Department of Neurosurgery (Research),
University Hospital Zürich,
Rämistrasse 100,
CH-8091 Zürich, Switzerland
E-mail: abeutler@nch.unizh.ch
Michaela S. Banck
Department of Internal Medicine,
University Hospital Zürich
Adriano Aguzzi
Department of Neuropathology,