tion" of a structure (Floyd E. Bloom, 13 Feb., p. 963). No structure is truly published until the atomic coordinates are provided to the scientific community. A group should be able to hold on to the coordinates as long as they like "before" publication, but they should not be allowed to have their cake and eat it, and eat it, and eat it some more, while everyone else is waiting. We can't even check it to see if it is real cake, let alone taste it.

Jason M. Johnson
Biophysics Program,
Harvard University,
Cambridge, MA 02138, USA
E-mail: johnson@arep.med.harvard.edu

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ICRISAT's Accomplishments

The News & Comment article "Midlife crisis threatens center for semiarid tropics" by Pallava Bagla (2 Jan., p. 26) is critical of the impact of the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) on its stakeholders. As Bagla rightfully points out, ICRISAT's mandated crops are grown by resource-poor farmers in dry areas spread across 60 least-developed countries, and thus it would be unrealistic to expect dramatic improvements in those crops, unlike what happened with wheat and rice. Nevertheless, ICRISAT has made many positive contributions that are not clearly recognized. I mention a few such major achievements here.

■ More than 2 million germplasm accessions, breeding lines, and other material, including accessions originating from 130 countries, have been distributed worldwide.

■ Collaborative research by ICRISAT and national research programs has led to the release of 365 improved varieties of six crops in 70 countries. In addition, several hundred varieties are in the prerelease or advanced testing stages, and many are expected to be released during the next few years.

■ This research has been highly cost-effective. A study of a sample of 20 releases (out of 365) shows that these varieties have generated new income streams of $232 million—more than 10 times ICRISAT's annual budget.

■ ICRISAT scientists have developed a range of "intermediate products"—new laboratory protocols, standardized methods for disease screening, new insights into plant physiology, and techniques for virus detection—now being used widely by national scientists in different countries.

■ ICRISAT has helped train more than 3000 scientists and technicians from more than 90 countries. National research programs are stronger than ever before; the number of scientists with masters degrees or doctorates has tripled in several countries, and a number of national research programs are managed by scientists trained at ICRISAT.

ICRISAT has thus had a substantial impact on semiarid agriculture despite enormous challenges. It should receive continued and increased support and recognition for the sake of the billion or so, mostly poor, people it serves.

C. S. *Prakash*
Director,
Center for Plant Biotechnology Research,
Tuskegee University,
College of Agriculture,
Tuskegee, AL 36088, USA
E-mail: prakash@tusk.edu

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Fractality in Nature

David Avnir *et al.* (*Science*'s Compass, 2 Jan., p. 39) pose the question, "Is the geometry of nature fractal?" By considering results from 96 reports that have claimed fractality in natural systems, they show that the declared fractality spans on the average only about 1.5 decades (orders of magnitude). Accordingly, they question the practice of