Response

During preparation of the News Focus article, Galson told me in an interview and in written correspondence—in unambiguous language—that despite discussions with NCI since EPA's 1997 childhood cancer conference, he continued to disagree with NCI about trends in childhood cancer. Several outside scientists who have been involved in EPA's childhood cancer activities explained in interviews that they shared Galson's view. Even if EPA and NCI now publicly see eye to eye, disagreement appears to remain in the scientific community.

Jocelyn Kaiser

Decay Rate of Beryllium-7 in Different Environments

The News of the Week article "Tweaking the clock of radioactive decay" (29 Oct., p. 882) by Richard A. Kerr focuses on the finding by Chih-An Huh (*1*), published in *Earth and Planetary Science Letters*, that beryllium-7 decays at a different rate depending on what form it is in (hydrated ion, hydroxide, or oxide). However, relatively large variations in the decay rate of beryllium-7 in different environments had already been reported before Huh published his results.

About 4 months before Huh's publication, we published an article (*2*) reporting that the decay rate of beryllium-7 implanted in gold is slower than when it is implanted in Al_2O_3 by a relatively large amount (0.72%). This result and many others have been understood using the linear muffin-tin orbital (LMTO) method and Hartree's calculations, and the implications of these results in different fields have been discussed (*2*). Before our work, W. K. Hensley *et al.* (*3*) applied a high pressure of up to 270 kilobars to ^{7}BeO and found that the decay rate increased by 0.59%. In his article, Chih-An Huh reports that the decay rate of beryllium-7 is about 1.0% faster when the beryllium is in the chemical form $Be^{2+}(OH_2)_4$, as compared with BeO. Earlier, however, H. W. Johlige *et al.* (*4*) also measured the difference between the decay rates of beryllium-7 in the same matrices and found it to be (0.0374 ± 0.0077)% faster as compared with BeO. They also measured the differences of beryllium-7 decay rates in many other chemical forms and detected only tiny variations of the order of 0.1% (*4*). Such differing results have yet to be discussed.

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1. Chih-An Huh, *Earth Planet. Sci. Lett.* **171**, 325 (1999).
2. A. Ray *et al.*, *Phys. Lett. B* **455**, 69 (1999).
3. W. K. Hensley, W. A. Basset, J. R. Huizenga, *Science* **181**, 1164 (1973).
4. H. W. Johlige, D. C. Aumann, H. J. Born, *Phys. Rev.* **C2**, 1616 (1970).

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

In the image accompanying the News of the Week article "Windfall breeds fresh but vulnerable crop of grants" by Jocelyn Kaiser (21 Jan., p. 402), the oat-corn hybrid is on the left, not the right as mentioned in the legend.

In Peter E. Black's letter under the title "Biosphere Management: Some tools of the trade" (14 Jan., p. 234), note 1 was not included. It should have read "P. E. Black, *Water Res. Bull.* **31**, 589 (1995)." Also, regarding Black's affiliation, there is no Department of Water and Related Land Resources. He is with the Faculty of Forestry at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Foresty.

In the report "Constraints on slow earthquake dynamics from a swarm in central Italy" by L. Crescentini, A. Amoruso, and R. Scarpa (10 Dec., p. 2132), the word "Fision" in the second footnote of the affiliations should have read "Fisica."