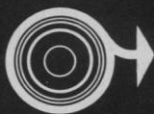


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spray several times, so I requested to see the label on the insecticide bomb. It read: "Airosol Company Inc., G-1152 Aircraft Insecticide Bomb, Neodesha, Kansas. Active Ingredients: Pyrethrins 1.0%, DDT 3.0%, Cyclohexanone 5.0%, Mineral Oil 6.0%. Inert Ingredients: Dichlorodifluoromethane 59.5%, Trichloromonofluoromethane 25.5%." What really caught my eye was not so much the fact that DDT is in truth being sprayed in tightly packed, poorly ventilated aircraft, but the warning at the bottom of the label in bold black letters "*Avoid Inhalation of Aerosol Mist,*" and what I assume must be both the source of the caution notice and the order to spray the aircraft, "U.S. Public Health Service (71.5.3E)."

The aircraft in which I was a passenger was sprayed three separate times before three separate landings, several times while passengers were drinking beverages served by the stewardesses. Although it is a relatively short flight from San José to Miami, it is difficult to hold one's breath that long, and contrary to what Jukes might think, we have learned something about the effects of DDT on human health since 1959 ... or have we?

DAVID K. EVANS

*Department of Anthropology,  
Wake Forest University,  
Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27109*

### Sonic Booms over Cities

It is surprising that F. G. Finger and R. M. McInturff, after giving *quantitative* accounts of many meteorological problems facing the supersonic transport planes ("Meterology and the supersonic transport," 2 Jan., p. 16) discuss the sonic boom in *qualitative* terms only. Why not inform the readers that the sonic boom overpressure will be 2 to 4 pounds per square foot and that this is twice the overpressure used in the 1964 Oklahoma City sonic boom tests—which resulted in damage payments exceeding \$94,000?

WILLIAM A. SHURCLIFF

*Citizens League Against the Sonic Boom, 19 Appleton Street,  
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138*

We were concerned "only with the atmospheric influences on sonic boom propagation, and with the prospects for predicting the location and intensity of the boom." Although, as we pointed out, there are other problems related

to the sonic boom, it seemed to us more appropriate to give a reference to a comprehensive discussion of these problems than to attempt ourselves to delve into an area outside our specialty (1).

In the interest of fairness, we offer the following quotation from a speech by John H. Shaffer, FAA Administrator, on 17 November:

"There will be no sonic boom nuisance or annoyance, because the whole program is based on the President's policy that the plane will not be operated at boom-producing speeds over populated areas."

FREDERICK G. FINGER

RAYMOND M. MCINTURFF

*National Meteorological Center,  
ESSA, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910*

### Reference

1. K. D. Kryter, *Science* **163**, 359 (1969).

### Mistaken Identity

The carelessness described by Goldman (Letters, 16 Jan.) is not limited to suppliers of radioactive biochemicals. We recently received nonradioactive samples of epinephrine and norepinephrine from a major supplier of biochemicals; unfortunately, they were in bottles bearing the opposite labels.

We first used the material labeled L-arterenol bitartrate as a substrate for phenethanolamine N-methyl transferase, the enzyme that methylates norepinephrine, and knew something was amiss when we found no activity in an assay used daily in our lab. Thin-layer chromatography showed that the bottle marked L-arterenol bitartrate actually contained epinephrine (in this case, the product of the enzyme). Another bottle from the same supplier was labeled L-epinephrine bitartrate; that bottle contained norepinephrine.

We were lucky that our experimental situation readily revealed the error. Possible scientific disaster awaits others with the same preparations if they happen to be working with one of the many experimental situations in which norepinephrine and epinephrine react qualitatively the same. The pharmacologist studying adrenergic blocking drugs, for example, might obtain results that he would accept, but which would be quite wrong. I therefore feel obliged to provide the name of the supplier and the lot numbers of the erroneously labeled catecholamines to anyone who

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\*Methyl pentene polymer

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may have doubts as to the identity of his samples.

Goldman suggested that investigators should "report such incidents promptly to their colleagues and forcefully to their suppliers." We have now done both.

RAY W. FULLER

*Lilly Research Laboratories,  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206*

## Nonhuman Primates

A simian virus reference center has been developed at this laboratory to provide assistance for individuals working in biomedical research with non-human primates. With grants from NIH and the World Health Organization [*WHO Chronicle* 23, 112 (1969)] we propose to develop a working repository for simian viruses, provide reagents such as certified reference seed virus strains and specific antisera, furnish diagnostic services and serum survey data on viruses of both human and simian origin, act as an information exchange with other primate centers, and train students in virological laboratory procedures associated with primate investigations.

S. S. KALTER

*Division of Microbiology and  
Infectious Diseases, Southwest  
Foundation, P.O. Box 28147,  
San Antonio, Texas 78228*

## Desalination of Cold Seawater

In "Dry lands and desalted water" (23 Jan., p. 339) Young suggests that a maximum cost of about 20 cents per 1000 gallons for desalinated water represents the limit below which irrigation agriculture using this water source can begin to be economical for certain crops. The cost of water from presently operating desalination plants is discouragingly higher. A recent study (1) of water production costs of the 59 largest of these plants, operating around the world, reveals that 57 percent of them cannot produce water below \$3 per 1000 gallons and only 5 percent show costs below \$1. Although Young points to the hoped-for cost reductions expected through engineering advances and the development of atomic reactor powered dual-purpose plants, it will be some time before these improvements can lower the cost of desalinated

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