

## Anthrax Appeal

Casting an ever wider net in its hunt for the anthrax killer, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) recruited 32,238 potential new tipsters last week. In an e-mail addressed to the entire U.S. membership of the American Society for Microbiology (ASM), the agency urged ASM's "talented men and women" to share information that might lead to identification of the perpetrator.

"It is very likely that one or more of you know this person," wrote Washington Field Office assistant director Van Harp, re-



Suited Marines at the U.S. Capitol.

minding ASM members of the \$2.5 million reward. FBI profilers

say scientists should be looking for a "standoffish" lab worker with access to anthrax and the equipment to refine it.

ASM's top officials chewed the matter over and consulted a lawyer before forwarding the e-mail to members. In an accompanying letter they call their decision "appropriate" and a "patriotic act." (It is also the case that FBI could have purchased or subpoenaed a list of members.) Although a few members have complained about the move, others have already called to say they have tips to pass along, says ASM's Barbara Hyde.

## Ohio the Next Kansas?

The price of evolution is eternal vigilance, as they're discovering in Ohio. Last month, state legislators introduced a bill calling on teachers to "disclose the historical nature" of evolutionary theory and to help students "understand why origins science may generate controversy."

Eugenie Scott of the National Center for Science Education in El Cerrito, California, says the Ohio bill represents a ripple effect from the "Santorum Amendment." That language was added last summer by Senator Rick Santorum (R-PA) to a federal education bill urging teachers to tell students why evolutionary concepts generate controversy. Lawmakers eventually stripped the amendment from the bill, but it's "still being promoted as giving congressional approval to 'evidence against evolution' proposals," she says.

"At this rate, Ohio could be the next Kansas," says Scott, referring to a controversy that led to the ouster of several antievolution Kansas state school board members after they tried to rewrite state science teaching standards (*Science*, 17 December 1999, p. 2242). Ohio's Board of Education is also working on a new set of science standards, and advocates of the intelligent design theory of creation are trying to get references to evolution deleted or qualified with references to the "tentative" nature of evolutionary theory.

A lawyer who argued for intelligent design in Kansas was recently brought in to address the Ohio board.

And another bill has been introduced that would give the state legislature final say over the standards. "We clearly have a growing fundamentalist population in Ohio," says philosophy professor Patricia Princehouse of Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. But an active counteroffensive is in the works: This week Princehouse and others formed a group called Ohio Citizens for Science. So far, she says, publicity has just been word of mouth, but "we've had tremendous response."

Scott predicts more activity over the evolution issue in this election year. Already, a Washington state lawmaker has introduced a bill declaring the teaching of evolution "repugnant to the principles of the Declaration of Independence." The rationale? The Declaration says that "all men are created."



## Biotech Nursery Rhyme

If you desire some greenish pork,  
Your day has come. Just grab a fork!  
Biologists at Kinki U.  
(That's in Japan, for all of you),  
Perhaps in search of wealth or fame,  
Have engineered, or so they claim,  
A porcine host with spinach gene.  
A healthy meal they hope to glean.  
Will it sell? I have no guess.  
But as for me, I must confess,  
I will not eat green ham and eggs,  
Not even if my editor begs.

—*Science* reporter Charles Seife, inspired by a 24 January news item on "the world's first success in breeding mammals with plant genes."

## World's Richest Forest in Peril

Indonesia's Tesso Nilo forest in Sumatra is biologically the world's richest lowland forest, according to a new report by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). It's also under immediate threat of extinction.

Tesso Nilo is a 1950-square-kilometer tract that is home to tigers, gibbons, and tapirs as well as some 200 elephants, making it one of the most important remaining Sumatran elephant habitats. On

Elephant in the mist.



top of that, it is extraordinarily rich in plants. An inventory of nine 200-square-meter plots revealed 218 vascular plant species. That's a much higher density than in 19 other regions that have been studied this way—including areas in Brazil, Cameroon, and New Guinea, according to WWF.

But all this richness is falling victim to booming pulp wood plantations. "Giant trees were literally falling down around us as we took measurements and counted plants," says the report's author, ecologist Andrew Gillison of the Center for Biodiversity Management in Queensland, Australia.

The report says that a plan for sustainable development, drawn up by WWF, is being undermined by pervasive illegal logging, corruption, and ineffectual law enforcement. At this pace, says WWF, Tesso Nilo forest could be largely destroyed by 2005.