

The great DDT hoax

Fusion Energy Foundation blasts environmentalist fraud

Tim Pike, Fusion Energy Foundation representative in the San Francisco area, exposed the fraud of the ban on the pesticide DDT in the June, 1979 issue of Fusion magazine, excerpted at length here:

When the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency banned the use of DDT in June 1972, it issued a death sentence to the Third World, condemning millions of people to suffer and die from the debilitating diseases that DDT had brought under control.

The EPA acted on the basis of a "Big Lie" manufactured by the fledgling environmentalist movement and its zero-growth sponsors. Their Big Lie then—that DDT is a killer—was similar in form to their propaganda today that equates nuclear power with cancer. In both cases, the assertion of a known fraud often and widely enough begins to make the public doubt the truth.

In fact, there is *no* scientific evidence that warrants the banning of DDT. As the U.S. Public Health Service noted in its recommendation to the EPA Sept. 9, 1971: "The known health hazard from DDT is essentially zero. Examined in this light, the benefits to mankind from the use of DDT for the control of malaria far outweigh even any potential hazard, on the basis of our total accumulated knowledge regarding DDT."

Long-term studies have shown that DDT is so safe to humans that doses 100 times as strong as those that occurred in periods of widespread DDT use have had no ill effects. Equally demonstrable, the consequence of the ban was an immediate rise in death and debilitation from the human diseases that DDT had effectively controlled—malaria (the world's greatest disease problem), typhus, plague, yellow fever, encephalitis, spotted fever, sleeping sickness, and others.

The EPA and the environmentalist supporters must be held accountable for their deliberate crime: There was not a single human death from DDT usage; there have been untold thousands of deaths, millions of disease-stricken persons, and an incalculable loss in human potential, as a result of the DDT banning.

As I shall show, the so-called facts mustered to convince the public that DDT was lethal were contrived

and then blown up into scare headlines by the media. The persons responsible readily admit why they would conduct such a hoax; in their world view, people are a problem and the world is better off without them. In the same way, they feel that the world would be better off without advanced technology, mechanized farming, and the U.S. agribusiness industry that has helped feed a growing world.

As official statistics from governments, the United Nations, and health agencies show, DDT use had helped control disease so effectively that entire populations were freed to realize productive lives. Similarly, DDT contributed to insect control so effectively that in some areas of application, food production increased by more than 40 percent.

In the Asian subcontinent, for example, DDT use had virtually cleared the mosquito out of this so-called indigenous malaria area. In 1961, Pakistan reported 7 million cases of malaria. After an aggressive spraying and treatment program, the disease was reduced to 9,500 cases by 1967, almost a 1,000-fold decrease. After a ban on DDT use, the malaria toll had climbed to 10 million cases by 1975.

The story is the same for India and Sri Lanka, where DDT production was stopped after the environmentalist onslaught here and the increased price of petrochemicals following the 1973 Mideast war. India brought the number of malaria cases down from an estimated 75 million to about 50,000 in 1961, after a vigorous DDT campaign. From 1961 through 1963, there were fewer than 100,000 cases in the entire country, but by 1977 "according to some estimates, the number of malaria cases reached at least 30 million and perhaps 50 million."

What this means for the future of the Asian subcontinent and the rest of the world where malaria saps the strength of the population is exemplified by the reports from Cambodia under the recently deposed Pol Pot government. In 1976, the government reported that the country was unable to harvest its rice crop adequately because more than 80 percent of the workforce had been "worn out" by malaria.

The mortality caused by malaria varies considerably,

depending on the standard of living, nutritional levels, and the specific type of malarial infection. (There are four major types of malaria-causing organisms that differ widely in the severity of the disease.) Anywhere from less than 1 percent to more than 20 percent of the individuals infected by the disease-carrying mosquito will die from the malaria. Additionally, for every one death due directly to the malaria, it is estimated that there are five deaths from other causes that result from the weakened state.

To take another example closer to home, the non-usage of DDT to destroy the bollweevil in southern cotton areas has been calculated to have cost more than 450 million pounds of cotton in lost yields. Similar calculations could be made for cereals, vegetables, and fruits.

The fraudulent evidence

The environmentalist attack on DDT was based on three main arguments: the predicted mass die-off of the bird population, the allegation that DDT can never be eliminated from the environment, and the charge that DDT causes cancer.

Most incredibly, the Environmental Protection Agency banned DDT after months of hearings in which reputable U.S. and world health agencies all testified against the ban, presenting sound scientific evidence (see box). On the other hand, the environmentalists presented evidence characterized by poor experiments, dubious theory, and just plain lies.

Lying about scientific evidence was a primary technique in the environmentalist battle against DDT. The widely read precedent for this goes back to Rachel Carson and her landmark 1962 book *Silent Spring*, a sort of wildlife bible. "When DDT was introduced into the diet of Japanese quail, few eggs hatched," Carson wrote. To back up her statement, she cited a 1956 article by J. B. DeWitt, "Chronic Toxicity to Quail and Pheasants of Some Chlorinated Insecticides," in *Agriculture and Food Chemistry* (vol. 4, no. 10, pp. 853-66).

What to most credulous readers must seem like the epitome of academic style, however, turns out to be a remarkable bit of deceit. For those who bother to check out the DeWitt article, they will find that this is not at all what the article says. On page 865, Table 3 explains that the amount of DDT introduced into the quail diet was 200 parts per million during the reproduction period (the average human intake during the DDT years was 0.0005 parts per million) and that 80 percent of these quail eggs hatched compared to 83.9 percent of the eggs laid by the control group. The reader also will find that 92.8 percent of the eggs from the DDT-fed birds were fertile, compared to only 89 percent of the eggs from the control group.

These weren't the only data Carson left out of her book. Table 4 in the DeWitt article, on the same page, notes that pheasants fed DDT experienced a great

increase in the survival rate of their chicks. Pheasants fed 50 parts per million of DDT throughout the year hatched 80 percent of their eggs, while the control birds hatched only 57.4 percent. Furthermore, after two weeks, 100 percent of the DDT birds survived, compared to only 94.8 percent of the control group.

DDT forever

The charge that DDT never breaks down chemically has been demonstrated to be untrue in the years since the ban. Furthermore, there was plenty of evidence at the time of the anti-DDT fight that this was the case. Dr. Philip Butler, who gave testimony during the hearings that DDT would be with us forever, claimed not to know of the work of his own research colleagues at Gulf Breeze, Florida who demonstrated in 1969 that 92 percent of all DDT, DDD, and DDE broke down in seawater in just 32 days. In 1971, Butler was still shrieking that up to 25 percent of all DDT compounds ever produced were transferred to the oceans, where they remained forever.

Then, there is the case of Charles F. Wurster, secretary of the board of trustees of the Environmental Defense Fund and an associate professor of environmental sciences at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Wurster and fellow Environmental Defense Fund scientist George M. Woodwell deserve the most credit for promoting the myth that DDT is with us forever. However, first one and then the other was forced to admit in testimony that their much-touted measurements of extremely high DDT residue levels in Maryland marshes did not reflect the general situation. Why? They had taken their first so-called alarming measurements at an isolated marsh site that just happened to be the spot at which the municipal DDT spray trucks cleaned their tanks.

When pressed about why they had not taken measures to correct the mistaken impression created by their widely publicized preliminary results, the good doctor Woodwell claimed that he did not think it was necessary; and besides, he said, the Environmental Defense Fund lawyers had advised him not to mention his own published work proving the earlier results to be grossly exaggerated.

Cancer

The environmentalist charges linking DDT to cancer are generally an embellishment on a study that indicated that DDT can induce liver tumors in mice. But further investigations into this area have yielded some embarrassing results for the environmentalists, for, in fact, there is reason to believe that DDT may be a cancer inhibitor.

Epidemiologically, there has never been a relationship shown between human cancers and exposures to DDT, despite a large number of workers who have been exposed to large doses of the chemical for a long

period, going back over 30 years. Indeed, the federal government, which has been listing just about everything as carcinogenic or potentially carcinogenic, removed DDT from its list just this year.

As for the theory that DDT may be a cancer inhibitor: Certain birds seem to show increased longevity and reproductivity in areas heavily "contaminated" by DDT. Since these birds show fewer tumors, it is hypothesized that the DDT protects the birds from the carcinogenic effects of the aflatoxin (a potent carcinogen naturally produced by grain mold) present on the grain they eat. The theory is that DDT mobilizes hepatic enzymes that are capable of detoxifying aflatoxin.

As Hart and Fouts reported in a 1965 study:

This induction of liver enzymes is the most likely cause of lower rates of cancer among vertebrates that have ingested DDT. It may explain the increased populations of birds in the near marshes that have been sprayed with DDT, because the birds can temporarily detoxify aflatoxin which would otherwise produce cancers in the birds after they ingest those toxins with natural food.

Other studies have shown similar effects, whereby DDT diminished the effectiveness of a substance's ability to induce tumors. For example, writing in 1972, Ottobone reported on feeding experiments conducted with four generations of dogs in an effort to induce DDT-related tumors:

There have been more reproductive failures and associated problems among the control dogs than there have been in the DDT dogs. As a result, the animal caretakers have dubbed the control group "the DDT-deficient dogs." The levels fed to the animals are, in reality, nearer to 1,000 and 10,000 times the quantities of DDT that Americans eat each day. We have examined every dog in the study that has finished its role in the project. As I mentioned earlier we have autopsied approximately 500 dogs. There have been no tumors related to doses of DDT.

Indeed, the fact that DDT induces liver enzyme synthesis was the reasoning behind a physician's successful treatment of a human hepatic-failure using DDT as the medicine of choice.

When all these fraudulent arguments were said and done, the environmentalists then pulled out studies claiming that DDT wouldn't do any good anyway since mosquitoes had become resistant to the pesticide. Ironically, where resistance had developed, it came about because of the very premature cessation of the use of DDT as a result of the environmentalists' efforts. The halting of DDT-spray programs before the elimination of completely susceptible malaria-carrying mosquitoes

had the effect of reducing dosage to the mosquitoes below the lethal amount, thereby allowing them to survive and breed while exposed to sublethal doses. This led to the rise of resistant organisms in a few areas. Now, in order to eliminate malaria in these places, a more comprehensive and expensive program involving spraying with many chemicals as well as drainage will be necessary.

Once again, the environmentalist "cure" has led to a less healthy planet.

An American scandal

The overwhelming evidence presented in the years that the DDT battle raged before the Environmental Protection Agency and in the courts said that DDT was safe and necessary. The great majority of the authorities on biological science, public health, agriculture, and toxicology were strongly opposed to the DDT ban and said so, as did the chemical industry. As Dr. Philip Handler, president of the National Academy of Sciences, put it, the DDT decision was "a kind of national scandal, the basis for it political."

After several months of hearings the EPA examiner, Edmund Sweeny, ruled April 26, 1972 as a conclusion of law, that DDT was not a carcinogenic or mutagenic hazard to man. EPA Administrator William Ruckelshaus overrode this decision and ignored the thousands of pages of testimony. "Because of the importance of the case of the registration of the many uses of DDT I have decided to ... decide this case myself," Ruckelshaus said.

It was acknowledged by his staff (and evident from his decision) that he did not read the record of the hearings and paid no attention to the findings of the EPA examiner. On June 14, Ruckelshaus ruled that DDT was a "nonacceptable risk" because: (1) it is persistent in the environment; (2) it accumulates and becomes magnified in the food chain, therefore constituting an "unknown, unquantifiable risk to man and lower organisms"; and (3) it has harmful effects on phytoplankton, beneficial insects, freshwater invertebrates, fish and birds, and is "a potential human carcinogen."

After issuing the order that banned DDT, Ruckelshaus issued an appeal on his personal stationery for funds for the Environmental Defense Fund, the group that had spearheaded the "kill DDT" campaign.

The DDT ban was the opening salvo in the continuing environmentalist war against industry, agribusiness, chemicals, and high technology in general. The fact that the ban was initiated and persisted—despite scientific evidence that shows clearly that DDT is a boon, not a hazard, to mankind—should be a sobering warning to the ostriches in the nuclear industry who think they can survive without fighting back.