

Monsanto

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August 10, 1983

*file
nitro*

Letters to the Editor
THE NEW YORK TIMES
229 West 43rd Street
New York, N.Y. 10036

Dear Editor:

Your August 4 article, "Dioxin Leaves Mark on a City Called Nitro..." is flawed in its discussion of health studies of the workforce at Monsanto's plant there.

Your reporter inadvertently misinterpreted the facts when he stated that "One study, however, by Robert W. Baughman in preparation for a 1975 Harvard University doctoral dissertation, produced results differing with those (Monsanto-sponsored) studies."

The facts are these: The results cited as being produced by Mr. Baughman were not produced by him at all. His work was not a "study" of Monsanto's Nitro workers, as your article states but, rather, a review of the acute (short-term) symptoms following exposure to dioxin. These had been observed and documented in University of Cincinnati reports between 1949 and 1953 by Drs. Ashe and Suskind following their examinations of employees after the 1949 industrial accident. The latter also reported, by the way, that all these initial symptoms, except some residual cases of the skin disease, chloracne, gradually cleared up.

The study by Ms. Zack and Dr. Suskind was published in January 1980, not the 1950s, in the Journal of Occupational Medicine (attached). This was a mortality study, and it contained a description of the short-term clinical symptoms described previously by Drs. Ashe and Suskind.

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Monsanto-sponsored health examinations focused on both acute (short-term) and chronic (long-term) health effects of exposure to dioxins. Failure to acknowledge this, and to recognize that short-term and long-term health effects may differ, reflects a gross misunderstanding of the subject. We regret the attempt to infer, as the article clearly did, that there is something controversial about the different results.

Sincerely,


George Roush Jr., M.D.
Director, Department of Medicine
and Environmental Health

GR:ec

CC: Mr. William Robbins
570 Lindsey Drive
Wayne, Pa. 19087

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STURGEON LITIGATION

FROM THE FILES OF D. Bishop

THIS FILE HAS BEEN REVIEWED BY LINDA SHAPIRO

FOR:

- Documents describing the presence or potential presence of dioxin in Monsanto products.
- Documents referring to the toxicity of any Isomer of dioxins.
- Documents referring to the toxicity of any Chlorophenol or Chlorophenol product.
- Documents referring to health effects as they relate to the above.

DATE 4/22/85