

December 3, 1990

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Dear NAME OF REPORTER:

From October 21 to 24, thirty-eight of the world's foremost experts on dioxin convened at the Banbury Center of Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory to examine the scientific data pertaining to dioxins. The goal of the scientists and policy-makers was to reach a consensus on how to assess human risk for dioxin exposure and to establish an acceptable daily human intake of dioxin.

The outcome of the consensus conference was a rejection of the linear model for human exposure to dioxin; this model is currently used in the United States. The experts agreed that a receptor-mediated model is more accurate. (A linear model assumes that any exposure constitutes a risk. The receptor-based model allows for the presence of a substance in the environment, with no risk experienced below a certain level of exposure.)

In light of the implications of the conference outcome for assessments of dioxin's risk and for regulatory decisions, each of the three scientific chairmen of the conference has prepared a press statement to provide you with information on the conference outcome. Proceedings of the conference will be published by Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press in Spring 1991.

The conference chairmen were Michael Gallo, PhD, professor and chief, Division of Toxicology, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School; Robert J. Scheuplein, PhD, director, Office of Toxicological Services, U.S. Food and Drug Administration; and Cornelius A. van der Heijden, PhD, director, Department of Toxicology, National Institute of Public Health, The Netherlands.

In addition to the three statements on the conference outcome, enclosed are a list of conference participants and a background document on dioxin. The background document has been prepared by conference participant George Carlo, PhD, JD, an epidemiologist at the State University of New York at Buffalo and chairman of the Health and Environmental Sciences Group, Washington, D.C.

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