

April 10, 1968

Mr. Hugh Cook, Director
Technical Division
Wine Institute
717 Market Street
San Francisco, California 94103

Dear Mr. Cook:

Please accept my thanks for your letter of April 4th, 1968.

I quite agree with you, in view of the information which you have given me, that contamination of most of California wine with lead from the capsules does not occur. I am pleased to have this information, for my concern, as you rightfully supposed, is for the avoidance of such contamination, so far as it is possible, after the sources have been demonstrated.

You would be surprised, I am sure, to know how frequently opportunities for the contamination of food and beverages with lead occur, or have occurred in the past, in processing and packaging. The quantities involved are usually small, to be sure, but the composite effect on the absorption of lead by consumers, is appreciable. You will be interested to know that this has been diminishing in this country during the past few decades.

I may have mentioned the matter previously, but a very considerable attention has been drawn toward this problem, as it relates to alcoholic beverages, by virtue of the frequency with which "moonshine" liquors have been found to be dangerously high, because of the common use of automobile radiators in their distillation. It seems altogether certain that beer and wine will be examined frequently, and it will be beneficial to the wine industry in the United States if its product is found, generally, to be free of this taint.

Thanks for your invitation to lunch at some mutually convenient time. I shall bear this in mind in connection with future visits to San Francisco.

Very truly yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.
Professor Emeritus of
Occupational Medicine

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