

there an antidote?" One Orangevale resident, Kim McCleneghan (PhD, biology), made a chart comparing the toxicity of oftanol (oftanol's LD50\* is 28-38.7 mg/kg depending on the test animal and route of exposure) showing that oftanol is 18 times more toxic than diazinon, 14 times more toxic than chlordane, and more than twice as toxic as toxaphene (a nationally banned pesticide). Kim explained at a public meeting that "a lethal dose of oftanol for a child would be 0.25 g. or 0.009 oz. An ordinary sugar cube weighs 2 grams. A quantity of oftanol the size of a sugar cube is toxic enough to provide a lethal dose for eight children."

Our concerns were dismissed by CDFA officials who used all public opportunities to denigrate us and describe us as "hysterical." Amazingly, the press bought such obvious under-handed political ploys and further stereotyped those who reasonably and rationally objected to being subjected to poisonous substances against their will as "grandmas in calico print dresses, suburban cowboys and weekend farmers in khaki shorts,"<sup>4</sup> despite the fact that ACTION's core group mainly consisted of highly educated people who are aware of the potential biological dangers posed by pesticides.

ACTION was denied access to oftanol's health and safety studies by CDFA who state then, as now, that the data are confidential. Through two University of California Davis scientists, Wendal Kilgore (PhD) and Wallace Winter (PhD, M.D.), we found the help that the community so desperately needed.

In a public forum sponsored by the Sacramento Toxic Alliance, Dr. Kilgore's questions revealed that there were problems with oftanol other than acute toxicity, such as the lack of adequate studies on the movement of oftanol through soil, and the possibility that oftanol's toxicity could be magnified by the presence (or even simultaneous application) of other pesticides being used in the program. He also dryly pointed out that the colorfully bound "Environmental Assessment" booklet published by CDFA contained only two out of one hundred verifiable scientific citations on oftanol. On behalf of ACTION Samuel Reed, an environmental attorney assisted by Philip Fraley, filed a lawsuit in Superior Court asking for a restraining order against the use of oftanol. By court order, Drs. Kilgore and Winter were given access to the health and safety studies of oftanol. Mobay Chemical Company, the manufacturer of oftanol, had conducted all of these studies and the review by Winter and Kilgore, as evidenced by their sworn statement to the court, affirmed their concerns on each aspect. Some three hundred residents, with but a day's notice, wrote affidavits that were included in the suit, expressing their concerns over the use of toxic pesticides on their private properties and in public places. Petitions with some three thousand signatures objecting to the use of oftanol were collected by the community.

At this time, few people publicly expressed concern about the other pesticides being forcibly applied in the community. Most of the energy went into a "stop oftanol" movement. When the motion to restrain CDFA from using oftanol was denied by Superior court Judge Horace Ceccettini in August 1983, impetus foundered. Many of ACTION's early leaders fell away. A nucleus of environmentalists with broader concerns remained, however, and ACTION is active today.

While CDFA finished out their fall 1983 pesticide applications of some 25,000 pounds of carbaryl, oftanol and diazi-



non, we drafted a new petition to reflect the expanded philosophy of the group. The petition declares: "We are opposed to the mass compulsory use of toxic pesticides which 1. jeopardize public health and safety, 2. enter into the food chain and 3. contaminate ground, water, or air." The petition is being circulated in public meetings and at shopping centers.

David saw Goliath stagger a bit in November, 1983, when the results of antidotal testing on oftanol were released by University of California scientist, Barry Wilson. The testing had been suggested by Judge Ceccettini because of issues raised in our lawsuit. Wilson's findings were that "whereas atropine and 2-Pam were demonstrated to be effective antidotes when administered several times a day during the first few days after exposure . . . hens given 100 mg/kg [of oftanol] showed signs of organophosphate induced neuropathy [OPIDN]."<sup>5</sup> This disorder is irreversible and was found "in three separate trials on two different strains of chickens." Another finding that concerned the scientist was that "levels as low as 0.1 mg/kg of body weight produced ataxia [muscular dysfunction] following daily administration." As Kilgore and Winter had indicated in their court affidavit that oftanol accumulates in foliage and that lawn clippings should be considered and treated as toxic waste, and as no known studies on the permeability of oftanol (or diazinon or carbaryl) into plastic pipe have ever been conducted, the residents in the treatment zone were being forced to undertake terrible risks without their knowledge or informed consent.

In December, 1983, CDFA withdrew oftanol from registration in California and the EPA is requiring Mobay to do additional long range studies on oftanol, while allowing the pesticide's national registration to continue.

\* LD50 is that amount of a compound that can be expected to kill 50% of the test animals. It is expressed as the ratio of the weight of the chemical (in milligrams) to the weight of the animal (in kilograms).