

Monsanto

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The Editor
BOSTON GLOBE
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Gentlemen:

I call your attention to the bylined story in your Sunday, January 10, edition with the headline "Study of Monsanto Plant Links Cancer Incidence to Work Site." It concerned results of a University of Massachusetts mortality study.

The authors, Messrs. Bush and Michak, resurrected a four-month old story and presented it as though it were current news. It did not cover the results of a more extensive study on the same subject by the University of Pittsburgh. A number of quotations, particularly those attributed to myself and Dr. Marsh, were made months ago, although, in the context of the article, they appear to have been made "yesterday."

For instance, my comment referred to in the article, "I think we'll know within a couple of weeks whether there really is any connection between these excesses and past exposures in the work force," was made October 16. This was after we had seen the University of Massachusetts study but before we had analyzed the results of the far more complete University of Pittsburgh study.

Dr. Marsh was quoted as having delivered the University of Pittsburgh study to us in May of 1981. In fact, only a preliminary report on the study was delivered at that time.

In any event, after reviewing the University of Massachusetts study and the University of Pittsburgh study, we notified our employees on October 30, 1981, that:

"The University of Massachusetts study purports to find excess deaths from several cancers, most particularly digestive cancer. These results are not confirmed by the University of Pittsburgh. The University of Pittsburgh study shows that those who died of digestive cancer were less likely to have worked for long periods in areas where vinyl chloride or polyvinyl chloride was present."

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