

NEW BOOK DOCUMENTS THE FALLACY OF THE  
POLITICAL MYTH OF AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS  
AS CANCER CAUSING AGENTS

Rachel Carson was a dedicated scientist. There was room for little else in her life. During most of her career, she enjoyed an impeccable reputation among her peers.

Toward the end, she "cracked". Turning from fact to doomsday theory, she published *Silent Spring* in the early 1960s. As a result, she died lonely, discredited and forgotten by her colleagues.

But she spawned a "new school" of negativism that continues to gain momentum as it affects the lives of every resident of Planet Earth. Under the umbrella of "environmentalism", such words as contamination, carcinogen and pollution have become everyday expressions in our vocabulary.

New national and state governmental bodies like the Environmental Protection Agency and Occupational Safety and Health Administration drain our tax "contributions". Organizations like the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health provide jobs for persons rejected by the scientific community. Groups like the Audubon Society and Sierra Club have "conned" journalists and gained a platform for "issues" far beyond their ken and "far out" from the worthy purposes for which they were established.

The net result has been an ill-informed and disillusioned public.

Finally, after 20 years of chaos, an all-encompassing synopsis has emerged to help swing the pendulum back to the middle and bring these issues into rational focus.

With the publication this Summer of *The Apocalypitics*, Edith Efron points out the following:

- Most causes of cancer occur naturally. Man-made chemicals and other products contribute very little to this health threat.
- Projections linking cancer in laboratory animals to humans are not scientifically valid. The only way to properly evaluate this is to study man himself.
- By "laying the blame" on pesticides and other chemicals, science has been corrupted, and the public deceived by unqualified politicians who want to regulate business.
- Lazy journalists have perpetuated the myth by not bothering to investigate all sides of the controversy.

In reviewing this monumental compilation for Science, Bruce Ames, chairman of the Department of Biochemistry at the University of California, points out that "the rates for most types of cancer are declining. Only a small

fraction of human cancer appears to be due to occupation or pollution. Since the incidence of carcinogens in the natural world is very high, it is not sensible to try to regulate very low levels of man-made carcinogens.

"We are eating 10,000 times more natural toxic chemicals made in large amounts by plants to keep off insects and other predators than we are of man-made pesticide residues. Thus, the risk from man-made carcinogens is tiny compared to that from natural carcinogens.

"We need some Edith Efrons to remind us that the increased health and wealth that industrial society has brought us has come from not being unreasonably fearful about new technology," Ames concludes.

Carcinogen consultant William Havender adds in *Fortune*, that of the tens of thousands of chemicals produced by modern industry, only 10 can cause cancer in both animals and humans. One (arsenic) is carcinogenic in man, but not in animals. Of those that cause cancer in animals, evidence linking incidence in humans is not clear.

But, "every uncertainty in animal tests is resolved against the chemicals. The deck is deliberately stacked in every way imaginable."

Let's hope this definitive work rocks some complacent boats and helps bring this issue back into a sane perspective. If you can't find a copy in your bookstore, I'll be glad to loan mine. The line forms to the rear.

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