

Contaminated Waste Sites Property and Your Health: Drinking Water, Ambient Water, Air, Soils/Sediment/Study, Food, by W.L. Lappenbusch, Lappenbusch Environmental Health, Inc., Alexandria, VA, 1988, No ISBN given, 376 pp., US \$95.

There are few "hotter scientific" topics than risk assessment in the United States as the country faces the general problem of chemical safety and the specific problem of the impact of pollutant chemicals at hazardous waste sites. The art (I don't think it is truly a science yet) of risk assessment is in its infancy. There are many unknowns, the calculations and the results are rather inexact. But they are improving, and books such as this one, providing a practical guide to the topic, will help.

The book probably would be better titled "Risk Assessment at Contaminated Hazardous Waste Sites". It is written by an expert in the field who appears to have much experience with chemical impacts on the human body. The book has been produced by his own firm in an 8 1/2 inch by 11 inch volume, photo-reproduced from a typed manuscript.

It is not however a book for the neophyte. The author assumes the reader knows much. Indeed he begins with SARA (the Superfund Amendments of 1986) and not with CERCLA itself (as I think he should have). Indeed the whole book lacks much explanation that would make it useful to the non-expert (this reviewer falls well into this category) as well as the expert in risk assessment.

However, the book is full of much useful material — data on chemicals, exposure limits, methods of calculating body burdens and specific examples thereof. But one overall example, applied to a real or a pseudo-contaminated site, would have been useful in addition to the short specific examples.

Some material I would have left out includes a National Priority List (Superfund) of sites (that list changes often) and the quantity of chemicals that have to be reported under CERCLA; I fail to see the relevance of the latter to the topic nor the need for the former. In addition, I would have placed some of the data (lists of US EPA official addresses for example) in the appendix if I included them at all.

Finally, the references are difficult to use. The author refers to "EPA" (85), but where there are several EPA reports published in the year listed, one is not sure which report is referred to. I would prefer a reference by number. Additionally, the reference list is almost exclusively to government publications. I would suspect there are other relevant, non-governmental documents that could have been cited and more easily accessed.

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