Twenty-one well-written and like the first chapter, well-referenced chapters follow. Virtually no aspect of dioxin production, emission, contamination, and affect is left undiscussed.

In Chapter 5, Birnbaum and Farland of the U.S. EPA (in a chapter entitled "Health Risk Characterization of Dioxins and Related Compounds") note: "For cancer outcomes, the epidemiological evidence provides consistent findings of statistically significant elevations, with some showing dose-response for all cancers combined with lung cancer risk in occupational cohorts, along with evidence of possible additional tissue-specific cancer rate elevation."

The toxicity of related compounds also is discussed. For example, "Human Health Effects of Polychlorinatedbiphenyls" (PCBs) are the topic of Chapter 17 by Longnecker, Korrick, and Moisich. These authors review data on PCB exposure in relation to health effects in humans. In the summary of their chapter, they write "The epidemiological evidence supporting adverse effects of background-level PCB exposure is not strong. Nonetheless, the data are suggestive but inconclusive regarding alterations in thyroid economy, immune function, neurodevelopment, and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Evidence that workers occupationally exposed to PCBs have had life-threatening consequences is also not strong. Yet such exposure does appear to be related to altered hepatic function, adverse dermatologic effects, and possibly increased risk of selected cancers."

The final three chapters are devoted to accidents that resulted in (dioxin) environmental contamination. By title, these chapters are: Health Consequences of the Seveso, Italy Accident; The Yusho Rice Oil Poisoning Incident; and The Yucheng Rice Oil Poisoning Incident.

The editors are to be commended for authoring this second edition of a definitive work on the health effects of dioxin (the first edition was in 1994). The contributors they selected have done an excellent job at presenting the data on the health effects of dioxins and related chemicals.

G.F. Bennett

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Misconceptions About the Causes of Cancer

Lois Swirsky Gold, Thomas H. Slone, Neela B. Manley, Bruce N. Ames (Eds.), The Fraser Institute, Vancouver, BC, 2002, 135 pp., US$ 19.95 (plus US$ 10.00 for shipping (US)), ISBN 0-88975-195-1

The very word cancer strikes fear in almost everyone but many misconceptions underlie this fear. Is cancer caused by dioxin, pesticide, foods, or other exposures, and what is the relative risk of those exposures? Are cancer risks increasing in North America? Would banning pesticides lead to an improvement in public health?

The above questions and others are answered by "leading scientists at the University of California, Berkeley" including Bruce N. Ames, professor of microbiology. Many of his rational articles on the topic are cited in the text. To address the many misconceptions about the causes and prevalence of cancer, the four scientists who wrote this book provide a comprehensive, though not exhaustive, review of the literature. The text notes that there are more than 7000 papers published on dioxin alone (see review of *Dioxins in Health* published in this journal).

The authors highlight nine misconceptions (each misconception noted below is discussed in a separate chapter) about pollution, pesticides, and the prevalence of cancer, showing that:

- Cancer rates are not soaring in either Canada or the United States.
- Synthetic chemicals at levels found in the environment have not been shown to be an important cause of cancer.
- Reducing pesticide residues is not an effective way to prevent cancer.
- Potential cancer hazards are not primarily the result of human exposures to synthetic chemicals.
- The toxicology of the synthetic chemicals is not different from that of natural chemicals which make up 99.99% of chemical exposure.
- High dose animal cancer tests do not provide enough information to assess human cancer risks at the usual levels of exposure.
- Synthetic chemicals do not pose greater carcinogenic cancers than natural chemicals.
- Pesticides and other synthetic chemicals at levels found in the environment are not likely to be significant in disrupting human hormones.
- The current regulatory policy of low, hypothetical risks is not effective in advancing public health.

In the brochure describing the book, Ken Green, chief scientist and director of the Risk and Environment Policy Centre at the Fraser Institute, says "The ever-longer life expectancies and ever-healthier lives enjoyed by people in developed countries is evidence that technological development and economic freedom are wellsprings of health and safety. Yet the constant drumbeat of alarmism about risk blurs people's understanding; denies them the ability to make lifestyle choices that would best reduce their personal risk; and leads them to support poor allocation of scarce public health resources." This book discusses many of these misconceptions and provides a rational discussion of risk.

Misconceptions About the Causes of Cancer is the third publication in The Fraser Institute's Risk Controversy Series, the purpose of which is to promote good policy, based on sound science and sound economics.

In my opinion, it is an excellent, rational analysis of cancer risk as posed by natural as well as synthetic chemicals.

G.F. Bennett

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Remediation of Chlorinated and Recalcitrant Compounds 2002 (Proceedings of the Third International Conference, 20–23 May 2002, Monterey, CA)
Arun R. Gavaskar and Abraham S.C. Chen (Eds.); Battelle Memorial Institute, Columbus, OH 2002, CD-ROM, ISBN 1-57477-132-9 (US$ 350.00)

Comprised of 321 separate papers presented to 1450 attendees at the conference held in Monterey, CA, in 2002, this computerized record of the conference proceedings contains a tremendous amount of information. I can only guess how many volumes of the Journal of Hazardous Materials it would take to publish all these papers. The number would not be inconsequential. The CD-ROM is an efficient way of recording and disseminating this vital information.