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COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
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October 23, 1975

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

Please excuse the crude typing. My typist is sick, and so I must type my letters with my particular limitations as a typist.

At the time of our phone conversation, I was unaware of your identity. In fact because of the background noise on the line, I had a difficult time hearing your words. It was only later, after a conversation with Professor Cooper that I finally recognized that you were the caller.

I was pleased and surprised to learn of your interest in the possibility of applying composting to the treatment of human wastes in developing countries. Much study has been conducted on the so-called hygienic aspects years ago, but then hygienic acceptability usually was based on reduction in fly generation. Methods for determining the incidence of pathogens and parasites were not available with the facility needed by the early investigators. As I mentioned over the phone, some work has been done in recent years, but not to the extent desired. This especially applies to conditions as they would exist in a developing country. A good avenue of approach would be along the lines being followed at the Farallones Institute. I visited the place on Tuesday of this week, and saw the "compost toilets" in action. After talking with two of the staff members, I could see how the method could be used in good stead in a developing country.

Another approach would be to anaerobically digest the excreta and other wastes to produce methane. This is being done to a considerable extent in India. Early this year I was on a panel concerned with the production of methane in developing countries. Our report has not been published as yet. You can obtain more information about the coming panel report from Dr. Norman Brown, National Academy of Sciences, National Research Council, 2101 Constitution Ave., Washington, D.C. 20418 (Phone: 202-393-8100).

If I can be of any assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Yours truly,

Clarence G. Golueke, Ph.D.
 Research Biologist

P.S. Other SERL reports will follow.
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