

MOWER, U.



THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

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NEW YORK, NY 10021

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JOSHUA LEDERBERG

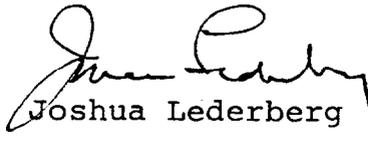
PRESIDENT

Mrs. Vivian Mower  
218 Southchester Lane  
Houston, Texas 77079

Dear Mrs. Mower:

I would hardly want to make a blanket statement about the safety of food additives any more than I could about natural foods, many of which are potential sources of problems when consumed in excess. The catch is in the word "synthetic": there is certainly no chemical difference between the same substance produced synthetically and that which is manufactured in the growing plant. In that sense synthetics are precisely as safe as their natural counterparts. Other substances are added to food which do not occur naturally and of course each one of these must be scrutinized carefully to determine its effect on health. While I believe that some of these concerns have been exaggerated I certainly would not dismiss them. We face a very difficult task in sifting out hysteria from legitimate concern, in trying to get clear-cut evidence of which additives give us useful extensions of our food supply, and which ones need to be looked at very critically. By and large I think the FDA has done a good job of separating the sheep from the goats but this matter will certainly become more complicated in the future.

Yours sincerely,

  
Joshua Lederberg