Arthur Upton

Challenge to toxicologists Revisited

Dear Arthur

You were so kind to me, I hesitate to attempt to answer, and certainly don't want to alter the mood.

One problem: my remarks were extempore; I had no occasion to edit either the transcript, nor the excerpt that CEN made. I can see that some of my intended emphases were perturbed, and how in turn that could provoke your comment. Also, let me hasten to say that if your Institute were less lovely as a feature of our institutions (including this one!) I would (happily) have no case. But you probably do know the flak I got at Stanford and to some extent here for attempting similar efforts.

The key misunderstanding is that you italicize worthless; my intent was to emphasize for standard setting. Aflatoxin, which you referred to, illustrates the problem. What standard of mistake would you suggest as the basis of the rote animal testing I was decrying?

We can set standards aside for "voluntary additives", where the risk-benefit analysis needs little precision. We cannot readily afford that for aflatoxin or formaldehyde or benzene or a host of other toxics that are woven into industrial practice.

Enclosed is a transcript which (with my added emphasis) is closer to what I may have said. I will be surprised if you are in profound disagreement with what I tried to say, and am sorry if that invited misunderstanding. In either event, I hope we have many occasions to continue the conversation.

Yours,

John

cc: Norton Nelson.

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