

CORRESPONDENCE

To the editor:

Your August article on the forthcoming Office of Technology Assessment report did well in summarizing in a brief space a document which could be as important as the OTA's earlier work on the impact of applied genetics. But one point might be amplified: the role of industry-university cooperation. As the report noted, this is one of the few areas in which we are substantially ahead of our international competitors. As the report also noted, if we are able to further combine the acknowledged excellence of our research institutions with the strength of our industrial sector, we will establish a basis for a strong U.S. presence in commercial biotechnology. If the Congress is looking for ways to enhance the U.S. position, it should strongly consider measures that will encourage increased industry support for promising university research.

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is managed by our Biology, Radiation Protection and Medical Research Directorate, within the Commission's Directorate-General for Science, Research, and Development.

In the Final Word (August issue), p. 526, you kindly gave us space for a fuller description of what the FAST programme has advocated for European Biotechnology. This was slightly marred by the unhappy substitution (column 2, line 16) of the word "concentration" for the word "concertation," describing how our Member States should "get their act together." We are a jazz group, rather than a symphony orchestra; certainly not a one-man-band!

Concertation is one of the key themes featured in the recently-agreed official communication by the Commission, *Biotechnology in the Community* (ref. COM(83)672 final/2 + Annex; available on request in all Community languages). This has been formally transmitted to the Council of Ministers and should be debated at the European Council (heads of state) meeting in Athens in December.

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To the editor:

Christopher Edwards's editorial in the October issue raises a number of important issues. The International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) referred to in the penultimate paragraph, has the desirable objective of ensuring that the appropriate fruits of biotechnological research are made available to developing countries in order to enhance their own basic internal economies and standards of living. If this matter is not taken up as an international responsibility, then the benefits of the bio-society into which we are inevitably moving will serve to widen the gap between the North and the South, rather than assisting in its closing.

It is understandable of course, that most industrialized countries, my own included, are giving priority to developing national programs in bio-

technology having regard to their own economic well-being. However, within their aid programs attention must be focused on the needs of developing countries.

There are a number of avenues open which should be used to train biotechnologists from developing countries, and the programs of such bodies as the United Nations University (UNU), International Foundation for Science (IFS), and the International Cell Research Organization (ICRO) should receive every support through multilateral programs. The specific programs of WHO [World Health Organization], FAO [Food and Agricultural Organization], UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization], UNEP [United Nations Environment Program], and UNIDO [United Nations Industrial Development Organization] that are directed to this high purpose, should also receive priority support from their governing bodies.

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To the editor:

Some misunderstandings about initiatives by the Commission of the European Communities have crept into the article (September issue) on Biotechnology in Europe, p. 562, partly repeated in the feature on New Trends in Financing Biotechnology, p. 557. The Bio-Society sub-programme of the FAST unit (Forecasting and Assessment in Science and Technology) has spent some \$300,000—not \$30 million—on 12 projects or working group activities, not six. The Centre de Recherches en Gestion Internationale is a unit of the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium, not France.

FAST makes long-term assessments and hence contributes to the definition of Community R&D objectives, but does not "direct biotechnology research" as stated. Our Biomolecular Engineering Programme, 1982–86 (first phase, 8 million Ecus [European currency units], some 50 contracts, in progress; second phase, 7 million Ecus, agreed October 1983; total 15 million Ecus = \$12.9 million)

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