

Notes for the laboratory

From cell culture products to an expert program, this week highlights innovative and useful ideas.

Ventrex Laboratories, Inc. has recently introduced **neutrally buoyant glass micro-carrier beads** (Reader Service No. 100). Typical Ventreglas beads have a specific gravity of only 1.03 making the vigorous stirring speeds that retard cell growth, but are required with heavier beads, unnecessary. Ventrex's beads are polystyrene coated with glass, and are therefore



The Ventreglas bead: unsinkable

capable of withstanding cleaning by trypsinization, chromic acid, or alcohol. Ventreglas beads are also autoclavable. The beads come in a variety of diameters ranging from 90–210 μm , and a 25 g sample is available for \$100 (US).

Statistical Programs' new expert computer system, **EXPERTIMENTAL DESIGN**, eases the selection of **statistical designs for data analysis** (Reader Service No. 101). Through a question-and-answer format, the program ranks the suitability of 13 designs, ranging from factorial to Box-Behnken analysis, to the user's experiment. Uncertainty in the user's answers is dealt with by assigning desirabilities and manipulating them according to fuzzy set theory. Accompanied by a user's manual including a tutorial, the programmed floppy diskette sells for \$295 (US), and is written for 256K IBM PC/XT/AT.

Mycoplasma contamination need not plague your cell cultures and influence your experimental results, now that the American Type Culture Collection is offering their new **mycoplasma detection service** (Reader Service No. 102). ATCC's procedure costs \$50 (US) each for 1–10 samples, and utilizes both a direct

These notes are compiled by Carol Ezzell from information provided by the manufacturers. To obtain further details about these products, use the reader service card bound inside the journal. Prices quoted are sometimes nominal and apply only within the country indicated.

and an indirect assay to determine if suspect cultures are affected. The direct assay involves a total incubation time of 28 days, according to ATCC, while the indirect assay (using a fluorochrome staining procedure) can be accomplished within a week.

The membrane-based **culture plate inserts** for epithelial cell culture available from Millipore allow *in vitro* cultures to closely mimic cells grown *in vivo* by providing cells with both serosal and mucosal contact with media (Reader Service No. 103). Millicell-HA inserts come presterilized in blister packages for convenience, and are produced in a 12 mm configuration to fit 24-well plates, as well as a 30 mm configuration appropriate for 6-well

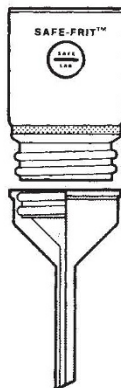
plates. Available since June 1986 in the United States, Millicell-HA inserts are now available in the United Kingdom, and are priced at £50–70 (UK) (depending on size) for a box of 50.

Taconic, Inc. eliminates worries over **clinically silent infections in laboratory animals** with its free bimonthly *Lab Animal Health Report* (Reader Service No. 104). Each edition will feature a different strain, and will outline the battery of tests to which Taconic mice and rats are subjected, along with ratios of incidence of infection. Available to any researcher using mice and rats, Taconic's reports will allow experimenters to exclude subclinical infection from other influential variables in the interpretation of results. □

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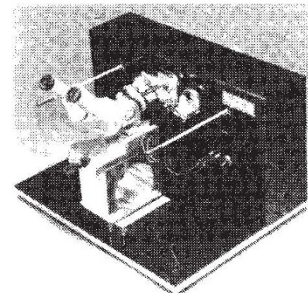
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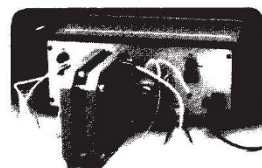


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