CORRESPONDENCE/

Serum Supply

To the editor:

With reference to "Checking Sources: The Serum Supply Secret" by John Hodgson (*Bio/Technology* **9**: 1320-1324, Dec., 1991), I would like to bring to your attention the fact that, contrary to a statement made, there *is* currently a sterile processing facility in New Zealand for Foetal Bovine Serum. *Life Technologies Ltd. (Auckland, New Zealand) has been collecting and sterile processing Foetal Bovine Serum in New Zealand for 15 years.*

A proportion of the raw material which we collect, is, as you rightly indicate, exported from New Zealand in the raw state for sterile processing in *Life Technologies FDA registered facilities* in other parts of the world.

There are no "middle men" (p. 1324, final paragraph) in the Life Technologies supply chain of New Zealand origin Foetal Bovine Serum, and, as such, I must challenge your suggestion that the way to "protect" the FBS supply in New Zealand and Australia would be to process the serum "down-under."

The end-user's ultimate guarantee of authenticity is the "paper-trail" and we would endorse, absolutely, your encouragement of users to be vigilant in this respect.

I congratulate you on what was in most respects a well-researched article. Bringing such issues to the attention of both end-users and those government officials responsible for policing the agricultural policies, as they relate to our industry, can only support the efforts of reputable companies, such as ourselves, in our on-going campaign to bring a greater degree of regulation to the industry.

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To the editor:

We refer to the article by John Hodgson "Checking Sources: The Serum Supply Secret" (*Bio/Technology* **9**:1320-1324, Dec. '91).

There are certain inaccuracies in the article that we strongly believe should be clarified in some future edition of the journal. The article concludes on p. 1324 that "perhaps the most practical suggestion, at least in terms of protecting the FBS supply in New Zealand and Australia, would be to process the serum 'down under.'" CSL in Australia has been involved in the manufacture of sterile FBS for many years. As CSL itself [is] a major manufacturer of biopharmaceutical products, we have long understood the need for FBS to be of the highest quality including the vital issue of traceability with the need to certify the origin of the raw material.

Over the last 12 months CSL has moved to "vertically integrate" our entire FBS process. CSL controls the manufacturing process from collection of the foetal blood at export-registered abattoirs throughout Australia to processing of the blood to raw serum through to manufacture of the finished sterile product. We have established a world class facility that conforms to all the elements of cGMP (Code of Good Manufacturing Practice) dedicated to the manufacture of FBS. We now supply sterile FBS to large multinational biopharmaceutical producers who have the same stringent quality demands for FBS as required by CSL in its own manufacturing processes.

On p. 1320 of the article the statement "A single company can span the entire process. Life Technologies does, *but it is an exception.*"

Based on the information outlined above as to CSL's vertical integration of its FBS manufacturing process, we would greatly appreciate some acknowledgement of our position in the FBS industry in Australia in a future issue of the journal.

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B.t. Resistance

To the editor:

Resistance to *Bacillus thuringiensis (B.t.)* has evolved in the diamondback moth in several areas of the world (*Bio/Technology* **9**: 1319, Dec., 1991), but not in the Colorado potato beetle, contrary to statements attributed to me. A team at Michigan State University has obtained a resistant strain of the Colorado potato beetle through laboratory selection. So far as I am aware, only the diamondback moth has evolved resistance to *B.t.* through exposure on crops.

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Controversial Comments

To the editor:

Jay Hair's article, "The Reality of Controversy" (*Bio/Technology* **10**:216, Feb. '92), inspired by a piece by Susanne Huttner ("The Value of Controversy" *Bio/Technology* **9**:1400, Dec. '91), repudiated insistence on "absolute safety or zero risk" for biotechnology, lauded allegedly broad-based "voices constitut[ing] a remarkable presence" speaking out on biotechnology, and criticized those who would stifle controversy; it seemed a model of moderation and reasonableness. However, it may be instructive to look with some care at the letter itself and at the record of Dr. Hair's organization, the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) in the biotechnology arena.

The primary points of Dr. Huttner's article were that (1) genuine antagonism to as opposed to mere interest in or concern about biotech research from "special interest groups that repeatedly and routinely object to agricultural biotechnology applications" is not widespread but "is usually the same handful of individuals"; and (2) characterizations of serious and widespread negative public perceptions . . . were wildly exaggerated and generally wrong." Dr. Hair in his rebuttal employs an old debater's trick: he refutes an assertion other than that made by his opponent. Specifically, Hair intentionally distorts Huttner's points, implying that she criticized controversy over biotechnology policy issues generally and that she denied that there is interest in new biotech among various environmental groups. Neither of Hair's implications is true—but Huttner's original assertions