

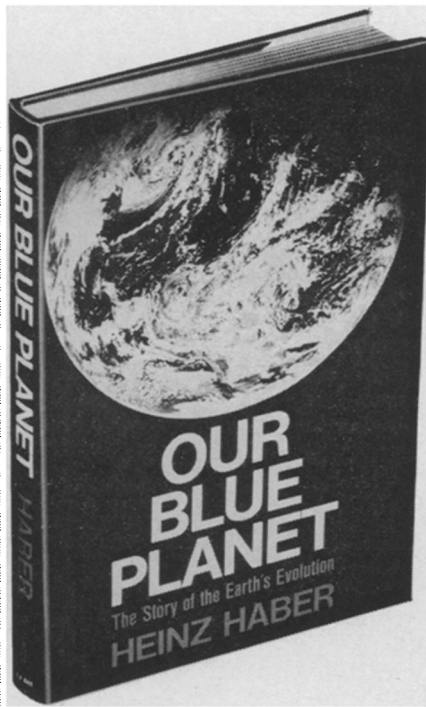
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LETTERS

to the editor

Early on Cyclamates

Just a line to say how much I get out of your magazine. It was within its pages, months ago (SN: 12/7/68, p. 571), that I read of the possible harm from cyclamates—and it just now broke in the newspapers.

D. P. Kochendorfer
Dayton, Ohio

Too soft on FDA

The article, "Salting the pure food mine," pertaining to the FDA and their position paper on MSG (SN: 10/4, p. 295) was accurate and to the point. I might comment that you were actually lenient with the FDA in your analysis of their position paper because, in fact, they misrepresented a lot more than you mentioned. Perhaps the most important observation is not that they made a couple of errors or even that they told a few bold-faced lies, but rather that every one of the numerous distortions and misrepresentations in their paper was slanted in the same direction, which suggests that those who drafted that paper were not only unconscionably careless with facts, but that they also must have had an ax to grind. Commissioner Ley, of course, did not write that paper, but he must assume responsibility for the bungling bureaucratic whitewash experts who did. The relevant question to press him into answering before letting the agency off the hook is how a consumer protection agency could possibly become so thoroughly turned around as to end up, in effect, defending industry at the expense of infant health.

Unfortunately, the FDA has continued, even under pressure, to show minimal concern over industry's indiscriminate use of MSG in baby foods. I have demonstrated that MSG in low oral doses, given by feeding tube to infant mice, produces brain damage. The FDA has been aware of these data for several months, but hasn't undertaken to replicate my studies as far as I know. It would be entirely possible for them to do the appropriate studies to confirm my findings in less than one month, but they would then have to admit that the practice of adding MSG to baby foods is in violation of all sound principles of toxicology. They would also have to remove MSG from the GRAS (Generally Regarded As Safe) list and ban it from baby foods, which would cost the baby-food companies some money and make the manufacturers of MSG uncomfortable for fear its use in