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Cover: Viruses are a controversial weapon in the war Australians are waging on wild rabbits. The creatures are destroying the habitat of native plants and animals such as this *Macrotis lagotis*, also known as a bilby, or rabbit-eared bandicoot. (Photos: Chris Oaten)

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Science Service, which publishes SCIENCE NEWS, is a nonprofit corporation founded in 1921. It gratefully accepts tax-deductible contributions and bequests to assist its efforts to increase the public understanding of science, with special emphasis on young people. More recently, it has included in its mission increasing scientific literacy among members of underrepresented groups. Through its Youth Programs it administers the International Science and Engineering Fair, the Science Talent Search for the Westinghouse Science Scholarships, and publishes and distributes the *Directory of Student Science Training Programs for Precollege Students*.

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## Letters

### Can't see usefulness of imaging

As a cognitive scientist, I have followed the developments in functional brain imaging with interest, particularly wondering what the tremendous investments in technology, manpower, and finances will do for neuroscience.

After reading "Brains in Space" (SN: 1/13/96, p. 28), I am still wondering.

As the article demonstrates, interpreting functional neuroimaging results is unreliable. Some parts of the brain are difficult to image. The analysis rests on statistically significant changes in regional function, which do not indicate all of the brain areas that may participate in a task, only those with the greatest metabolic changes. The test may be insensitive to functionally significant, but metabolically modest, changes in brain regions.

Finally, neuroimaging merely indicates the possible functional anatomy of a behavior. It does not illuminate how the mind reaches a

decision based on the information acquired.

Anyone who, upon reviewing the results of such studies, thinks he or she understands better how the brain functions is kidding himself or herself. I have yet to see how such research will either revise a theory of brain function or benefit clinical science.

*Victor W. Mark  
Assistant Professor of Neuroscience  
School of Medicine  
University of North Dakota  
Fargo, N.D.*

### Meating dietary guidelines

In "Government guidelines okay vegetarian diet" (SN: 1/6/96, p. 6), you fail to mention that the U.S. Department of Agriculture still recommends two to three servings per day of protein (beef, fish, poultry, or dairy products).

This error of omission could jeopardize the health of your readership along with your credibility.

*Al Fried  
Somerset, Ky.*

### WANT MORE MATH?

Ivars Peterson, who writes for SCIENCE NEWS about mathematics and physics, has created MathLand—a weekly on-line column that looks at new developments in mathematics and its applications, with mathematical amusements, anecdotes, puzzles, and history thrown in for good measure. The first of these short, informal articles have featured such topics as computer chess, math in children's literature, and memory feats involving pi.

MathLand will be included in the SCIENCE NEWS World Wide Web site now being planned, but until then you can find it at the Mathematical Association of America's Web site: <http://www.maa.org/>.