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Letters

Farm physics

In your article "A call for more college science and math" (SN: 4/10/99, p. 239), you report on the findings of an expert panel that concluded that undergraduates should be required to take more science and math courses to help them make "technically competent decisions about their health, communities, and economic lives." As someone with multiple physics degrees, I can state from experience that very little I learned in my math and science courses is much help in making such decisions. When I worked on a friend's farm, I learned more about health, communities, and economic lives than I did in any college course. Perhaps we should require more farmwork from college students.

*David Mantell
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Hard-hearted reality

The correlation of coronary artery atherosclerosis with hostility ("Bad attitude may be bad for heart," SN: 4/17/99, p. 255) fills in the causal chain shown by J.C. Barefoot, W.G.

Dahlstrom, and R.B. Williams in 1983. Medical students scoring high on the hostility scale of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory had markedly elevated coronary risk when followed up 25 years later. Similar results were obtained by Barefoot and others in a 1989 study of law students.

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It's all in the water

In response to the report "Souping up and other tricks produce satiety" (SN: 4/24/99, p. 261), I'd like to suggest that the ineffectiveness of drinking water in providing satiety, as opposed to water used to 'soupify' the casserole, may be a result of swallowing compared with chewing.

CORRECTION

In "What's that smell?" (SN: 5/15/99, p. 316), the statement that choline is an amino acid and a protein building block is wrong. Nevertheless dietary restriction of choline, a B-complex vitamin, can control the odor associated with trimethylaminuria.

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Cover: The Asian long-horned beetle, roughly the size of a peanut shell, can chew a tree to death in a few years. Invading beetles munched away in Illinois and New York for years before entomologists noticed. Now, they suspect that more of these beetles are still lurking out there.
Page 380 (Photo: USDA/APHIS)

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