

ORGANIC LIVING

By
Robert Rodale

ENVIRONMENTAL TIME BOMBS WILL SURPRISE YOU

Long Islanders got an unpleasant surprise last winter. The sewage sludge that communities have been dumping ten miles out to sea suddenly turned up half a mile offshore. Aided by ocean currents, the gunk had slowly crept in toward bathing beaches, going undetected for years.

Surprises like that are becoming more and more common as man tampers with his environment. Deteriorating air and water quality attract much attention, but our food supply and personal health are vulnerable too. Because such processes usually take a long time before erupting in dramatic change, I call the phenomenon the "time bomb effect."

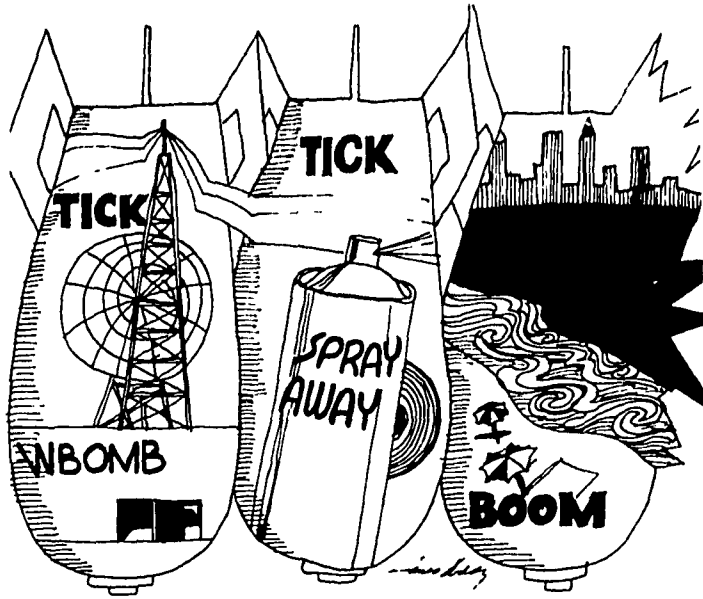
You don't need too potent a crystal ball to foresee some of the health surprises waiting for us in the not-too-distant future. In fact, some of the time bombs have already started to explode. And we can hear others ticking:

PLASTICS. Six cases of a rare liver cancer among workers at a vinyl chloride plastics plant have startled health officials. Thousands of workers are now being screened for the disease.

"We had our fingers crossed that nothing like this would happen with plastics," says Dr. Irving Selikoff, an authority on environmental medicine, but "the plastics era—now about 35 years old—is just coming of age in terms of latency period."

Vinyl chloride plastics are all around us, in aerosol sprays, food wrap, water pipes, shower curtains, phonograph records and car upholstery. Will this time bomb go off? "We're just beginning to see the effects of years of exposure to vinyl chloride," warns Dr. Joseph Waggoner of the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health. "The potential for damage to the public health is open."

RADIO WAVES. Scientists have long known that microwave energy, as used in radar, can dangerously heat up parts of the body. Sight-robbing cataracts are one side-effect of overexposure.



But now a White House agency has warned that ordinary broadcast radio waves may affect human health and growth at levels lower than ever before expected. The evidence is not conclusive yet, but major cities (with many powerful broadcast stations), airports, military bases and tracking centers could be the most "radio-polluted" areas.

ASBESTOS. The city of Duluth, Minn., was shocked to learn last year that its drinking water is polluted with tiny asbestos fibers that might cause cancer. A metals processing plant had been dumping asbestos into the water for 18 years before the trouble surfaced.

HOT DRINKS. Doctors now suspect that people who consume extremely hot beverages regularly are more likely to develop cancer of the esophagus. It may take many years of drinking hot fluids before such throat abuse leads to disease. A simple test: If you can stick your finger into a hot beverage without discomfort, it's probably safe to drink.

ATOMIC RADIATION. Opponents of nuclear power plants have long maintained that tiny amounts of escaping radiation may lead to birth defects and cancer after many years of exposure.

At first, the radiation damage goes undetected. "Non-fatal injury to the cells of certain human tissues may be far, far more dangerous than the outright, immediate death of the cell would be," say physicists John Golfman and Arthur Tamplin in their book, "Poisoned Power." "These non-fatal injuries are especially hazardous because, within a period of years, a single cell injured in this way has the potential to initiate a cancer or a leukemia."

The whole process may take 20 years. "The intervening period is silent," they write. "The person doesn't realize it is going on. If asked about his health, he would, of course, say, 'I feel fine.'"

Sometimes the fuse is even longer. Damage is passed on through genes to future generations instead. Then when the time bomb finally goes off, it's too late to do anything about the original cause.

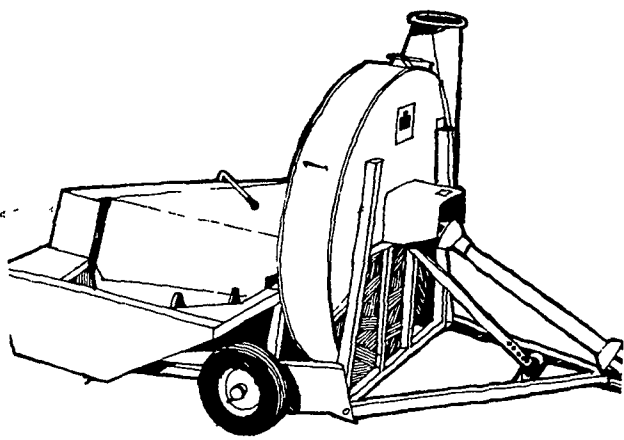
Painting a gloomy picture of environmental health isn't difficult. But there are pleasant surprises every now and then, also.

For example, the American Medical Association recently reported that the age-adjusted death rate for coronary heart disease is declining. What's more it's been going down since 1963, but very few people were aware of it. Some happy, unnoticed change in our diet or environment may be responsible, but doctors can't put their fingers on it yet.

Environmentalists were surprised to learn recently that the Great Lakes, once given up for dead, are actually becoming less polluted, thanks to vigorous action. Game fish like salmon and trout are returning to Lake Erie. And the Detroit River is reportedly running blue again in spots for the first time in recent memory.

Those are the kind of surprises we should get more often. "Hot-Line to Health" is a 48-page guide that pinpoints present and future threats to our environment and health. You can get a copy by sending fifty cents to Robert Rodale, Organic Living, in care of this newspaper. Be sure to ask for the booklet by name and allow at least three weeks for delivery.

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Pa. Simmental Association Organized

The organizational meeting of the Pennsylvania Simmental Association was held recently at the Sheraton Motor Inn, State College, Pennsylvania. The purpose of the Association is to promote the Simmental breed of cattle in Pennsylvania. Simmental cattle originated in Switzerland, but are popular in most European countries as a dual purpose breed—for both milk and beef production. Simmentals offer increased milk production, increased growth and leaner carcass.

Application for a corporate charter was approved by members attending the meeting. A board of directors was chosen, and officers elected.

The board of directors is comprised of: Dr. Thomas D. Conrad, Bird-in-Hand, Pa.; John P. Whiting, State College, Pa.; Dalton Kirschner, Breinigsville, Pa.; Bill Hart, Leesport, Pa.; Roger H. Clapool, Worthington, Pa.; Robert E. Armstrong, New Castle, Pa.; Joe Etter, Blain, Pa.; Gerald J. Brown, State College, Pa.; and Bob Elliott, New Bethlehem, Pa. The first president of the

Association is Dr. Thomas D. Conrad. Mr. Kirschner is first vice-president, Mr. Clapool second vice-president, and Mr. Whiting is secretary-treasurer.

On Wednesday, September 4, 1974, at Beechdale Farms, Bird-in-Hand, Pennsylvania, the Association will hold its first field day. Dr. and Mrs. Thomas Conrad, owners of Beechdale Farms have indicated they expect a rather large attendance from Pennsylvania and surrounding states. Guest speakers will be Dr. L. L. Wilson, Professor of Animal Science at The Pennsylvania State University, and Dr. Don Vaniman, Executive Secretary of the American Simmental Association. Dr. Wilson will speak on crossbreeding of beef cattle for increased production. Dr. Vaniman will present the goals of the American Association and the progress of the Simmental breed in the United States.

All membership inquiries should be addressed to the Pennsylvania Simmental Association, Inc., P.O. Box 224, State College, Pennsylvania 16801

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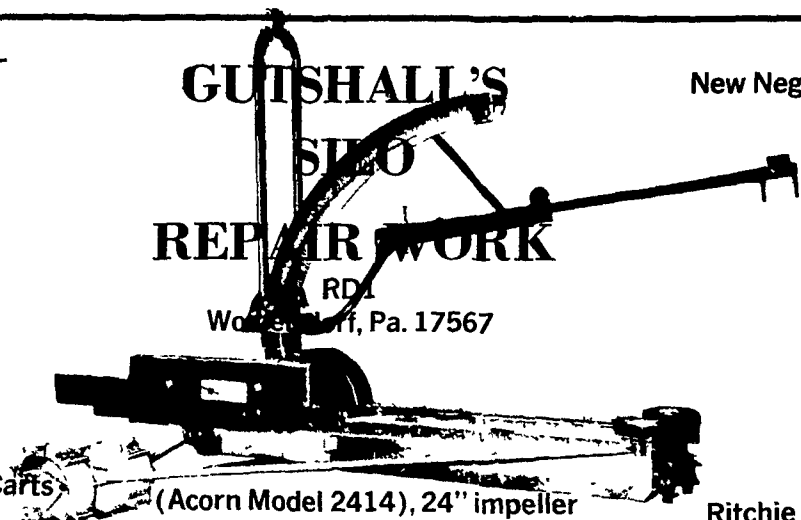
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