

Scientist on alert against pesticides in food

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potentially and environmental hazards, was legally used in the 1950s in several foreign countries including the United Kingdom, India and the Philippines.

She added that the FDA has detected pesticide residues in 64 percent of imported food and in 38 percent of domestic food. About 23 percent of domestic tomatoes contain residues while 70 percent of imported tomatoes have them. Thirty percent of domestic cucumbers have residues, 80 percent of imported cucumbers have them.

What troubled the speaker in regard to the role of the EPA and FDA regarding pesticides in food is that their research is scanty, not up to date and EPA's tolerance levels are too high.

About the FDA, she said, "The FDA samples less than one percent of this country's food supply. Its enforcement against food with residues in excess of tolerance is ineffective."

ABOUT THE EPA she reported, "The lack of health effects data on pesticides means that the EPA is regulating pesticides on the basis of ig-

norance rather than knowledge."

She observed that between 1982-85 the FDA detected pesticide residues in 48 percent of the most frequently consumed fresh fruit and vegetables. "Yet this figure probably understates the number of pesticides in food because half of the chemicals applied to food supplies cannot be routinely detected by FDA lab methods," she said. "Approximately 40 percent of pesticides identified by the FDA as posing moderate to high health hazards, including carcinogens like dieldrin, benomyl, alachlor and EDBCA, cannot be identified in its lab tests."

A majority of pesticides now available were licensed before the EPA established requirements for health effects testing. "In 1972 Congress directed the EPA to re-evaluate all 600 older pesticides by modern testing, in recognition of the serious consequences posed to public health," noted Mott. "Through re-registration, the EPA would fill the gaps in required toxicity tests and have better information on how to evaluate and regulate pesticides."

The speaker paused. "But by 1987 the EPA had completed a final safe-

ty statement for only two of those 600 pesticides," she said.

About 400 pesticides are registered for use on food, she declared. "The EPA acknowledged that 390 are undergoing registration review. Of the 100 left, 390 of them, there is an inadequate toxicological data base with which EPA could register these pesticides," Mott explained.

"TO MAKE MATTERS worse, scientists are now uncovering new toxic adverse effects caused by chemicals. For example, a few pesticides have found to damage components of the immune system, the body's defense network."

"Testing for this toxicity is not part of the routine safety evaluation for pesticides. Furthermore, the EPA now acknowledges its battery of tests to evaluate neurotoxicity is inadequate."

Consumers could have an important role in improving the pesticide situation, according to Mott, who offered a variety of suggestions on how to deal with them.

• Wash all produce with water to decrease exposure to pesticides.

Some will be removed but not all.

• Peel produce. Some residues cannot be removed by water.

• Grow your own food without pesticides.

• Buy locally and in season. If food is shipped long distances, pesticides are often added to prevent spoiling.

• Beware of perfect-looking produce. Many pesticides are used just to enhance its appearance. Brown spots do not reduce nutritional value or affect taste. A glossy appearance may signal produce that was waxed for cosmetic reasons. Wax can't be washed off, and it seals in residues in food.

• Buy organic food. (Mott favors a farm bill that would financially aid farmers willing to make the transition from using pesticides to not using them.)

• Write to supermarket managers or meet with them to ask them to stock organically grown produce. If possible, help them locate sources of this food. Kneaford is indignant to the Ann Arbor Ecology Center that it may soon stock organic food as an alternative.

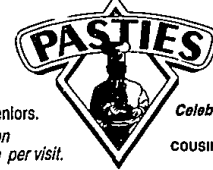
• Write your congressional rep-

resentatives stating your opposition to pesticides. In the next few months Congress will consider legislation to strengthen the EPA's regulation of pesticides in food. Attempts will be made to revise its tolerances based

on new methods and safety data. Also urge Congress to consider children when tolerances are set. They consume more food per unit of body weight than adults and need lower tolerances.

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Olive oil shines at gourmet delis

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cooked pasta, steaks or seafood. If you have a recipe that calls for cooking with olive oil, a simple, less expensive domestic brand will suffice.

Last but not least, if you are really into these types of oil or know someone who would appreciate them, shopping around the various markets will have you noticing vintage olive oils. These are from the smaller producers with exceedingly high standards and, of course, with the territory comes exceedingly high prices. True gastronomes will surely appreciate the difference, but folks like you and me probably would have difficulty discerning it.

So if you are into olive oil, a trip to some neat delis and gourmet shops will entice your palate and pocketbook. Bon Appetit!

THE WORLD'S BEST SALAD DRESSING
One-half cup olive oil
3 tablespoons wine vinegar
fresh juice from one-half lemon
dash Worcestershire
1 large clove garlic, mashed

2 eggs, coddled
1 teaspoon Dijon-style mustard
2 anchovies, mashed, optional
In the bottom of a wooden salad bowl, mash garlic with anchovies. Stir in mustard and Worcestershire. Coddle the eggs by first boiling them

in their shells for 1 minute. Whisk in eggs, then lemon juice, then vinegar. Mix well. Slowly drizzle in the oil and whisk until smooth. Pour over romaine lettuce and sprinkle with fresh ground black pepper and fresh grated parmesan cheese.

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Chicken, paprika, mustard

This recipe is from an article "Motor City Magic: The Rattlesnake Club," about the new Detroit restaurant, co-owned by chef Jimmy Schmidt and Michael McCarty, with Keith Josefak as chef, in the January issue of Bon Appetit.

ROAST CHICKEN WITH ACHOTE AND MUSTARD
The chef serves this intriguing entrée with roasted red peppers and french fries.

Four servings
1 cup coarse-grained mustard
1/4 cup ground cumin
3 tablespoons achote paste (a paste made from achote seeds; available at Latin American markets), or medium-hot paprika
2 tablespoons dry mustard
1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature
1 cup chopped fresh parsley (about 1/2 large bunch)
salt
2 chickens, halved
1/4 cup olive oil
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice

Combine first four ingredients in processor. Add butter and blend well. Mix in parsley and salt. Arrange one chicken half skin side down on work surface. Insert sharp knife under ribs and cut away ribs, breastbone and wishbone. Cut around thighbone to separate meat, gently scraping meat from bone. Remove bone. Repeat with remaining chicken halves. Using fingers, gently lift skin away from breast and leg meat on each chicken half. Rub meat under skin of each with 3/4 tablespoons mustard butter. Rub skin with oil. Preheat broiler. Arrange chicken halves skin side up on broiler pan. Broil until golden brown, about five minutes. Transfer chicken to baking pan. Reduce oven temperature to 400 degrees. Position rack in lowest third of oven. Bake chicken until cooked through, about 20 minutes. Brush skin with lime juice. Top each chicken half with 1/4 of remaining butter. Serve immediately.