consumer mailbag

The following is one of the Con-sumer Mailbag's ECO-NOTES — up-dates on various environmental is-sues:

JR QUALITY
During 1987, air quality remained poor in all major US. Cities despite the continued battle to reduce political review of the result of the resul

in smog.

Several areas showed improve-ment in carbon monoxide levels, mainly because more older cars ex-cupit from emission controls were junked. Despite improvements, 59 areas failed to meet the carbon

monoxide levels. The 23 largest U.S. urban areas falled on one or both counts.

ACID RAIN
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Northeast inland lakes are being
adversely affected by acid deposits,
a recent report from the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) states
that acid rain — specifically airborne nitrogen — is causing a major
decline in the quality of coastal waters and marine life in the eastern
United States.
The EDF study examined the effects of eutrophication (the depletion
of oxygen from the waller,
than acidity, no coastal aides,
mostly from cars and electric utilities, are
converted to nitric acids and ni-

trates. When deposited in the water, the chemicals stimulate excessive algae growth. The algae depletes the oxygen supply and blocks sunlight needed by marine plants and ani-

needed by marine plants and animals.

According to the U.S. EPA, cases of severe coygen depletion and fish kills are on the rise in eastern coastal waters from the Chesapeake Bay south through North Carolina, particularly in estuaries.

SOLAR ENERGY
A main drawback to solar energy has been its higher cost in relation to other forms of energy. However, solar energy researchers are getting closer to making solar energy cost competitive with east and oil. Scientists at the Arco Solar Co. and the Solar Energy Research Insti-



Terry Gibb

tute, a division of the U.S. Department of Energy, have increased so-lar panel efficiency from 8 percent to 11.2 percent. Filteen percent effi-ciency would make the panels cost-competitive with other energy sourcest.

This efficiency improvement was a chieved with the use of copper indi-um disclentide (CIS), a semi-conductor material that converts sunlight into electricity.

usually have the lowest revers when tested.

Also, refined sugar and refined vegetable oils are virtually residue-free because the residue is eliminated during the extensive processing used in the refining process.

CIS produces large amounts of electrical current in panels, but at the same time lowers the panel's was raised, the current are reduced to unacceptable levels. Scientist found by adding the element gallium to CIS they could raise the voitage without setting the usual reduction in current. The Solar Energy Research Institute believes that these CIS/gallium panels should one day produce power at half the cost of power generated by present day solar panels and cost competitive with coal or oil. Arco hopes to market these new panels for limited commercial use by 1990.

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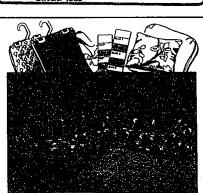
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NEXT WEEK; pesticides in pro-

The Consumer Mailbag answers your questions. Address mail to The Consumer Mailbag, Concern Detroit, One Kennedy Square, 4th Floor, Detroit 48226.



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Are the pesticides we eat dangerous? RESIDUES? Most, poultry, fish, botter and lard probably contain residues more frequently than fruits or vegetables. We consume the greatest TOTAL, amount of pesticides from grains and added fat because we eat so much of these in our diet. WHICH FOODS ARE "CLEANEST" Legumes — beans and peas — usually have the lowest levels when tested.

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DESIGN STAFF

Q. Are pesticides dangerous in the amounts that we consume in food?
A. If pesticides didn't contain polson, they wouldn't kill pests, and the condicing information were consumed by the average American are: not dangerous. The National Academy of Sciences asys MAYBE.
Consumer groups say YES.
However, while the "experts" argue, we as consumers don't have to be helpfulness bystanders. We can Imake a difference in how we select and prepare these foods.
The following questions and an

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more important role than pesticides in the general public's health, we are aware of these risks and have some control over them. Because pesti-cides can't be seen or tasted, they go largely unnoticed.

ARE SOME PEOPLE MORE AT RISK THAN OTHERS? Farm worker who mix and apply toric pesticides are in the greatest danger. Children who consume more pesticides per pound of body weight than any other group are the next most vulnerable.

WHICH FOODS ARE MOST LIKELY TO CONTAIN PESTICIDE

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