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Aims and Scope

The Journal provides a wide-ranging service of general articles and abstracts on food and cosmetics toxicology. The Journal is primarily intended for the use of food scientists and technologists, manufacturers and administrators who neither read nor have access to the medical, pharmacological or toxicological literature. In addition, the journal will constitute a medium for the publication of reviews and original articles relating to the fields of interest covered by the British Industrial Biological Research Association.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

NITROSAMINES IN DISHWASHING COMPOUNDS

Sir,—Our laboratory is actively engaged in the determination of volatile nitrosamines in food products. We recently observed a sample-contamination problem that we believe should be brought to the attention of other investigators determining nitrosamines. *N*-Nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA), *N*-nitrosomethylethylamine (NMEA) and *N*-nitrosodiethylamine (NDEA) were occasionally detected, using the Thermal Energy Analyzer (TEA), in control/blank samples that should not have had TEA-responsive peaks. A quick investigation revealed that the source of the nitrosamines was the dishwashing compound used to clean the glassware. A limited survey of some commercially available dishwashing compounds showed that a few samples had detectable levels of nitrosamines ranging from 1 to 11 ppb NDMA, from 2 to 5 ppb NMEA, and from 1 to 8 ppb NDEA. Mass-spectrometric confirmation of a single sample containing both NDMA and NDEA proved positive for both nitrosamines. This finding takes on added importance because of the recent disclosure by NIOSH that testing of the detergent and surfactant industry for nitrosamines will soon take place (*Chemical & Engineering News* 1980, **58** (13), 23). Therefore, necessary precautions should be taken and dishwashing compounds should be analysed to prevent nitrosamine artefacts in analytical procedures.

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