

APPENDIX VII

Comments on the UN Experts' Report

The UN Report, by and large, is a respectable piece of work. The team has done, at least in the opinion of the writer of this report, what could be done under the circumstances. However, a number of minor misinformations have crept into the report which cannot go unchallenged.

It is incorrect to list cobalt cardiomyopathy as a mycotoxicosis (paragraph 2, page 38). This disease is due to a combination of malnutrition and cobalt that was used as a foaming agent.

Paragraph 5 (page 40) contains several typing errors which could be misinterpreted. The natural levels of occurrence of trichothecenes were reported in the literature in $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$, not g/kg . Further, it is not correct to say that fungi produce, under laboratory culture conditions, toxins which are different from those in field crops. The quantitative ratio of the various toxins produced may be different, but not the quality as such.

The statement with respect to a particular plant that takes up and modifies trichothecenes is not pertinent. There are no known reports of animals ever having been poisoned by such plants or any other plant that may have assimilated trichothecenes from the soil.

Paragraph 69 (page 28) of the report, which states that it is necessary to prove whether mycotoxin-producing fungi are present in a sample, or in the environment, is a well-aimed criticism of previously carried out investigations. Thai and other authorities should be encouraged to establish a data bank of occurrence of fungi and mycotoxins, and it is hoped that the samples taken by this investigator will help to shed some light on the questions. This author's preliminary impressions are that decay of organic matter occurs in Thailand in much the same fashion as everywhere else in the world¹⁾.

The point raised in paragraph 73d (page 29), i.e., that many scientific publications report production of these mycotoxins at

¹⁾ Many decaying plant materials were observed to be covered by grey or black "rusts", suggestive of fungal infestation which may include Fusarium species. Also, the bamboo fences and walls in Ban Vinai Camp were "black", indicating fungal growth, but no untowards effects in people living in Ban Vinai are known to occur.