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**Report/Article Title** Memorandum: From John F. Young, Executive Secretary, Agent Orange Working Group (AOWG) Science Panel, to All Agent Orange Working Group (AOWG) Science Panel Members, regarding Attached Draft of November 24, 1987 Minutes, dated December 8, 1987

**Journal/Book Title**

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## Memorandum

Date : December 8, 1987  
From : John F. Young, Ph.D.  
Executive Secretary, AOWG Science Panel  
Subject : Review of November 24, 1987 Minutes  
To : All AOWG Science Panel Members

Attached is a draft copy of the minutes from the November 24, 1987 Science Panel meeting. Please review them and return your comments/changes to me by December 18th.

We look forward to receiving your comments.

*Rose Huber*  
for John F. Young, Ph.D.

JFY:rmh

\* \* \* D R A F T \* \* \*

MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON NOVEMBER 24, 1987  
SCIENCE PANEL OF THE AGENT ORANGE WORKING GROUP

The Science Panel (SP) met from 9:00 am until 12:30 pm in Room 729G of the HH Humphrey Building in Washington, D.C. Dr. Ronald W. Hart, Director of the National Center for Toxicological Research (NCTR) and Chairman of the AOWG SP, presided. Members and guests present at the meeting are listed on the attached sign-in sheet (Attachment #1). An agenda was distributed and is attached (Attachment #2).

**OLD BUSINESS:** The minutes of the August 6, 1987 SP meeting were approved as circulated. The minutes of the September 14 meeting of the SP were approved as circulated but following a suggested modification by Dr. Vernon Houk (CDC).

Dr. Donald Barnes (USEPA) reported on the Las Vegas "Dioxin" meeting. Dr. Barnes had previously circulated to the SP members a trip report which detailed the meetings (Attachment #3); a shortened version was distributed at this meeting (Attachment #4). Dr. Barnes indicated that there was not that much new information presented at the meetings from the viewpoint of the SP. Dr. Houk distributed a fact sheet (Attachment #5) from presentations at the Las Vegas meeting dealing with human tissue levels. He pointed out that the only high levels of TCDD reported were from Ranch Handers (see paragraph 4, Massachusetts study).

Dr. Barnes reported that NATO's Dioxins & Related Chemicals document had been released. It contained summaries on over 300 projects and also contained numerous summary charts. Dr. Hart requested that copies be forwarded to all SP members. Dr. Barnes did pass out a copy of a review of the NATO document which contained a summary and some charts (Attachment #6).

Dr. Barnes then reported on the USEPA's National Dioxin Study report. He distributed a press release on the document (Attachment #7) and copies of some slides that had been prepared (Attachment #8). Again, Dr. Hart requested that copies of the complete report be forwarded to each SP member. Dr. Houk asked if the results of the soil sample analyses from Ft. A P Hill (?) had been included in the document; Dr. Barnes did not think that that data had been included. Dr. Houk also pointed out the discrepancy in the use of the term 'whole fish' vs. eatable fish tissue; these terms are often used interchangeably which is in error.

**VA PUBLICATIONS:** Dr. Larry Hobson, VA, reported that the review of the current dioxin literature, Volumes IX and X, were available and have been distributed to members of the SP. A lay summary was also distributed with the full report. An additional book was distributed by the VA entitled "Human Exposure to Phenoxy Herbicides"; Dr. Houk commented on the usefulness of the summation at the end of this book.

**VA's PMR STUDY:** The VA's Advisory Committee on Environmental Hazards reviewed the PMR manuscript and provided similar review results as the SP and OTA (Attachment #9). Dr. Han Kang, VA, pointed out that this committee indicated that it was premature to make any VA policy changes based on this study. Dr. Houk inquired if any additional information had been obtained on

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the smoking status of the participants of this study; Dr. Kang indicated that he had requested this information but had not received anything yet. Several people pointed out that individual smoking records probably would not be available, but service records as a whole might shed some light on this question. Dr. Houk pointed out that the Marines as a group were different than other Vietnam veterans in that prior to 1965 only one unit had been sent to Vietnam, but after 1965 all Marines went to Vietnam; i.e., if you joined the Marines you were going to Vietnam. Dr. Marilyn Fingerhut, NIOSH, questioned the division of AO exposure to the various regions in Vietnam; which region really was the most heavily sprayed? Dr. Houk and Dr. Kang disagreed as to the extent and statements in the PMR manuscript concerning linking AO exposure with the PMR results.

Dr. Kang indicated that the Journal of Occupational Medicine had accepted the PMR study for publication with changes; the extent of modification of the manuscript that the SP reviewed was not delineated by Dr. Kang. Dr. Kang indicated that the offending language had been modified. A second manuscript based on the original PMR study and additional data as suggested by the SP and other reviews is being compiled. Dr. Kang indicated that this second document would be reviewed by the SP before being submitted to a journal. Dr. Houk indicated that the lung data should be eliminated from the study altogether. Dr. Hart indicated his unhappiness of the submission of the PMR study to a journal without re-review by the SP as the VA had indicated would be done.

**RANCH HAND PUBLICATIONS:** Col. William Wolfe, USAF, reported that several manuscripts were being prepared based on the initial Ranch Hand reports. The full 1100 page report is in the Army process of being released. The approximately 50 page summary of this report was distributed to the SP members last month (Attachment #10); about 300 copies have been released. A manuscript based on the baseline data and a review of the literature has been sent to Dr. Miller and his committee for their review. Additional manuscripts will be ready shortly as the full 1100 report was correlated by chapters with the idea toward future publications. There are two additional publications that the CDC is taking the lead on which one deals with the TCDD serum levels of the Ranch Handers and the other is the half-life study. Dr. Houk suggested that at some time in the future all of the manuscripts should be compiled under a single cover for convenience. Dr. Hart indicated that the compilation would be very useful and used the NCTR ED01 study as a good example where this had been done.

**CDC's AO EXPOSURE STUDY:** Dr. Peter Beach, Executive Secretary for the AOWG Domestic Policy Council (DPC), stated that at the last AOWG meeting the AO Exposure Study had been recommended to be canceled based on the CDC report. Mr. Newman sent a letter to Mr. Meese and then later sent a letter to the Congress; there has been no response from Congress yet. Dr. Houk indicated that the contracts were in the process of being terminated; RTI has already indicated that there would be no penalties, but the Lovelace cancellation penalty will be approximately \$1.5 million. Dr. Houk indicated that about

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\$19 million will be returned to Congress; he is going to recommend that this money be returned to the VA with about \$2.5 million being requested for the completion of the Ranch Hand serum TCDD analysis study (specifically, approximately \$300,000 for blood draws and \$2 million for analysis). Ms. Hellen Gelband, OTA, asked if any public information release was going to be forthcoming about the cancellation of this study; Dr. Beach indicated that there were no plans for additional information release other than what already had been done by the CDC.

Dr. Larry Hobson stated that the Congress had ordered the VA to do these studies and it was up to the VA to recommend the cancellation of this study. In order to do that, the VA needed to receive a written report from the CDC with all of the pertinent data. Dr. Houk felt that the data had already been presented to the VA at the various briefings and SP meeting in August. However, Dr. Hobson indicated that the formal report was still needed. Dr. Houk said that a formal report with all of the data recommending cancellation of the study would be sent to the VA as soon as possible.

Col. Wolfe and others asked what needed to be done to get the excess money rerouted to finish the Ranch Hand serum TCDD analysis. It would appear that a few letters need to be written among the principles (DoD, CDC, VA) indicating the needs. Dr. Hobson indicated that a letter from the DoD to the VA would be in order. Dr. Carl Keller, NIEHS, stated that the AOWG DPC would be the proper group to approach Congress for the reapportionment of these funds to the VA. Dr. Hart indicated that this request would be part of his report to the DPC this afternoon.

**DoD's MOVIE REQUEST:** Col. George Stebbing, DoD, indicated that he had told MGM to go elsewhere for its ships and he hasn't heard anything back.

**SP POLICY - PRIOR REVIEW OF PUBLICATIONS:** Dr. Hart suggested that in order to avoid surprises, he was recommending that the Agencies voluntarily submit their relevant draft manuscripts for review to the SP Chairman and one other SP member of the individual Agency's choice prior to submission to a journal with sufficient time to have some meaningful input. This would be a voluntary submission with each Agency determining which manuscripts should benefit from this additional review. This suggestion was received with mixed reviews. Dr. Houk stated that he would not do it as they had a very good review system already in place and saw no need for additional reviews. Dr. Hobson wondered why the VA was the only Agency that had to submit their manuscripts for prior review? Dr. Barnes inquired about the focus of these reviews! How about Dioxin related articles? Dr. Hart again emphasized that this was an Agency's choice and if the manuscript later drew heat, the Agency and investigators would just have to defend their actions. Col. Wolfe stated that the policy fit very nicely with what they were already doing. Dr. Beach indicated that manuscript review was what Dr. Miller's committee was set up for, but they did not have time to do the review of all studies. Ms. Gelband felt that the manuscripts should be reviewed for policy concerns and that the SP members generally had a good over-all view of the AO issues. Dr. Jerome

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Bricker, DoD, supported the suggested review policy. Col. Wolfe suggested that we need to be careful of mixing policy and science reviews. Dr. Hobson felt that scientist could and should raise policy issues but probably should not be involved in setting policy. Dr. Kang asked what was the difference in this policy statement and what the SP already was doing? Dr. Hart indicated that basically there was no difference and that this was mainly to formalize the SP position. Dr. Keller felt that the SP should mainly review science, but on occasion the scientist can best see potential policy issues. Dr. Keller added that the SP has no mandate to review manuscripts, but only to do whatever the AOWG DPC requests the SP to do. The SP is an advisory group to the AOWG DPC. Dr. Houk stated that all protocols should come before the SP for review; the results can but do not have to come before the SP. Dr. Hart asked for a vote on this policy issue: there were 7 for and 3 against; those against were Drs. Kang, Keller, and Barnes.

**AIR FORCE HEALTH STUDY SUMMARY (RANCH HAND):** The approximately 50 page summary was distributed to the SP members prior to this meeting (Attachment #10). There were many accolades for Col. Wolfe. Dr. Hobson complimented Col. Wolfe and his colleagues on an excellent study and report. Dr. Houk stated that the Ranch Handers were a good group to work with. Col. Wolfe indicated that the participation was up from years past and the study was currently ahead of schedule. Dr. Houk suggested that in future reports they may wish to highlight what had been found in the past and then indicate the current status. Dr. Keller stated that all AO Vietnam issues lie with the Ranch Hand study and the main dioxin exposure is the NIOSH worker study. Should we not be trying to get more publicity out of these positive efforts?

**VIETNAM VETERANS AND 'AGENT ORANGE': A MORPHOLOGY STUDY:** Dr. Nelson Irey of the Air Force Institute of Pathology made a presentation of his data of the above title. His basic conclusion was that there were no differences found between the Vietnam veterans and controls. Dr. Kang asked about the distribution of cases; Dr. Irey indicated that they varied from 3-4 to about 100 from individual hospitals with 3-4 cases each coming from about 25-30% of the hospitals. Dr. Keller indicated that there was a selection bias that could not be dealt with and no real statement can be said either on the positive or negative side. Several suggestions were made to try to decrease or eliminate the selection bias; most had been tried by co-author Dr. Walter Foster, AFIP, but had not been successful. Dr. Hart suggested that all references to AO exposure should be eliminated from the manuscript. The manuscript supplied to the SP prior to the meeting by Col. Stebbing and the reviews of the manuscript by Col. Wolfe, Dr. Houk, and Dr. Dave Gaylor, NCTR, are included as part of these minutes (Attachment #11).

**VA's JNCI MANUSCRIPT - JNCI 79(4):693-699, 1987:** Nearly all reviewers agreed that the references to AO in the abstract and concluding paragraph were inappropriate. The requested written reviews by Drs. Gaylor, Kodell, Chen and Young (NCTR), Dr. Houk (CDC), Col. Stebbing (DoD), Col. Wolfe (USAF), Dr. Keller (NIEHS), Dr. Fingerhut (NIEHS), and Dr. Barnes (USEPA), the summary prepared by Dr. John Young (NCTR), and the journal article all are included

\*\*\*\*\* D R A F T \*\*\*\*\*

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as part of these minutes (Attachment #12). Dr. Kelder inquired as to the purpose of Dr. Hart's requested review of this already published article. Dr. Hart indicated that this was done in anticipation of a Congressional inquiry; Dr. Houk predicted that the inquiry would come. There was some discussion concerning AO exposure surrogates; Col. Wolfe stated that all surrogates have problems, but the best surrogate appears to be the serum TCDD level. There was also a great deal of talk about a letter-to-the-editor indicating that the AO exposure indexes used were inappropriate. Dr. Kang indicated again that until he sees the CDC Validation data, he is not convinced about the exposure surrogates. (NOTE: Dr. Kang and all SP members reviewed the Validation study at the August 6, 1987 SP meeting.) Several persons indicated that even though this manuscript was submitted and accepted for publication prior to the completion of the CDC Validation study, changes concerning the exposure indexes could have been made to the galleys or even as a footnote. Dr. Hobson suggested that in future articles dealing with this subject, references to past articles should be made that point out the errors in AO exposure indexes based on the newer data. Dr. Hart called for a vote on the issue of the SP sending a letter-to-the-editor concerning the AO exposure surrogates; the motion failed with only Dr. Houk voting for the motion.

**FEMALE VIETNAM VETERAN STUDY:** Dr. Hobson stated that the Women's protocol that was reviewed at the September 14th SP meeting was being reworked by the contractor. The contractor had contacted several Vietnam Women's groups. The reworked protocol will come back to the SP for review. Dr. Houk reported on the Atlanta discussion of October 14 (Attachment #13). The discussion centered mainly on stress. Another concern was the inexperience of many of the nurses (six months vs. older inductees). Dr. Hobson stated that the OTA had recommended looking into civilian controls; this may be impossible to accomplish.

**CONGRESSIONAL REQUEST TO REVIEW - JNCI 78(5):899-910, 1987:** Since the meeting had gone too long, Dr. Hart requested written comments on this study. The Congressional request, article, and comments by Dr. Houk are included as part of these minutes (Attachment #14).

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 pm.

Prepared by John F. Young, Ph.D.  
Executive Secretary  
AOWG Science Panel

Approved by Ronald W. Hart, Ph.D.  
Chairman  
AOWG Science Panel