

Taking issue with Bugman

Sunday, March 8, 2009

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Editor's note: A clarification for the **Bugman's** column cited below ran Feb. 28 on page A2. To read it online, go to sfgate.com/ZGIK.

Editor - Richard Fagerlund's recent column "Skeptical of Cal's orange-oil study" (Feb. 22) grossly misrepresents my research on the effectiveness of various termite control products and makes the wild accusation that my work is "conducted and managed by pesticide industry people." Nothing could be further from the truth.

The column makes several misstatements of fact.

Most egregious, Fagerlund confuses my scientific studies, conducted as an independent third party at the request of the state of California, with a marketing document released by Dow Agrosiences Corp. Fagerlund even provides a link to the Dow document and claims that it is a link to "the Cal study."

My study, which evaluates six different products administered according to their pesticide label instructions and based on rigorous scientific methods, is available at nature.berkeley.edu/termites.

Fagerlund also implies that there is a relationship between my work in the Department of Environmental Science, Policy and Management, and a program across the Berkeley campus that happens to be funded by Dow Chemical.

There is absolutely no such relationship.

Over the years, I have been involved in a number of alternative control studies for termites, both chemical and nonchemical. The relative advantages and disadvantages of various approaches are both complex and important to understand. Fagerlund is doing consumers no favor by being so careless with the facts.

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The deal on Dow

Editor - We are writing to clarify inaccurate information published in a recent "Ask the **Bugman**" column.

The article inaccurately attempts to make a connection with a recent UC Berkeley study on termite control and the Sustainable Products & Solutions Program, known as the SPS Program. The SPS Program is housed at the Center for Responsible Business at UC Berkeley's Haas School of Business and is funded by the Dow Chemical Co. Foundation. The SPS Program has never had any involvement with the termite control project that the author refers to, nor has the program provided any funding to support this project.

Launched in 2007, the SPS Program links Berkeley's learning, research and technology development expertise to create a multidisciplinary environment where the foundations of sustainability - society, science, engineering, environment and finance - are all considered simultaneously as new products and solutions are explored.

The program is focused on exploring innovative approaches to tackling some of the world's big challenges. It is not a research program on sustainable chemicals as the article incorrectly states.

Since the program's launch, nearly all of the \$2 million in funding has gone to support 23 interdisciplinary projects at Berkeley with a focus on clean water and hygiene, bio and renewable energy, sustainable metrics and measurement, and energy savings. Descriptions of all of the projects the SPS Program has funded are publicly available on the program's Web site at spsp.berkeley.edu/projects.html.

The funding from the Dow Foundation for the SPS Program is directed by the program's faculty steering committee, made up of Berkeley faculty from a cross section of disciplines, including business, engineering, chemistry and public health.

The article also incorrectly states that Tony Kingsbury is executive director of the SPS Program. Actually Haas Professor Kellie McElhaney is the SPS Programs Director. Mr. Kingsbury is an executive-in-residence at the Center for Responsible Business and plays an advisory role to the SPS Program, but is not a voting member of the steering committee. He also teaches sustainability in the Haas School's MBA and executive education programs.

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