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The Reader's Digest, New Castle, Pennsylvania

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THE MOST DANGEROUS PEST: "*HOMO ENVIRONMENTALS*"

ROBERT JAMES BIDINOTTO, The Reader's Digest, New Castle, Pennsylvania 16101

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Thank you very much. I'm delighted and deeply honored to have been invited here as your keynote speaker for the 15th Vertebrate Pest Conference. I suspect the real reason for the invitation from Bob Timm was not my writings on animal rights, pesticides or environmentalism, but rather my articles on criminals. I guess he figured that, as the guy who made Willie Horton famous, I would feel right at home with any group whose mission is to control predators.

Well, whatever his motives, I certainly do feel right at home. Your important work goes largely unsung, and when noticed, is frequently attacked—often, on moral grounds. I suspect you don't get many "thank you's." So let me begin by thanking you—on behalf of myself, my family, and consumers everywhere—for the vital job that you do in protecting our food, our homes, our economy and our precious resources from the unwanted destruction and predations of mammals and birds.

This morning, I want to return the favor, in a way. Now, I'm a journalist, not accustomed to presenting scholarly papers. But for this special occasion, I've tried to conform more closely to your format, and present my findings about a most unusual predator. For your own protection, I want to train you to identify, neutralize and control what is perhaps the world's most wide-ranging and destructive vertebrate pest.

I speak of that insatiable predator, *Homo environmentalus*. This predator is a subspecies of homo sapiens, of which I observe several examples present. For the past several years, under special funding by *Reader's Digest*, I have made a special study of this pest, also known by his more familiar name of "environmentalist activist."

Most of you have seen one in the wild, but probably haven't recognized it for what it is. That's because this animal, like the chameleon, can utilize protective coloration when it fears exposure, and thus appear to be a more harmless species. It is a mammal once thought to be of recent origins, but whose evolutionary pedigree can be traced back centuries. It usually runs in destructive packs, known as "environmental groups." Its behavior patterns revolve around a kind of strange fixation on its habitat, or environment—hence its name. Its most disturbing quality is its feeding habits. Unlike almost all other animals, it singles out and feeds upon the most healthy and productive members of its own genus, *Homo sapiens*.

Since my research indicates that it is especially fond of attacking and feeding upon those working in the field of animal damage control, I wanted to explain why you are at special risk, describe the beast's pattern of attack and suggest how you might defend yourselves and your colleagues from him, as you go about your daily work.

Unlike most of the vertebrate predators who rely upon

fangs and claws, this beast's most powerful weapon is his philosophy. It is a philosophy that challenges, allegedly on moral grounds, the very basis of all that you do. To defend yourself and your vital work against his philosophy, you have to know what is fundamentally wrong with it.

The problem with identifying environmentalist activists is that there are millions of people who today call themselves "environmentalists," but who pose no predatory threat. They are simply nature-lovers or so-called "conservationists," in the tradition of Gifford Pinchot, the first chief of the U.S. Forest Service. Such conservationists view natural resources in terms of the values which they offer to human beings. They see nature as a free bounty for wise human use, development and enjoyment. But that view is a far cry from the basic premises, animating drives and political agenda of the organized movement of environmental activists—particularly its leadership cadre. The modern movement has a different pedigree—the so-called "preservationist" lineage of Pinchot's arch-enemy, John Muir, who founded the Sierra Club. Preservationists equate resource development with resource destruction. It is preservationism, not conservationism, which is the guiding philosophy of organized environmentalist activists.

"DEEP ECOLOGISTS" AND "GREENS"

The environmentalist leadership cadre is loosely divided into two competing, but often intermingling herds, both of which evolved in the 1960s, and both of which are preservationist in premise and pedigree. For simplicity, I'll distinguish these two herds as, first, the Deep Ecologists, and second, the Greens.

The Deep Ecologists are the apolitical heirs to the 1960s' "counterculture" movement. Children of Rousseau, who tend toward mysticism, hedonism and nihilism, they see environmentalism not as a means of reforming modern society, but rather of escaping from it, or even destroying it. Alienated and sometimes antisocial, Deep Ecologists either "drop out" of society or, if they have an activist bent, join radical environmental and animal rights groups that reject technology and a utilitarian perspective toward nature. Their preferred groups range from Greenpeace and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, to overtly violent packs such as the Animal Liberation Front, the Sea Shepherds and Earth First!

The Greens, by contrast, are the political heirs to the New Left. They profess at least a nominal concern for human values and modern culture, and are also distinguished by their pragmatism and seeming willingness to compromise. That's because they don't want to destroy modern civilization: they want to run it. Their goal, however, is equally radical and uncompromising: a socialist, redistributionist society, cen-

trally controlled and planned by environmental "experts" like themselves. Greens prefer more sophisticated, respectable and better-heeled groups, including the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Environmental Defense Fund, the Sierra Club, the Wilderness Society, the Worldwatch Institute, the Union of Concerned Scientists, and various animal welfare (as opposed to animal rights) groups. Some go to work for the Environmental Protection Agency (or EPA) and its regulatory sisters, and a few have joined Congress, where you can hear them howling nightly at imaginary ozone holes over Kennebunkport, Maine.

For all their feuds, both herds supplement each other. The Deep Ecologists set the moral tone and spiritual direction of the environmentalist movement: they inspire, radicalize and recruit. Meanwhile, the Greens translate these raw assets into political power — into proposals, manpower, candidates and ultimately, laws.

But whether radical or pragmatic, virtually all environmentalist activists accept, openly or tacitly, the basic premises of what has been called the "environmental ethic." It is their most potent weapon.

DEEP ECOLOGISTS AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL ETHIC

The "Deep Ecologists" accept this ethic in its purist, most uncompromising form, as it was first defined in 1966 by UCLA historian Lynn White, Jr., and in 1972 by Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess. White blamed the ecological crisis on the West's Judeo-Christian heritage, which, he said, was based on the "axiom that nature has no reason for existence save to serve man." He called for a "new religion" based upon "the spiritual autonomy of all parts of nature" and "the equality of all creatures, including man." (White 1966)

Naess took this a step further. Individuals do not exist, he said; we're all only part of larger "ecosystems." The "shallow ecology" of mainstream conservation groups, he argued, was still anthropocentric, or homocentric—that is, man-centered. It aimed only at improving the environment for the benefit of humans. "Deep ecology," on the other hand, led to a view "biospheric egalitarianism...the equal right [of all things] to live and blossom."

In short: all *things* are created equal; they should be venerated as ends in themselves, as *intrinsically valuable* apart from man; and they have equal rights to their own kinds of "self-realization," without human interference or exploitation. (Naess 1972; Chase 1987; Borrelli 1988)

THE "ANIMAL RIGHTS" MOVEMENT

The most prominent subspecies of Deep Ecologists is the "animal rights movement"—that part of the environmentalist herd which has most ferociously locked horns with you in the past. The movement emerged with the publication in 1975 of philosopher Peter Singer's book, *Animal Liberation*. Led by a group of young philosophy professors, this movement ranged far beyond traditional concerns for animal welfare or protection. Rather, its basic premise was captured in the title of Singer's first chapter: "All Animals Are Equal."

"This book," Singer wrote, "is about the tyranny of human over non-human animals." That tyranny amounts to "speciesism," akin to "racism." A speciesist, Singer said, "allows the interest of his species to override the greater interest of members of other species" (Singer 1975). Note the word "greater."

As philosopher Tom Regan, author of *The Case for Animal Rights* (Regan 1983), put it, "the fundamental wrong is the system that allows us to view animals as *our resources*, here for us..." Instead, both Singer and Regan held that all beings with a capacity to feel pleasure and pain have an "inherent value of their own." (Bailey 1985) Or, as Michael W. Fox, a high-ranking Humane Society official, asserted in his book, *Returning to Eden*, "Each sentient being should be valued in and for itself (Bidinotto 1983, Fox 1980).

Some have decided that even plants and inanimate objects have rights not to be used by humans. In *The Rights of Nature*, Roderick Frazier Nash notes that "ecological egalitarianism," as he calls it, "accords nature ethical status at least equal to that of humans. The antipode is 'anthro-pocentrism,' according to which humans are the measure of all nature" (Schwartz 1989).

Given this view, even man's most innocuous activities are viewed as homocentric intrusions upon the rights of other species. Philosophy professors Dale Jamieson and Tom Regan, addressing 200 marine scientists, declared that whales have rights, since "they have a mental life of greater sophistication than many humans." They attacked the training of whales to perform in aquatic parks, and even oceanic whale-watching cruises. "Whales," they admonished the group, "do not exist as visual commodities in an aquatic free market, and the business of taking eager sightseers into *their* [emphasis added] waters...is exploitative." (Associated Press 1983)

There can be no compromises on animal rights, say its proponents. Steven Wise of Attorneys for Animal Rights contends, "The lives of tens of millions of animals do not belong to us and are not ours to compromise" (Wise 1983). The authors of an animal rights anthology affirmed: "Compromise, in the traditional sense of the term, is simple unthinking weakness" (Bidinotto 1983, Harris, et al. 1972). What's the bottom line? According to three animal rights philosophers, it means "...there can be no rational excuse left for killing animals, be they killed for food, science or sheer personal indulgence" (Harris, et al. 1972). It means: no animal testing of medicines or surgical techniques; no hunting, circuses or rodeos; no bird cages or dog pens; no leather; no meat, milk or eggs; no use of animals, period.

And certainly, no killing of wild predators on behalf of the "tyrant species." Strict observance of animal rights forbids even direct protection of people and their values against nature's many predators. For example, in *Returning to Eden*, the Humane Society's Michael Fox denounces the use of bug sprays and electric "bug roasters" to zap mosquitoes: he says reassuringly, "only a few of the million you kill would have bitten you" (Fox 1980, Bidinotto 1983). Likewise, the Humane Society has made its official hierarchy of values equally clear. In a 1990 letter to members opposing the fed-

eral Animal Damage Control program, Society President John Hoyt denounced "the killing of millions of animals — to protect American agriculture and other resources from damage caused by wildlife. This goal must be changed to one that seeks to limit losses to acceptable levels *without* killing or injuring wildlife." [Emphasis in original] (Hoyt 1990). Losses to people, you see, are "acceptable"; losses to animals are not.

"Is it not perverse to prefer the lives of mice and guinea pigs to the lives of men and women?" asks philosopher Patrick Corbett. Not really, because "if we stand back from the scientific and technological rat race for a moment, we realize that, since animals are in many respects superior to ourselves, the argument collapses" (Harris, et al. 1972, Bidinotto 1983). Man, snarls Michael Fox, "is the most dangerous, destructive, selfish and unethical animal on earth" (Fox 1980, Bidinotto 1983).

All animals may be equal in animal rights theory; but—as Orwell pointed out in *Animal Farm* — some animals are more equal than others. Human values, even human life itself, mean little to some Deep Ecologists. In one interview, philosopher Arne Naess targeted ideal world population at one billion people — roughly the world population in 1800 (Borelli 1988). Given that current world population is about 5.3 billion, what do Deep Ecologists hope will happen to the remaining 4.3 billion?

Reviewing a recent Deep Ecology manifesto—Bill McKibben's *The End of Nature*—David Graber, a taxpayer-financed biologist for the National Park Service, expressed his own hopes thusly in the *Los Angeles Times*: "Human happiness, and certainly human fecundity, are not as important as a wild and healthy planet. I know social scientists who remind me that people are part of nature, but it isn't true. Somewhere along the line —at about a billion years ago, maybe half that—we quit the contract and became a cancer. We have become a plague upon ourselves and upon the Earth... Until such time as *Homo sapiens* should decide to re-join nature, some of us can only hope for the right virus to come along" (Postrel 1990).

Mr. Graber isn't alone in his death wish for the human race, as Earth First! founder and former leader David Foreman makes clear. "We advocate bio-diversity for bio-diversity's sake. That says man is no more important than any other species.. It may well take our extinction to set things straight." (Fayhee 1988)

To Deep Ecologists, man is the only thorn in an otherwise perfect Garden of Eden. They equate natural resources with *capital*, and thus the development of resources with "capital consumption." Therefore, to develop resources, as man must, is to destroy. And since man is *destructive by nature*, everything in the universe is "natural" ...except *human* nature.

In summary, Deep Ecology is an example of what I call "neutron philosophy": it kills people, while leaving their environment intact.

THE "GREENS"

While the Deep Ecologists denounce a homocentric or man-centered perspective toward nature, the more pragmatic Greens are nervous to admit any such underlying animus. Many are every bit as uncompromising, but they are political gradualists, not revolutionaries. Besides, as I said, these would-be "planet managers" don't want to destroy the world: they want to run it. So, in well-furnished offices, their well-dressed lawyers and well-paid lobbyists crank out endless reports, legislative proposals and regulatory schemes, often cloaked in the ill-fitting mantle of the very science and technology they privately despise.

The thrust of their activities, of course, is to put endless impediments in the way of human development of natural resources, and to stymie every attempt by humans to protect their lives and well-being against natural hazards. And if scientific facts have to be manufactured, warped or jettisoned in the pursuit of a Man-free environment, so be it.

Consider the case of pesticides, which are central to the work you do. I learned something about how the Greens manipulate this issue during my six-month investigation of the Alar Scare for the October 1990 issue of *Reader's Digest* (Bidinotto 1990a).

Alar is not, strictly speaking, a pesticide, but a chemical regulator of plant growth. Nevertheless, what happened to Alar has happened to many pesticides, under the same regulatory apparatus.

You have all probably heard how an environmental group, the Natural Resources Defense Council (or NRDC), panicked America about Alar on apples, with the help of its eminent consulting toxicologist, Meryl Streep. On CBS-TV's popular "60 Minutes" program in 1989, NRDC reported that apples treated with Alar could cause up to 5,300 lifetime cases of cancer among American preschoolers. This carefully engineered publicity stunt terrified mothers, caused over \$100 million in losses to growers, some of whom were bankrupted, but made a fortune for NRDC in books sales and new members (Bidinotto 1990a, 1990b).

This was in keeping with NRDC's uncompromising position that the presence of pesticide residues on food in any amount — no matter how trivial —constitutes an intolerable risk to public health. For example, NRDC's Lawrie Mott wrote in 1984 that "it may be impossible to define a safe level of pesticide residues in food" (Mott 1984). The group's chief lobbyist, attorney Janet Hathaway, described for me NRDC's ultimate goal. If pesticide residues can be detected on food even in "minute amounts," she said, and if a massive dose of that pesticide "causes tumors in any laboratory animals, then it should be illegal." According to Mott, NRDC would ban all such chemicals "no matter how great their benefits are" (Bidinotto 1990b).

What you probably know is that the Alar scare was actually initiated, not by the NRDC or CBS, but by the EPA. During the 1970s, rodent tests on Alar and its chemical breakdown by-product, UDMH, suggested a serious cancer risk. But the dose levels employed in those tests were so absurdly

high that the animals were dying of simple poisoning. In addition, the record-keeping was atrocious, the Alar itself had been contaminated by another cancer-causing agent, and some of the tests didn't even use "control groups" of untreated rodents for comparisons. Nonetheless, the EPA's staff Greens used these shoddy tests to try to ban Alar.

In 1985, the EPA's own independent Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) dismissed the Agency's efforts by throwing out the rodent experiments as useless. That's when the NRDC, Ralph Nader and other environmentalists jumped in to launch a publicity campaign to ban Alar. Meanwhile, stung by the panel's rejection of its evidence, the EPA ordered Uniroyal to start yet another round of tests on Alar and UDMH. But for two years, every test came back clean. Nine tests for genetic damage proved negative, as did all tests of Alar in mice and rats. Even at dose levels 35,000 times higher than the highest amount that children might ingest daily, UDMH caused no tumors in rats.

Finally, in desperation, the EPA decided to stack the deck: for a final test, it ordered the laboratory to increase the UDMH dose levels four to eight times higher than independent consultants had already computed was the maximum amount the animals could tolerate. Sure enough, these grossly excessive doses at last generated the tumors that the agency had been looking for — even though 80 percent of the mice died early from simple poisoning. Nevertheless, the EPA used these deliberately manipulated results to estimate that 45 people in a million "might" get cancer from Alar, and therefore ordered all use of the product to cease (Bidinotto 1990a).

But while Uniroyal and growers suffered, the NRDC prospered. The group— which likes to denounce greedy pesticide manufacturers who profit by peddling poison— figured out ways to profit by peddling panic.

First, the NRDC dashed off a new paperback book on pesticides, titled *For Our Kids' Sake*, and priced at \$6.95 per copy. Then, they set up a 900 phone number, priced at \$3.00 per call, through which to order the book. At the outset of the big scare, the phone number was published on the front page of *USA Today* and aired on national TV commercials featuring Streep. The book quickly became a bestseller: when promoted on the "Donahue" show, over 90,000 copies were sold. And Janet Hathaway proudly told me that during the scare, NRDC phones were ringing off the hook with new members and contributors (Bidinotto 1990b).

To reap these riches, the NRDC's manipulation of the facts about Alar and pesticides was absolutely shameless. Consider just two examples.

Back in 1985, the EPA's Scientific Advisory Panel had ruled that the original studies were not suitable for "quantitative risk assessment" —that is, for quantifying the cancer risk to humans. A few months later, Associated Press reporter Guy Darst interviewed Lawrie Mott, and asked if she agreed. Mott admitted, "I tend to agree that the studies have major problems and are not adequate for quantitative risk assessment" (Darst 1986). Yet despite this remarkable admission that the studies couldn't be used to estimate actual cancer risks, Mott soon went on to co-author "Intolerable Risk" —

the report released on "60 Minutes"—which used those very studies to predict anywhere from 4,730 to 5,952 of today's preschoolers "may" contract cancer in their lifetimes as a result of their exposure to UDMH (Mott, et al. 1989).

A final example. Defending "Intolerable Risk" before a Senate subcommittee on May 15, 1989, Janet Hathaway of the NRDC testified that "UDMH is a potent carcinogen, a fact which both the EPA and its Scientific Advisory Panel acknowledged in 1985." Hathaway even footnoted this claim in her testimony. Well, I looked up the footnote. Guess what? The SAP *never* describes UDMH as a "potent carcinogen." In fact, the word used by the SAP was not "potent." It was "potential." (Hathaway 1989, EPA Scientific Advisory Panel 1985.)

Ladies and gentlemen, this manipulation of fact is typical of what the Greens call "regulatory science." "Regulatory science" is, of course, an oxymoron. That means a contradiction in terms—like "rap music," or "Senate Ethics Committee."

In fact, as the Alar example shows, "regulatory science" can literally be called *political science*. In their quest for political power, the Greens have significantly corrupted science across an ever-expanding array of issues—pesticides, climate change, radon, asbestos, acid rain, you name it. Nowhere have I found the corruption of science more acute than in the EPA.

Let me stress that the EPA is not a scientific body, but a regulatory body. There *are* some good scientists at EPA, but those I've met are upset that any science they do is subservient to the EPA's political agenda. EPA regulatory scientists are regulators first, scientists second. Their success and effectiveness is measured not by what they invent or discover, but by what they restrict or ban.

Many EPA staffers—including its current administrator, William Reilly—either have come to the agency from environmental groups, or share such groups' philosophy and agendas. I vividly recall a past interview with a scruffy-looking EPA scientist at the agency's shabby Washington offices. He was cranking out alarming reports on the allegedly imminent dangers of global warming. Around him, his office walls were littered with Greenpeace posters.

The EPA is the illegitimate child of the shotgun wedding of science and politics. And when scientists become the junior partners of politicians, there is no end to the destruction that can be wrought.

THE FRAUD OF "INTRINSIC VALUE"

What, then, are we to make of the so-called environmental ethic, an ethic shared to varying degrees by both the Greens and the Deep Ecologists?

For thousands of years, we humans have struggled to climb from the muck, to overcome plagues and poverty, to transform our environment into the goods and services that would make our lives better. Yet ironically, precisely because we have the unique power of choice over our thoughts and values, we're the only species capable of denying our own nature and needs, and spitting at our highest aspirations.

Today's leading environmentalist spokesmen tacitly and often explicitly operate on the premise that all of nature (except *human* nature) has "intrinsic value" in itself, and thus a "right" not to be altered by Man.

That, in fact, is the premise underlying many of our environmental regulations, such as the Endangered Species Act, which places minnows and owls above our needs for hydro-electric power and lumber; and the designation of "wilderness areas," upon whose sacred soil anything human is regarded as an obscene intrusion and desecration. It is certainly the premise underlying the war against your own pest control work.

By this view, humans are the moral outcasts of the universe—precisely because we are capable of morality. Our Original Sin is our conceptual intellect, by which we must alter nature to our own ends in order to survive. Since we humans are the only entities with this power to think and choose, all moral restrictions must apply only to humans, on behalf of nonhumans.

Logically, then, beavers may change the flow of streams—but Man must not. Locusts may denude hundreds of miles of all plant life—but Man must not. Cougars may eat sheep and chickens—but Man must not. In the "natural order" espoused by environmentalists, humans are the second-class citizens of the universe, condemned by our very nature as creative developers to sit at the back of the bus.

But this basic moral premise of modern environmentalism is a colossal fraud. Animals, at best, are adaptive; only humans can be truly creative. We alone can project a future, and aspire. We alone can improve our lot, by consciously developing the raw material of nature into goods and services of benefit to us. We alone can choose to create intelligibility and significance. This is not our shame; it is our power and our glory.

To declare that a Northern spotted owl, a redwood tree or the course of a river has "intrinsic" or "inherent value in itself," is to speak gibberish. There's no inherent "value" or "meaning" residing in nature itself. "Value" presupposes a *valuer*, and some *purpose*. It's only in relation to some valuer and purpose that something can be said to "have value." Thus, there's no such thing as "intrinsic value." The concept is unintelligible. There's only the moral values and meanings that are created and imposed upon a meaningless nature by a conceptual consciousness.

As the only living entity having both the conceptual ability to project "good" and "evil," and the power to choose between them, Man is the only *moral* entity, the only natural source of moral values. It's only to humans that concepts of "good, better, best" can even occur.

In our absence, there is nothing but insentient matter and energy — and, at best, entities limited to perceptual-level reflex and habit, lacking the capacity to visualize a better future, trapped in the cycles and routines of a never-ending present. To equate morally the involuntary cycles, habits and reflexes of unthinking animals with the conscious moral choices and ends of humans—to equate Aristotle's purposes with those of some ape — is sophistry too crude for words.

"The environment," then, acquires value and meaning only insofar as it's perceived, developed, used and enjoyed by *human beings*. That's why it's *morally* appropriate to regard the rest of nature as *our* environment, as a bountiful palette and an endless canvass for our creative works.

Those who first decry human "exploitation of nature" are also first to deny or forget that we, too, are part of nature. Our nature is that of a *developer*. By the only moral standards there are—ours—our creativity is not a vice, but a virtue; our products are not evils, but—literally—"goods;" and the term "developer" is not an epithet, but a title of honor. Paraphrasing Bacon, though Nature must be obeyed, it exists for Man to command.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH "ANIMAL RIGHTS"

The "environmental ethic" leads to a foolish corollary: that animals have inherent rights—rights *not* to be bothered by people. It is important to grasp how different this view is from our Western, Lockean-based tradition of rights.

Our tradition regards rights as arising from human nature, and applicable only to humans. Rights are moral principles that define the boundary lines necessary for peaceful interaction in society. The purpose of these boundaries is to let men pursue their well-being and happiness without interference.

Any intelligible theory of rights must presuppose entities capable of defining and respecting moral boundary lines. But animals are by nature incapable of this. Since they are unable to know, respect or exercise rights, the principle of rights simply can't be applied to, or by, animals. Rights are, by their nature, based on a homocentric (man-centered) view of the world.

Practically, the notion of animal rights entails an absurd moral double standard. It declares that animals have the "inherent right" to survive as *their* nature demands, but that man doesn't. It declares that the only entity capable of recognizing moral boundaries is to sacrifice his interests to entities which can't.

Ultimately, it means that *only* animals have rights. Since nature consists entirely of animals, their food and their habitats, to recognize "animal rights," Man must logically cede to them the entire planet.

And that is the dead end of the environmentalist ethic.

CONFRONTING *HOMO ENVIRONMENTALUS*

How are we to confront the radical assaults posed by *Homo environmentalus*? First, an effective defense means effective communication with the public. You don't answer public health concerns with economic arguments. You don't persuade a mother worried about her child getting cancer from pesticides, by trying to get her to sympathize with the economic plight of the farmer. She doesn't care if some anonymous grower goes bankrupt. Most mothers won't trade their children's health for any economic benefit.

We must start answering health worries with *health arguments*. We must convince the public that banning agricultural chemicals and pest control measures may actually

pose dangers to our *health*.

I'd point out that in the days before pest control, crops were often ruined and human health threatened by various pests, plagues and predators. To grow our food, we must compete with 10,000 species of insects, 1800 kinds of weeds, 1500 plant diseases, plus a wide variety of worms, fungi, rodents and predators. Humans must also contend with diseases carried by pests, such as malaria and encephalitis. Measures which destroy the carriers are sometimes our only protection against many of these hazards.

Other threats to our health are indirect, but still very real. Without pesticide use, for example, the cost of food would skyrocket. Many vital, nutritious foods would become either less available to all of us, or less affordable. And a poorer diet would only increase risks to our health. For example, research is indicating that people having diets poor in fruits, vegetables, and fiber are more susceptible to certain cancers.

A second point to make about pesticides is that *the dose makes the poison*. Almost everything is toxic — or safe — at some level. A third point is that *a mouse is not a little man*. If, for example, the EPA had been around years ago, we might not have penicillin, one of our greatest life-saving wonder drugs. Why? Because penicillin, which saves humans, kills guinea pigs! And while animals may be useful for toxicity testing, human cancer risks cannot be accurately projected from animal test data, based on generating tumors by overdosing the animals.

But more important than all these practical arguments, our main defense lies in morality. For by defending our nature and responsibilities as productive human beings, we bring meaning and value into the world.

Whatever they wish to call themselves, the contemporary children of Rousseau are at war with human nature — with *Homo sapiens* and the homocentric view of the world. Driven by fanatical hostility and an insatiable taste for power, they cannot be tamed by extending sweet offers of compromise, which only strengthen them, while weakening our society and its cultural institutions. However, they can be morally neutered—if we reject their Procrustean moral premise, which reduces Man to, or below, the status of mice, weeds and soil.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is a beautiful setting for a conference, a beautiful environment for the work of Man. But unseen and unappreciated, the environment is meaningless. It is but an empty frame, in which we and our works are the picture. From that perspective, *Homo environmentalus* would sacrifice the picture to spare the frame.

You are on the frontlines of the battle to protect human well-being against an indifferent and sometimes destructive Nature. Now you are required to defend yourselves, and people everywhere, against a different sort of predator: one who, in his lust for power and his hatred of his own nature, preys upon the self-esteem, values and aspirations of his own kind.

Battling *Homo environmentalus* is a chore from which many would recoil in distaste; but it is a battle which, like it or not, we must engage. For we are fighting for the entire human legacy—in the name of every person who ever dreamed a

noble dream, and who dared to act on behalf of that vision.

We shall protect ourselves, and our civilization, against the assaults of these predators on the day when we finally confront their charge of "speciesism" with buttons and bumper stickers that proudly declare our own right to exist as our nature demands, and unashamedly proclaim our own form of "species solidarity."

Without apologies, then, let me be the first to come out of the closet, so to speak — to face *Homo environmentalus* head on, and declare: "I am a practicing homocentric."

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