

Radio-Active Elements Tested on 400 Beagles

By HOWARD S. BENEDICT
SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — In a unique village on the University of Utah campus more than 400 dogs are helping humans find out what radio-active elements are potentially harmful.

They are beagles and their village, naturally, is called Beagleville. The dogs, Dr. Robert Bay, and seven technicians are under an Atomic Energy Commission contract — the only one of its type in the country. The experiments are important because of the great number of people who might be exposed to radioactivity at various AEC installations.

They might take on even greater importance some day if this country ever found itself a target in a shooting war. Beagleville was founded by the AEC in 1950 because the results of radioactive experiments with mice and rats could not be related accurately to humans. What was needed was a larger animal that lived longer.

The beagle was selected because of its easy disposition, its short hair, its ideal size for lab work and because it is one of the oldest pure breeds in the United States — giving better control of experiments.

The AEC invested an initial half million dollars in the lab and has spent about \$200,000 a year since. The beagles are injected with graduated doses of radium, mesothorium, plutonium and radiothorium — all highly radioactive — and then observed closely.

To Blood Marrow
The four substances used at Beagleville lodge in the bones and attack cells with damaging alpha particles. Some of the particles go after the bone marrow, which manufactures blood cells; others attack the membrane covering the bones and others the bone cells. If the marrow is damaged, it shows in the blood count. Injury to the membrane or blood cells is recorded by X-ray.

Dr. Bay, a veterinarian, explains that a change in the blood count is the most reliable indicator of the effect of radioactivity. Six dogs are selected for each experiment. All are of the same sex and, if possible, from the same litter. They are picked about a month before they are to be injected and put through a series of control tests: X-rays, blood count, bone structure, disposition, urine and feces. Two weeks before the injections they are placed in separate metal cages.

Injection of Water
When the test begins, five of the beagles are injected with different amounts of a solution of one of the radioactive elements. The sixth dog is given an injection of water. He acts as the control factor for the group.

For three weeks, they are kept in the cages and given daily X-ray, blood count and other tests. Each dog has a chart upon which its daily reaction is recorded. These tests continue for months and even years after the dogs are returned to the kennels. They are kept separate from dogs injected with other materials and from

those who have not been injected. After five years of experimenting, Dr. Bay and his assistants are able to predict how much radioactive material will be discharged by the dog at a given time, when tumors will develop, and the long range toxic effects of certain types of radioactivity.

Blame Shifted
Important knowledge about the comparison of the radioactive substances with each other also has been gained at Beagleville. For example, many persons who worked in the luminous dial industry between 1910 and 1930 developed cancerous tumors. For many years it was thought that radium used in the industry was the cause. But experiments on the dogs have shown that mesothorium — also used in the industry — is much more dangerous than radium.

Dr. Bay started with one male and seven female beagles, later, to improve the breed, he bought one of the top three beagle sires in the county. Today beagle sires 400 dogs romp in the spacious kennels.

The dogs get better care than many children. Their diets are regulated from a well-equipped kitchen. Their kennels have long outside runways with radiant heat for melting snow. They are bathed regularly. Their kennels are disinfected three times a day.

Surgery Room
They are treated with antibiotics whenever infection threatens. The lab has a surgery room where many of the dogs have been operated on for various illnesses. There is an isolation ward for sick dogs, surgery or post-surgery patients.

When a dog is injected, the solution is intended to simulate safe

or nearly safe exposure, so that many of those injected do not become seriously ill. A dog's blood count is affected at first, but most recover. Only six dogs have died from radioactivity since the experiments began.

As a result of this good care many anti-vivisectionists have endorsed the experiments.

Looking back on five years in Beagleville, Dr. Bay says: "We are just now beginning to get meaningful results and the

Atomic Energy Commission investment is paying off. The AEC and many important scientists are turning their attention here, because, for the first time, information is being obtained on how radioactive material might act on humans."

Norblad Urges Silent Policy Isle Defense

BEND (AP) — Rep. Norblad (R-Ore) said Saturday night suggestions that "we should not defend Quemoy and Matsu or that we should make a definite statement of policy as to our intentions with those islands seem absurd to me."

Norblad said that as a civilian he does not know what should be done, "and I can't believe that others in Washington who are urging a fixed policy regarding

these islands have any better knowledge or information than I have." "We have highly trained and educated military and naval minds on the ground floor there who must be trusted to make the proper decision if that time ever arrives," the congressman concluded.

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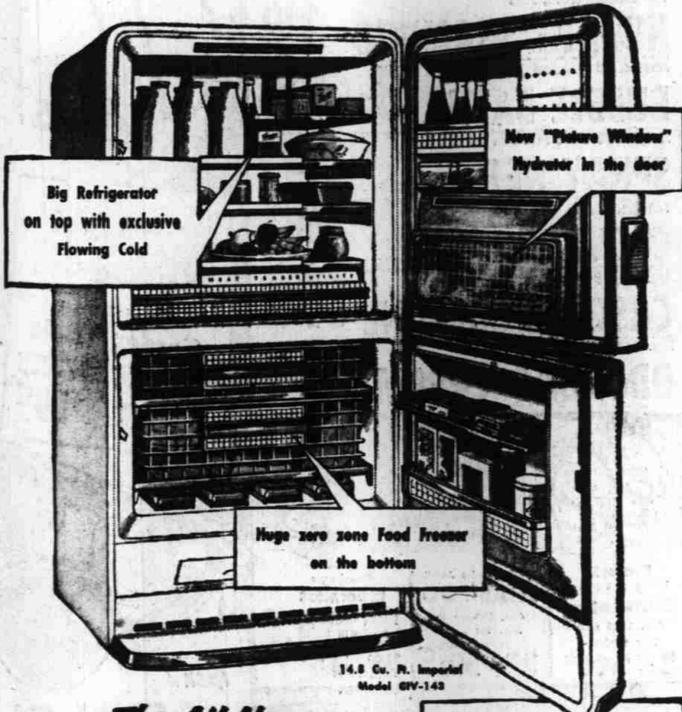
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Queen Wary of Dropped Pins

LONDON (AP) — Queen Elizabeth II stars in a story told over tipped teacups in London this week: A west end hatmaker dispatched a sales girl to Buckingham Palace with a selection of summer beauties the Queen said she wanted to see. There was a slight delay, for Elizabeth at the moment was trying on dresses.

When she was eventually shown in, the salesgirl was startled to see the Queen crawling around on her hands and knees picking up pins.

"Come in, my dear," the Queen said. "You can't be too careful when you've got children around the house."

GAS WELL REPORTED
PAYETTE, Idaho (AP) — H. K. Riddle, president of Oroco Gas & Oil Co., said Saturday he has struck natural gas in commercial quantities eight miles east of here.

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