

Coronavirus Chemical Update readers' comments on chemical illiteracy and technological illiteracy in recent newsletters, August 2021

**Chemical illiteracy #1, 25<sup>th</sup> August 2021 newsletter** - *Unilever haircare marketing director Carly Burford said the (new Tresseme) range was "specifically developed to provide shoppers with a haircare range that is as natural and chemical-free as possible", to tap a global desire for "more transparency in the beauty industry"*

Commenting on both the chemical and technological illiteracy items, Jonathan Stephenson wrote, via email:

The first two parts of this newsletter are the sorts of things that make me want to exit planet earth for a bit and come back when people have found their senses once again.

The demonisation of chemicals and fossil fuels has got to the point where people seem to believe they serve NO purpose and have NO benefits to a functioning society and economy. Like anything, chemical and fossil fuel misuse is dangerous and harmful, but so is running with scissors.

A quote I heard recently, from a surprising source was "Sometimes I think it's better to be uninformed, than to be misinformed." (Arnold Schwarzenegger), which resonated with me as misinformation seems to be the real virus we're currently suffering from. He wrote quite an interesting article relating to mask wearing and vaccinations and the strange distinction people seem to be making between rights/freedoms/responsibilities – it's based around America but I feel we are simply America Lite at the moment.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/08/schwarzenegger-schmuck-mask-vaccines/619746/>

I wonder if we will ever return to a time of moderate, balanced and nuanced conversations where we aren't simply embedding ourselves in right and left wing echo chambers looking for validation of thoughts as opposed to deliberately seeking out the truth, even if it challenges our beliefs.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qz1y37vnThQ>

This is also worth a watch, not sure if you've seen much of Bill Maher, but he strikes me as one of the few who is more concerned with the truth as opposed to political and cultural points scoring.

Sorry this turned into a bit of a soap box, but the first two topics REALLY irked me (not you, the people in them)... 😊

### **Technological illiteracy, 25<sup>th</sup> August 2021 newsletter**

On email John Partington wrote: Well said, Don't think you made any head way though. I like her profile 'Teaching small business owners 'Mission Led Content' ' what ever that is!

The picture used is interesting ... I can see multiple instances of the un-necessary use of fossil fuel based / originated products.

Blue – pink flags and the use of pink powder flares!!! etc

I will not start on the use of the cotton cloths a lot are wearing.

Julie Woollin commented via email: Quite interesting that none of the people that have reacted to the post have profiles that mean anything in the real world. Or is that just me being old fashioned?

**Chemical illiteracy #2, 27<sup>th</sup> August 2021 newsletter** - North East Hygiene says this:  
"Why would you use Tyrosan 20 (HOCl) instead of bleach? ..... Tyrosan 20 can be used in the home or anywhere you need sanitizer. If you are against using products that contain chemicals, then this will be a perfect product for you". See  
[https://www.linkedin.com/posts/eoghan-hampsey-856251182\\_safetyfirst-animals-childsafety-activity-6835517791819436032-mSCY/](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/eoghan-hampsey-856251182_safetyfirst-animals-childsafety-activity-6835517791819436032-mSCY/)

On LinkedIn, Adam Hunniford wrote

You cannot say a disinfectant contains no harmful chemicals. Even the headline claim of 'gentle to kids and animals' is arguably a breach of the regulations.

Biocides 101.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/biocides/advertisement-requirements.htm>

Colin Pratt responded:

That's ok - we're all safe ..

"" If you are against using products that contain chemicals, then this will be a perfect product for you. ""

It's got nothing in it - thank goodness for that ! 🙄🤔

My good friend [Janet Greenwood](#) will be delighted, but some what bemused I'm sure!

100% safe - so I couldn't even drown if I shoved my head in a bucket of it ?

I replied to Colin:

The only thing which doesn't contain chemicals is a vacuum! (and I don't mean a vacuum cleaner!)

And Colin also responded to the original post:

Somebody else who has absolutely no clue about what "chemicals" are! Total rubbish - so ignorant !

Quote from above " If you are against using products that contain chemicals, then this will be a perfect product for you. ""

So explain that to me ??

Via email, Aaron Turrall wrote:

Its both amusing and frightening that their SDS states to 'Avoid all unnecessary exposure' and 'Do not eat, drink or smoke during use' yet the post claims you can wash your veg with it...

The problem is, I know a huge number of people would be drawn to this product because of this chemophobia we have in our society today. I don't dispute that it works, but to claim a disinfectant is completely harmless is dangerous.

Also, if you're afraid your children will get their hands on a hazardous product, put it on a higher shelf or under lock and key? Also, don't all manufacturers of consumer products have a legal obligation to make their product packaging child-proof if it is hazardous?

I think the bottom-line is that there needs to be more education about chemicals within the school system and wider-society.

Via email, Tom Grayson wrote:

I just wanted to throw in my two-pence about "chemical free" brigades. We have had more than a couple of customers who have wanted us to develop products for them and be able to make spurious marketing claims like "chemical free", it always takes a lot of time explaining to them how this just doesn't work as a phrase. Usually what comes out of it is a desire for a "natural" or "green" product, again two words that don't have any real meaning. I try and explain in terms of biodegradability but it's amazing how many people struggle to grasp ideas like that. It depresses me how many people just want a buzzword on their product labels without really understanding what it means or taking any real steps such that it means something real.

It interests me as well how much sulphates have fallen out of vogue too. I had a conversation with a hair dresser a couple of years ago who said that she avoided all sulphates in everything "because they kill your skin". Sulphate are obviously skin irritants but I hadn't realised they had been demonised so much. This person also said that they now avoid sulphates in everything, effectively looking to cut out the functional group from their lives. I tried to explain that sulphate is ubiquitous and is in all sorts of food and drink and that it is a part of the natural world, I don't think I won any hearts and minds there, I find people don't want opinions like that countered. Another person once said to me that they only have sea salt on their food on account of it being natural, I often wonder what else in sea salt that we don't know about, natural or otherwise, there's sulphates in that for sure as well!

Collated by Janet Greenwood, 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021