

## Infodoc 13 | [PDF](#)

### Who gains?

#### [1] The phosphate fertiliser industry

Fluorine Recovery in the Phosphate Industry: a review. Phosphorous & Potassium #103 Sept/Oct 1979, p. 33-39.



*"Ponds full of 1.5 billion gallons of acid." ... it costs at least \$400,000 a month to operate the plants and keep the pumps running to prevent an environmental catastrophe."*

Source: Tampa Tribune, 17/3/2001.



*A tanker carrying hexafluorosilicic acid, sneaks it's way down a dark country lane. It's destination is a fluoridation plant where it will deliver it's highly corrosive & toxic payload.*

Picture source: Fluoride (part of the BBC Nature series, 1990s).

#### [2] The sugar producers / end users

The sugar producers should be particularly sensitive about criticism. The WHO have stated that sugars: *"contribute no nutrients and are not essential for human health"* (as reported in the Guardian, 19th April 1991).

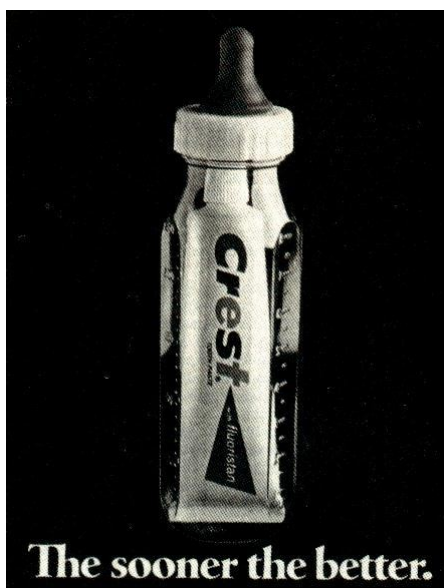
On 16th December 1989 the Grocer, quoting from an official report, stated that sugar was: *"the most important dietary factor in the cause of dental caries."*

Has our sugar consumption gone down since the WHO made their recommendations? It is extremely unlikely because some families are forced to buy 'economy' or plain-wrapped supermarket own-brand products due to lack of income. And you do not get something for nothing and cheap foods are commonly sugar-rich because it is one ingredient that can be produced cheaply. Of course, some brand names also have high levels of sugar (see breakfast cereals).

Ethical Consumer also reported that in 1990, Tate & Lyle and British Sugar launched a £12,000,000 campaign to promote sugar ( which included providing 'educational' material for schools ). As you may expect, Tate & Lyle are contributors to the Tory Party and have also decided to protect their interests by giving a similar 'sweetener' to the New Labour Party.

### **[3] The toothpaste manufacturers**

Although they have no direct interest in fluoridation, this industry has quite literally 'nailed it's colours to the mast' on the subject of fluoride in general. By relying heavily on the promotion of fluoride in their products, whether it be toothpastes, mouth rinses, etc., they cannot afford a scandal over fluoride. What is worse is that some companies, such as like Colgate, have gone as far as making edible fluoride supplements. This can only increase the desire to protect fluoride's reputation.



An advertisement for Proctor & Gambol's Crest fluoride toothpaste. The motto which appears with the advertisement is "*The sooner the better*". It is possibly the most irresponsible piece of advertising you are ever likely to come across. Babies should NOT be given fluoride and the portrayal of a tube of toothpaste in a baby's bottle would not be tolerated by today's advertising standards. Picture source: the Ecologist magazine, 1986.

### **[4] The Dentists and the British Dental Association (BDA)**

The BDA likes to make money - just like anyone else with a keen business mind. The BDA's defence of the large sums of money they generate is that such funds are normally used to pay for research. However, how this money is spent by the researchers and who receives it is another matter entirely. An example of how the BDA raises funds is given below:

British Dental Association

64 Wimpole Street, London, W1M 8AL.

Tel: 0171-935 0875 Fax: 0171-487 5232

E-mail (Internet): bdainfo@clus1.ulcc.ac.uk

DX 53835 Oxford Circus North

2 July 1996

Dr Tony Lees

Mill Farm

Preston on Wye

Hereford HR2 0JU

Dear Dr Lees

It was good of you to phone about emergency dental kits.

I said that I would write to you about the possibility of BDA accreditation. The process would involve some experts taking a view of the product, and we would need to pay them realistically for their time. Normally, the charge is £2,500 +VAT, for a panel of four experts. But for this product, we could probably organise something more cheaply - an area for negotiation. Then, in the event of the product being approved, there would be a charge for use of the BDA logo. In the case of toothpaste, this works out at about 1% of sales. For Dentanurse it would be simpler to have a flat sum, I think - again, this would something for discussion.

It is difficult to quote a price, in a small market for a one-off product. But we are keen to build up the BDA logo as a dental quality mark for consumers. And while we do expect companies to pay for accreditation because the logo helps sales, we are also very interested to help the public to choose reliable products. So I think the message is - if you think BDA accreditation would help you, think about what you could pay and talk to us. I'm not doing a hard sell on this, but I don't want us to be ruled out, either!

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dana Barrett'. The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

NB. Thanks to Dr Tony Lees for the use of this letter.

So what do the dentists get out of fluoridation? There are three possibilities, depending on your point of view:

- a. If fluoridation were effective at reducing tooth decay, then dentists who are poorly rewarded for filling and extracting teeth could spend more time on more expensive procedures. There is also a lot of money to be made by the use of cosmetic treatments to rectify the damage done to teeth by fluoride (fluorosis)
- b. If fluoridation does not have an impact on dental decay then the dentists would only benefit from cosmetic treatment (see a.).
- c. If fluoridation damaged teeth in other ways, such as making them more brittle and difficult to repair, then more money could be earned from doing such repairs - usually later in life when the adult patient is liable for costs.

In any event, the dentist stands to gain.

#### **[5] Grant-supported / sponsored scientists**

Scientists who claim to be independent are not always what they appear to be. Although some may not be the beneficiaries of hefty financial grants from industry, the foundations, institutions, etc., that they work for may be in receipt of such funding. In this situation the the scientist has to dance to the tune of his, or her, employer.

One example of this is the case of Phyllis Mullenix

#### **[6] 'Reward seekers' / social climbers**

Some supporters of fluoridation are seemingly independent, basing their opinions on what they have learned from the subject. Some are very naive and don't think there is much wrong with the world we live in. Some are plain gullible and believe the one-sided propaganda they are spoon-fed by the establishment. Some are downright arrogant, refusing to change their minds even after hearing the other side of the story.

Then there are those, who can fit into any of the above categories, but have other incentives to persuade them to support fluoridation. There is an old saying which goes something like this:

*"Everyone has their price: and it is those who say they are incorruptible who demand the highest price of all."*

This is quite possibly very true. But corruption comes in many forms and is not always recognisable because it does not always come in the form of a financial reward or a similar inducement. Turning a blind eye to a serious crime because you fear for your own safety, your career or some other aspect of your life which may be adversely affected, is a form of corruption. Your reward for silence is that you can escape an act of revenge from those who commit such crimes.

Compromise is another form of corruption. Members of Parliament, for example, are always being warned about being compromised - not that some of them seem to care judging by what we see on television or read in the newspapers.

Other forms of compromise can appear to be quite harmless and there can be no intent to corrupt. In these situations, the individual takes it upon themselves to exploit an opportunity of personal advancement. One example of this is given below. It should be pointed out that this is NOT a suggestion that certain people have been corrupted, or that there was an attempt to corrupt. The letter concerns a meeting at the House of Lords in early March 1996. It was sent to the 'non-attending' District and County Councillors. It will be seen that a combined meeting and dinner at the House of Lords will have provided a backdrop which some may consider 'seductive'.

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### **The British Fluoridation Society**

President: The Baroness Fisher of Rednal

Vice Presidents: The Lord Colwyn, Robin Cook, MP, Dame Jill Knight, DBE, MP.

Chairman: Professor M A Lennon, M.D.S., O.P.D., F.D.S.R.C.S.Ed, Head of Department of Clinical Sciences; Information Officer: Mrs Sheila Jones MPH. School of Dentistry PO BOX 147 Liverpool L69 3BX.

Ref: wp3\las\dinner

14th March 1996

### **Local government Oral Health Forum**

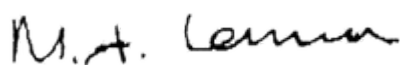
I am sorry that you were unable to attend our meeting and dinner at the House of Lords last week. It was a successful first stage in the process of establishing a forum within which the NHS and local government can work together to ensure that the Oral Health Strategy targets are met.

All present agreed that oral diseases still cause far too much pain and suffering, particularly for children living in socially deprived communities, and that local government has an important role to play in oral health promotion - not least of which is helping to secure water fluoridation for those communities most in need of it.

Lady Farrington kindly offered to approach colleagues in the new Local Government Association about the idea of a Local Government Oral Health Forum. In the meantime, we at BFS are pursuing the possibility of a second meeting, perhaps in Yorkshire in late May or early June, to involve those councillors who were unable to attend last Tuesday.

I will keep you informed of developments regarding a second meeting; in the meantime, enclose, for your information, the notes of last week's meeting.

Yours sincerely



## **[7] Opinion Pollsters**

MORI have demonstrated that as pollsters, they are interested in more than people's opinions. They have a vested interest in helping their clients improve their business. I quote: "Improve the health of your brand, and your relations with key audiences" is the MORI boast. Being just as much a public relations outfit as an opinion pollster, MORI are sub-contracted to help promote the 'brands' of whoever employs them. If the brand is fluoride - then so be it.