

ACTUALITY AND PERSPECTIVES IN TOXICOLOGY

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For a century investigators have been working largely with simple materials prepared the time-honored methods of organic chemistry. While there is yet hope that remarkably non-toxic, biodegradable, specific compounds may be found, the odds are worsening. The movement into fields that use hybridomas of living tissues to prepare super-specific compounds,

that use plant products hitherto undetectable, that manufacture more products from biosynthetic sources, and that create complex substances such as unusual polymers, proteins, natural toxins, and who knows what next, is creating new problems that toxicology must address. Cost per gram is meaningless; cost per uninfested crop, cost per day of hospitalization, cost per acre-foot of pure water, are the only valid considerations. It must not be thought for a moment that this shift will end controversy or placate controversialists. Carbon monoxide and lead are still capable of generating furor as well as illness. Only when avarice and ignorance are eliminated from human kind will toxicology become a dull study. There will be plenty to do.