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NEWS

A CONTEMPORARY TOUCH TO EPIDEMIOLOGY

... After studying an outbreak of *Salmonella muenchen* in Steubenville, Ohio, David N. Taylor and Emmett Schmidt (Ctrs. for Disease Control) announced their results in a press conference. "All the media were there—the local newspaper, the local radio, the local television, and the stringers for the wire services. I read our statement. I told them that the source of the outbreak wasn't water, it wasn't any eating place, it wasn't any food. I told them—and this is from our prepared statement—"Our most important lead suggests that a noncommercial product with an unknown distribution is the source of this salmonella. We have tested samples of marijuana associated with three different cases, and we have found the identical

salmonella which has been isolated from the ill persons. This findings suggests that the marijuana currently in use in Jefferson County has become contaminated with salmonella and represents the primary vehicle of transmission for the illness" It was really very exciting. A big story. And not only locally. Both the wire services carried it. It wasn't so much that we had solved the mystery. It was the marijuana. That gave it a contemporary touch."

[Berton Roueché in *New Yorker* 13 Aug 84, p. 76–85. Reproduced with permission from Press Digest, *Current Contents*® , No 2, January 14, 1985, p. 15 (Published by the Institute for Scientific Information® , Philadelphia, PA, USA.)]

WHY THE "BEST" TECHNOLOGY DOESN'T ALWAYS WIN

... "The technology that 'wins' a market does not necessarily have to be the 'best' or most efficient. In the case of the automobile, the steam (Rankine) cycle is thermodynamically more efficient than the gasoline (Otto) cycle. Given as much development as the gasoline engine has undergone over the last 90 years. It is quite possible that a steam engine could have been more economical. . . . It is [also] quite possible that gasoline was indeed innately superior. The matter has never been settled. But it is equally possible that a series of small events at the turn of the century gave gasoline a temporary lead that subsequently proved unassailable. . . . Steam continued viable as an automotive power source until in 1914 there was an

outbreak of hoof-and-mouth disease in North America. This led to the withdrawal of horse troughs—which is where steam cars could fill with water. It took the Stanley brothers about three years to develop a condenser and boiler system that did not need to be filled every thirty or forty miles. But by then it was too late."

[W. Brian Arthur (Stanford U.) in *Options* (2): 10–13, 1984 (Internatl. Inst. for Applied Systems Analysis) Reproduced with permission from Press Digest, *Current Contents*®, No. 2, January 14, 1985, p. 16 (Published by the Institute for Scientific Information®, Philadelphia, PA, USA.)]
