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NEWS

EATING AWAY AT OIL SPILLS

...“When oil [from spills] washes up on beaches, it kills off plant and animal matter, providing a natural feast for bacteria. These microbes will feed on oil, but it's not their favourite food. ‘For [the microbes] almost anything is better than eating oil,’ says Eric Levy, a researcher with the Bedford Inst. of Oceanography [Dartmouth, Nova Scotia]. The oil stays relatively untouched until the microbes finish gobbling up tastier foods. Since fertilizer contains nitrogen, an essential foodstuff for bacteria, applying it triggers a population explosion — and the more microbes there are, the less time it takes for them to get around to eating the oil.... The

technique is relatively inexpensive, too: it costs the same as fertilizing a farm field. Earlier attempts to clean up polluted beaches with fertilizer failed, but according to the Nova Scotia researchers, the reason is that the material wasn't given enough time to work; microbes take a few days to colonize the oil.” [Stephen Strauss (*Globe and Mail*, Toronto, Canada) in *Technology Review* 91(3):12-4, April 88. Reproduced with permission from Press Digest, *Current Contents*®, No. 21, May 23, 1988, p. 13. (Published by the Institute for Scientific Information®, Philadelphia, USA.)]

ERRATUM

In the article on “Synthesis of novel polynucleotide: Potential R-L Model” by R. K. Mishra and S. K. Brahmachari, published in *Curr. Sci.*, June 5, 1988, Vol. 57, No. 11, p. 574: The underlines for the

sequence have been inadvertently omitted on the second column first line. The corrected sequence may please be read as follows:

GAATTCTCATGTTGACAGCTTATCATCGATAAGCTTTAA
 R L R L