

Public Citizen

November 4, 1974

The Washington Post

To The Editor:

A recent article by William Rice about the food dye Red #2 (Washington Post, Nov. 1, 1974), related our efforts to ban and the Food and Drug Administration's efforts to continue use of this hazardous chemical.

In response to our review of recently-obtained data on the cancer-causing properties of Red #2, an FDA official was quoted as saying that we

"totally ignore more extensive studies which are statistically valid and have not shown carcinogenicity."

We phoned the FDA Press Office to learn if this statement had been transmitted accurately and, if so, what "more extensive" studies the FDA was referring to. An FDA Press Officer, Donald Berreth, responded that although the FDA had issued that statement, he did not know which studies were being referred to but would make an inquiry of the FDA toxicologists who had been consulted on the issue. In a subsequent call we made to the FDA, Senior Toxicologist, Dr. H. Geddes, admitted that "there are no other statistically valid extensive studies which do not show carcinogenicity."

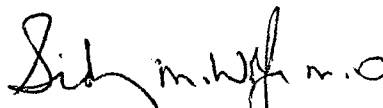
Whether by confusion or intention, such misleading of the public is typical of the industry-riddled FDA's pattern of denying or minimizing the hazards of food additives or drugs even though they may cause cancer.

While FDA obfuscates and quibbles, Red #2 is left on the market. During each additional day, Americans consume more than 27 million dollars worth of food containing this dye. Under the direction of

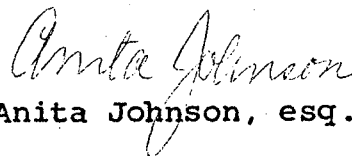
a former Wesson Oil executive, Dr. Virgil Wodicka, FDA management has bent over backwards to protect the health of this dangerous coal tar derivative dye.

Instead, the health of the public needs protection from risk of cancer, fetal death and other adverse effects on male and female reproductive systems. If 10 billion dollars worth of junk food sales didn't greatly depend on this dye, the FDA might find it easier to perform its public health function. Until it does, perhaps the FDA Bureau of Foods could be renamed the Bureau of the Food Industry.

Sincerely,



Sidney M. Wolfe, M.D.



Anita Johnson, esq.