

N Wright

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Mr S Magee
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SM/SMcL

NW:EH

11 Nov 70

PARAQUAT

Dear Stanley,

Answering your letter of the 10th November, the question of adding an emetic to paraquat has of course been mooted and gone into in great detail by PP and these laboratories many times in the past.

It is unfortunately a fact that no emetic, even the most powerful, would act strongly enough and in time to prevent the absorption of paraquat after swallowing a lethal dose. Paraquat is itself emetic and people who have taken more than just a spoonful have frequently vomited afterwards; this, however, has not always prevented fatal results. You will see, therefore, that it would need first of all a very large quantity of emetic in the formulation, which would make it undesirable from commercial and other points of view, but even if one could find the perfect additive it is most unlikely that it would succeed in preventing fatalities.

I take it that you do not want any more than a general comment of this kind from me, as I presume that Mr Joseph Blake is not a scientist who wants detailed information. I return his letter herewith.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,