

UNITED STATES  
ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION  
SAVANNAH RIVER OPERATIONS OFFICE  
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AUGUSTA, GEORGIA

404943

TM:KEH:mep  
IN REPLY REFER TO:

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November 18, 1953

Dr. Lauren R. Donaldson  
Director, Applied Fisheries Laboratory  
University of Washington  
Seattle 5, Washington

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Dear Dr. Donaldson:

I am able to add very little to your observations of sheep in the vicinity of Groom Mine. You will recall our squad consisted of eleven men in six vehicles and was often separated and reunited in various combinations during the course of our work. It seems quite possible that one or more of the U.C.L.A. - A.E.P. biologists - Joshua A. Lee, William Rhodes, Jim Watson and James T. Scanlan - may have made some observations that I was unable to make. Original field notes were reviewed and either submitted for use or destroyed before leaving Mercury, however, I do not recall notes of sheep nor do I recall seeing dead sheep either before or after the shot.

My observations were limited to a flock being rounded up and apparently culled - about 11 a.m. on March 24 - by two or more men on horseback at a point near State Highway #25 about 12 air miles E.N.E. of Bald Mountain. The location was near Station 26 as indicated on a map (Figure 1) of U.C.L.A. Report #243. As I recall, notes that I made there were limited to radiation background and orientation in respect to permanent landmarks. The radiation level was very low if above background level at the time. Progressing southeast we had left the fall-out cloud at least ten miles earlier. Kermit Larson's isoactivity curves will show that background levels lowered by at least a factor of twenty in the area south of the summit of the Timpahute Range, near Lincoln Mine. I was impressed by the emaciated appearance of some of the sheep but was little surprised when the condition of the range was considered. The weather was very dry, no grasses and few annual herbs were available. I recall that the most succulent and apparently palatable plant life was the toxic "loco-weed" that grew most abundantly down the shoulders of the highways there. Mr. Rhodes, previously mentioned, may be able to give positive confirmation of this as well as reports on other flora of the region at the time.

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DOE ARCHIVES

Dr. Lauren R. Donaldson

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During our brief stop several sheep were pursued on horseback until they dropped to their knees from exhaustion, then were lassoed and pulled to the saddle to be taken back to the herd or to a temporary enclosure. This type of sheep husbandry was rather unusual unless the animals were sick and were to be culled from the herd.

I have had recent correspondence from Dr. L. K. Bustad of Hanford on the same subject. I will send copies of this letter to him and to Dr. Pearson.

I was interested in your comments of progress at the University and at Hanford and your plans for successful research in the Pacific. Comments on the University of Washington football team were conspicuously omitted.

Best regards to all.

Very truly yours,

Karl E. Herds, Radiobiologist  
Radiation Control Section  
Technical & Manufacturing Division

cc: Dr. Paul A. Pearson ✓  
Dr. Leo K. Bustad

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