

## LETTERS

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### SPOKESMEN

## There's good reason they are not believed

So, pesticide industry official spokesparrot — sorry, spokesman — Jeffrey Lowes and university toxicologist Keith Solomon are both of the opinion pesticides are perfectly safe, if used according to the instructions; so says The Okanagan Sunday editorial.

You know, the devil of it is, they may well be right. There's only one problem, though. The editorial writer was quite correct — we, the people of planet Earth, simply don't believe them.

In fact, most of us don't believe anything that an official spokesman tells us, whether he be from industry, government, the military, or even from academia.

The reason for this unfortunate state of affairs is really quite simple. We don't believe them because, over the past several decades, we have been systematically and consistently misled, misinformed, obfuscated, prevaricated at and outright lied to, by official spokesmen from all of those sectors of society.

Indeed, this stuff has been going on for centuries. I recall reading somewhere that sulphurous fumes from the chimney stacks of coal-burning furnaces were touted as being beneficial for the lungs, especially for patients suffering from emphysema or consumption, back in the early 19th century.

And weren't all those fresh-faced young army recruits, back in 1914, assured repeatedly by their officers that the Great War would be all over "in a matter of months?"

More recently, we have been informed by official spokesmen from the tobacco industry that their products were perfectly safe and non-addictive (while their own scientists were telling them exactly the opposite). Others from the petroleum companies assured us leaded gasoline posed no threat to anyone.

And so it goes on. How many years is it since President George W. Bush's advisers claimed to have "definite evidence" of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq? And how many years since George W. himself proclaimed "victory" in the subsequent war?

And today, official spokesmen are at it again.

It's no use, guys. You can assure us and reassure us again and again until your faces turn purple, and we're still not going to believe you.

Your profession is irredeemably contaminated by the actions of your predecessors, so you might as well give up. Sorry, but that's the way it is.

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