

FROM: The Tobacco Institute, Inc., 1735 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.  
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Tobacco Institute Discusses

'Tar' and Nicotine Testing;

Cites Confusion, Misunderstanding

Washington, D.C. -- As a result of the Federal Trade Commission hearing today on "tar" and nicotine, a number of inquiries have been directed to the Tobacco Institute. Accordingly, the Institute has issued the following statement:

The hearing today was concerned with the "methods to be employed in determining tar and nicotine content" of cigarettes. A number of the cigarette companies submitted their views on this subject to the Commission at today's hearing.

Even prior to this hearing, the cigarette companies have been cooperating with the Federal Trade Commission, and have given the Commission the benefit of their experience with test methods. Research directors of various companies have met with Commission officials and scientists to discuss the wide range of technical problems involved in such testing. A Commission scientist has visited individual company laboratories to discuss the techniques involved in such testing, and to observe testing. In addition, relevant references from the scientific literature have been provided to the Commission for its use.

The industry plans to continue to cooperate with the Commission--assuming, as we do, that the Commission will follow sound scientific practices in its testing.

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Aside from the technical questions involved in arriving at test results, there is a broader question, not the subject of today's hearing. That is whether or not information regarding "tar" and nicotine content of cigarettes is actually meaningful in terms of human health.

We firmly believe the public should have the facts concerning tobacco and health. We believe, moreover, that it is essential that the public not be misled about the facts, or be confused by theories stated as facts.

We are concerned about the growing emphasis on "tar" and nicotine by publications, various organizations and by government-related persons and agencies.

We believe this emphasis can mislead and confuse the public insofar as it suggests that science has established human health significance for "tar" and nicotine, or for particular levels of "tar" and nicotine. At best such a suggestion is a matter of opinion and guesswork.

It is common knowledge that some scientists believe "tar" and nicotine may be harmful to human health. It is not so well known that many other scientists question this view.

Evaluation of the scientific literature makes it clear there is no valid scientific evidence demonstrating that either "tar" or nicotine is responsible for human illness.

Even those who are the most outspoken about the possible hazards of cigarette smoking have not been able to demonstrate that any particular ingredient in cigarettes actually causes any human diseases.

Some scientists have theories about particular components of smoke. Many such theories, proposed in recent years, have not stood the test of rigid scientific scrutiny. Other theories are being carefully studied through research supported by the tobacco industry and by others.

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With respect to nicotine, the report on Smoking and Health of the Surgeon General's Advisory Committee points out that "There is no acceptable evidence that prolonged exposure to nicotine creates either dangerous functional change of an objective nature or degenerative disease" (page 74). The report goes on to state that nicotine "probably does not represent a significant health problem" (page 75).

There is no "tar" in cigarette smoke, and smoke is not "tar." "Tar" is the name given to some of the components in smoke that can be collected by laboratory techniques.

Former Surgeon General Terry said in testimony last year before the U.S. Senate Commerce Committee: "While it seems at least plausible that cigarettes with lower tar and nicotine may present lesser health hazards, there is presently no proof that this is so."

Nor is there any scientific proof today that "tar" and nicotine have significance in terms of human health.

Scientists throughout the world are continuing to investigate questions concerning tobacco and health, including "tar" and nicotine. The tobacco industry is supporting much of this research.

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