



February 28, 1994

David A. Keeler, M.D.  
Commissioner of Food and Drugs  
Food and Drug Administration  
Department of Health & Human Services  
Rockville, MD 20867

JAMES W. JOHNSTON  
Chairman and  
Chief Executive Officer

Winston-Salem, N.C. 27102  
919-741-7825

Dear Dr. Keeler:

This letter is intended to clarify one simple fact: that R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company does not increase the nicotine in its cigarettes above what is found naturally in tobacco. In fact, our processes reduce the amount of nicotine in cigarettes when compared to unprocessed tobacco.

Reynolds manufactures and sells a broad range of cigarette products designed to appeal to the tastes of today's adult cigarette smokers. Smokers have increasingly demanded lower "tar" cigarettes. As a result of the processes used to lower "tar", nicotine has also been reduced. Over the past 40 years, the average "tar" and nicotine in cigarettes sold in the U.S. has declined by more than 60%.

The variety of cigarettes available is, in large part, a result of blending techniques developed over a long history of cigarette manufacture and research. In addition to traditional tobacco blending techniques, various other techniques are available to cigarette manufacturers, including puffing of tobacco, filtration, air dilution, tobacco reconstitution and others, in order to enable manufacturers to reduce the "tar" and nicotine yields in their cigarettes. As a result of these various techniques, the sales weighted averages of "tar" and nicotine yields in the United States today are 11.5 milligrams and 0.8 milligram, respectively.

In the early 1950's the sales weighted averages of "tar" and nicotine yields were 36 milligrams and 2.7 milligrams, respectively. Most cigarette brands were in a narrow band around this average. Flue-cured tobacco naturally contains 2.5 to 3.5 percent nicotine, burley tobacco contains 2.75 to 4.0 percent nicotine, and Oriental tobacco contains 0.5 to 1.8 percent nicotine in the cured leaf. Finished cigarettes generally contain approximately 1.5 to 2.5% nicotine by weight, less than the natural cured leaf.

"We work for smokers."

91819326

Dr. David A. Kessler, M.D.

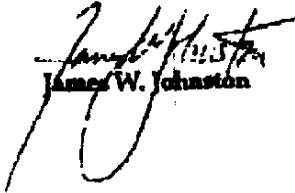
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The broad range of cigarette products available today provides smokers with a wide selection of tastes, "tar" and nicotine yields. The "tar" and nicotine yields in cigarettes are published by the Federal Trade Commission and the yields for each brand are provided in every advertisement for that brand in accordance with the law. The processing of certain tobaccos enables us to manufacture cigarettes consistent with the published "tar" and nicotine levels despite the nicotine variations from leaf to leaf and crop to crop.

Let me repeat, so that it is absolutely clear: R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company does not increase the nicotine in the tobacco we use in the manufacture of our cigarettes.

Sincerely,

  
James W. Johnston

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