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Wednesday, April 21, 2010

In Honor of Earth Day, Let's Have Some DDT [Veronique de Rugy]

Tomorrow is Earth Day. Preparing for the event, my daughter's first-grade class has been hard at work to show all the perils that our planet faces. Hoping to brighten her teacher and her classmates' day, I sent her to school with this *USA Today* [article](#) by the fantastic director of the Copenhagen Consensus Center, Bjorn Lomborg, stating that:

Given all the talk of impending catastrophe, this may come as a surprise, but as we approach the 40th anniversary of the first [Earth Day](#), people who care about the environment actually have a lot to celebrate. [...] In virtually every developed country, the air is more breathable and the water is more drinkable than it was in 1970. In most of the First World, deforestation has turned to reforestation. Moreover, the percentage of malnutrition has been reduced, and ever-more people have access to clean water and sanitation.

I would have loved to send her with this *Reason TV* interview of Africa Fighting Malaria's Richard Tren and Donald Roberts about what's so excellent about DDT.



A reader sent this yesterday:

... A great deal of my work involved strategy development for new pesticides. The fact is that DDT is truly remarkable! I can't count the number of pesticides that have come — and gone — being introduced as "the successor to DDT." DDT is still here; most of the "successors" are long gone.

The truly remarkable fact about DDT is that it remains effective after more than 65 years. In fact it was a Ciba chemist who won the Nobel Prize for chemistry in 1943 for DDT. Moreover, it was given credit for saving the Italian campaign.

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Absent DDT, it would have been necessary to close the port of Naples, which was the main supply point for all Allied troops in Italy, because of a massive typhus epidemic. Along came DDT and the epidemic was stopped cold.

The *Excellent Powder* book is [here](#). It's truly excellent.

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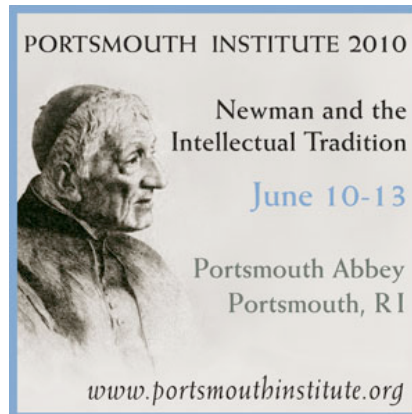
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