

A B S T R A C T

Studies were carried out on lead levels in an agricultural area traversed by a major highway. Samples of soil, grass, water and sediment from nearby canals as well as vegetables grown in the area were studied.

Lead levels in the sediment of the canal draining the area were about 10 times higher than the Caroni River into which it flows and biota from the canal had elevated levels of lead. Although systemic lead levels in the vegetables were generally low, a monitor over a period of a year revealed that lead levels in the soil had risen from about 90 $\mu\text{g/g}$ to about 225 $\mu\text{g/g}$, which is an alarming rate of increase and cause for continued monitoring of lead in food and fish from the area.

A discussion of factors affecting lead deposition and remobilisation is included, along with a discussion of the pattern of fall away of lead levels with distance from the road and some anomalous results due to the use lead arsenate and unevenness of the terrain.