

Prairie Fare: Are Plastics Harming Our Health?

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"Have you been hearing about plastics, especially microplastics, lately?" I asked my husband.

He spends a lot of time reading online, so he is often my gauge for column topics. I wondered what he had been seeing.

"Yes. Plastics are everywhere," he said when he briefly looked up from his phone. He obviously was not very chatty that evening.

What he said was true. I continued reading for this column. I looked around our house, and plastics certainly are everywhere.

As I explored research articles, I was getting a bit alarmed about "microplastics" and "nanoplastics" in our environment.

Let's take a step back in time and then consider what we can do to reduce the amount of microplastics in our food and environment.

I enjoy combing through antique stores. The implements from our ancestors' era were made from natural materials. Decades ago, materials were made of wood, metal, glass and other nonplastic items.

However, I do not think we will ever give up the convenience of plastics.

Plastic has a long history dating back to 1869 when John Wesley Wyatt invented a substitute for ivory from elephants by combining natural cellulose (cotton fiber) with camphor to make a shapeable material. Interestingly, the popularity of billiards prompted the discovery, according to the Science History Institute.

Later, another inventor, Leo Baekeland, created "Bakelite" in 1907 as the first synthetic "plastic" insulator for use in the electrical industry. Plastics then became part of the war effort in the 1940s.

Look around your space. Are you drinking from a plastic water bottle or wearing shoes that are part plastic? You might have a part-plastic cell phone at your side. Perhaps you drove a vehicle with plastic components. You might have a body or facial scrub with "microbeads" (plastic) in your shower. Plastic is part of tires and even clothing.

Most likely, if you are like me, you might have a plastic bag full of plastic bags in a closet. Everything from milk to laundry detergent is sold in plastic containers. We might bring our lunch in plastic containers or wrap our food in plastic wrap. Toys are often plastic.

As time has progressed, plastics have become pollutants, with plastic chairs showing up at the bottom of the oceans.

Researchers have been studying the potential detrimental effects of us inhaling or consuming microplastics. Microplastics are small particles (less than 5 millimeters) that are released as plastics break down. Nanoplastics are extremely small, about 1/10 the width of a human hair.

Pick up a ruler or examine a

strand of hair to visualize how small that is.

Unfortunately, these tiny plastics are in our environment. Many plastics do not break down easily. When found in the ocean, microplastics can be consumed by fish and shellfish and, potentially, later consumed by humans.

According to the Food and Drug Administration, microplastics and nanoplastics have been detected in salt, seafood, bottled water, honey, milk, tea and other foods.

The good news is that the FDA states that "current scientific evidence does not demonstrate the levels of microplastics or nanoplastics detected in foods pose a risk to human health."

The researchers and regulators acknowledge that we do not have all the scientific information we need. What are some practical tips a savvy consumer can do until more research about microplastics is published and disseminated?

- Avoid heating food in plastic containers, especially in take-out containers or plastic wrap. Use glass containers to warm foods in a microwave.

- Use stainless steel or glass containers for your water, coffee or other beverages. Cook in stainless steel or cast iron pots and pans and other cookware without plastic-based coating.

- Use wood or stainless steel cooking utensils. "Black" cooking and eating utensils have been particularly problematic.

- Use glass or bamboo cutting boards instead of plastic.

- If you care for a baby, do not heat formula or breastmilk in a plastic bottle.

- Eat a simpler diet rich in natural antioxidants. Enjoy more "whole foods" instead of heavily processed foods.

- Stay well hydrated with filtered water from your tap. Water can help flush out toxins.

- Use reusable bags or paper bags instead of plastic bags.

- Look for plastic that is safe for food storage. Items labeled 1, 2, 4 and 5 are usually considered to be the safest. If your city has a recycling program, find out the codes that can be recycled.

Instead of a recipe this week, I am providing a resource for gardening and food preparation. Try growing your own food, helping in a community garden or visiting a farmers market.

See www.ag.ndsu.edu/field-to-fork (and go to the Resource section) to learn more about growing vegetables and fruits, which are rich in compounds that help fight health issues.

You can explore recipes for bell peppers, cabbage, carrots, onions and numerous other colorful vegetables. Aim for a variety of colorful produce. Foods naturally high in red, blue or purple colors, such as red cabbage, blueberries, red grapes and many others, have been reported to be particularly protective.

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*2024 North Dakota State Study, Conducted by Coda Ventures

Oil Activity Report

Permits:

Hess Bakken Investments II, LLC, EN-Edwards-157-94-2203H-1, NENW 27-157N-94W, Mountrail Co., 680' FNL and 2016' FWL, Development, White Earth, 2287' Ground, API #33-061-05535, Spacing unit: Sections 3, 10, 15 and 22, T157N R94W, drill-back outside of spacing unit

Hess Bakken Investments II, LLC, EN-Edwards-157-94-2203H-2, NENW 27-157N-94W, Mountrail Co., 680' FNL and 2049' FWL, Development, White Earth, 2287' Ground, API #33-061-05536, Spacing unit: Sections 3, 10, 15 and 22, T157N R94W, drill-back outside of spacing unit

Hess Bakken Investments II, LLC, EN-Edwards-157-94-2203H-3, NENW 27-157N-94W, Mountrail Co., 680' FNL and 2115' FWL, Development, Big Butte, 2287' Ground, API #33-061-05537, Spacing unit: Sections 27 and 34, T157N R94W, outside of spacing unit

Hess Bakken Investments II, LLC, EN-Edwards-157-94-2203H-4, NENW 27-157N-94W, Mountrail Co., 680' FNL and 2115' FWL, Development, Big Butte, 2287' Ground, API #33-061-05538, Spacing unit: Sections 27 and 34, T157N R94W, outside of spacing unit

Hess Bakken Investments II, LLC, EN-Edwards-157-94-2203H-5, NENW 27-157N-94W, Mountrail Co., 680' FNL and 2148' FWL, Development, White Earth, 2287' Ground, API #33-061-05539, Spacing unit: Sections 15 and 22, T157N R94W, drill-back outside of spacing unit

Hess Bakken Investments II, LLC, EN-Edwards-157-94-2203H-6, NENW 27-157N-94W, Mountrail Co., 680' FNL and 2181' FWL, Development, White Earth, 2287' Ground, API #33-061-05540, Spacing unit: Sections 15 and 22, T157N R94W, drill-back outside of spacing unit

Hess Bakken Investments II, LLC, EN-Edwards-157-94-2203H-7, NENW 27-157N-94W, Mountrail Co., 680' FNL and 2181' FWL, Development, White Earth, 2287' Ground, API #33-061-05541, Spacing unit: Sections 15 and 22, T157N R94W, drill-back outside of spacing unit

Hess Bakken Investments II, LLC, EN-Edwards-157-94-2203H-8, NENW 27-157N-94W, Mountrail Co., 680' FNL and 2181' FWL, Development, White Earth, 2287' Ground, API #33-061-05542, Spacing unit: Sections 24 and 34, T152N R91W

Slawson Exploration Company, Inc., Cannonball Federal 6-27-34H, SWSW 22-152N-91W, Mountrail Co., 1140' FSL and 752' FWL, Development, 'Confidential', Big Bend, 1951' Ground, Bottom hole location: SWSE 34-152N-91W, API #33-061-05543, Spacing unit: Sections 24 and 34, T152N R91W, location outside of spacing unit

Slawson Exploration Company, Inc., Cannonball Federal 6-27-34H, SWSW 22-152N-91W, Mountrail Co., 1140' FSL and 752' FWL, Development, 'Confidential', Big Bend, 1951' Ground, Bottom hole location: SWSE 34-152N-91W, API #33-061-05544, Spacing unit: Sections 24 and 34, T152N R91W, location outside of spacing unit

Slawson Exploration Company, Inc., Cannonball Federal 6-27-34H, SWSW 22-152N-91W, Mountrail Co., 1140' FSL and 752' FWL, Development, 'Confidential', Big Bend, 1951' Ground, Bottom hole location: SWSE 34-152N-91W, API #33-061-05545, Spacing unit: Sections 24 and 34, T152N R91W, location outside of spacing unit

Slawson Exploration Company, Inc., Cannonball Federal 6-27-34H, SWSW 22-152N-91W, Mountrail Co., 1140' FSL and 752' FWL, Development, 'Confidential', Big Bend, 1951' Ground, Bottom hole location: SWSE 34-152N-91W, API #33-061-05546, Spacing unit: Sections 24 and 34, T152N R91W, location outside of spacing unit

Slawson Exploration Company, Inc., Cannonball Federal 6-27-34H, SWSW 22-152N-91W, Mountrail Co., 1140' FSL and 752' FWL, Development, 'Confidential', Big Bend, 1951' Ground, Bottom hole location: SWSE 34-152N-91W, API #33-061-05547, Spacing unit: Sections 24 and 34, T152N R91W, location outside of spacing unit

Slawson Exploration Company, Inc., Cannonball Federal 6-27-34H, SWSW 22-152N-91W, Mountrail Co., 1140' FSL and 752' FWL, Development, 'Confidential', Big Bend, 1951' Ground, Bottom hole location: SWSE 34-152N-91W, API #33-061-05548, Spacing unit: Sections 24 and 34, T152N R91W, location outside of spacing unit

Slawson Exploration Company, Inc., Cannonball Federal 6-27-34H, SWSW 22-152N-91W, Mountrail Co., 1140' FSL and 752' FWL, Development, 'Confidential', Big Bend, 1951' Ground, Bottom hole location: SWSE 34-152N-91W, API #33-061-05549, Spacing unit: Sections 24 and 34, T152N R91W, location outside of spacing unit

Slawson Exploration Company, Inc., Cannonball Federal 6-27-34H, SWSW 22-152N-91W, Mountrail Co., 1140' FSL and 752' FWL, Development, 'Confidential', Big Bend, 1951' Ground, Bottom hole location: SWSE 34-152N-91W, API #33-061-05550, Spacing unit: Sections 24 and 34, T152N R91W, location outside of spacing unit

Slawson Exploration Company, Inc., Cannonball Federal 6-27-34H, SWSW 22-152N-91W, Mountrail Co., 1140' FSL and 752' FWL, Development, 'Confidential', Big Bend, 1951' Ground, Bottom hole location: SWSE 34-152N-91W, API #33-061-05551, Spacing unit: Sections 24 and 34, T152N R91W, location outside of spacing unit

Slawson Exploration Company, Inc., Cannonball Federal 6-27-34H, SWSW 22-152N-91W, Mountrail Co., 1140' FSL and 752' FWL, Development, 'Confidential', Big Bend, 1951' Ground, Bottom hole location: SWSE 34-152N-91W, API #33-061-05552, Spacing unit: Sections 24 and 34, T152N R91W, location outside of spacing unit

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Slawson Exploration Company, Inc., Cannonball Federal 6-27-34H, SWSW 22-152N-91W, Mountrail Co., 1140' FSL and 752' FWL, Development, 'Confidential', Big Bend, 1951' Ground, Bottom hole location: SWSE 34-152N-91W, API #33-061-05559, Spacing unit: Sections 24 and 34, T152N R91W, location outside of spacing unit

Slawson Exploration Company, Inc., Cannonball Federal 6-27-34H, SWSW 22-152N-91W, Mountrail Co., 1140' FSL and 752' FWL, Development, 'Confidential', Big Bend, 1951' Ground, Bottom hole location: SWSE 34-152N-91W, API #33-061-05560, Spacing unit: Sections 24 and 34, T152N R91W, location outside of spacing unit

Slawson Exploration Company, Inc., Cannonball Federal 6-27-34H, SWSW 22-152N-91W, Mountrail Co., 1140' FSL and 752' FWL, Development, 'Confidential', Big Bend, 1951' Ground, Bottom hole location: SWSE 34-152N-91W, API #33-061-05561, Spacing unit: Sections 24 and 34, T152N R91W, location outside of spacing unit

Slawson Exploration Company, Inc., Cannonball Federal 6-27-34H, SWSW 22-152N-91W, Mountrail Co., 1140' FSL and 752' FWL, Development, 'Confidential', Big Bend, 1951' Ground, Bottom hole location: SWSE 34-152N-91W, API #33-061-05562, Spacing unit: Sections 24 and 34, T152N R91W, location outside of spacing unit

Slawson Exploration Company, Inc., Cannonball Federal 6-27-34H, SWSW 22-152N-91W, Mountrail Co., 1140' FSL and 752' FWL, Development, 'Confidential', Big Bend, 1951' Ground, Bottom hole location: SWSE 34-152N-91W, API #33-061-05563, Spacing unit: Sections 24 and 34, T152N R91W, location outside of spacing unit

Slawson Exploration Company, Inc., Cannonball Federal 6-27-34H, SWSW 22-152N-91W, Mountrail Co., 1140' FSL and 752' FWL, Development, 'Confidential', Big Bend, 1951' Ground, Bottom hole location: SWSE 34-152N-91W, API #33-061-05564, Spacing unit: Sections 24 and 34, T152N R91W, location outside of spacing unit