

Sunday Express 8-4-73.

OUT SOON—a safer

Sunday Express Science Correspondent

THE WORLD'S first cigarettes containing synthetic tobacco—to reduce health risks—will be on sale in Britain before summer ends. They will be king-size filter-tipped and sold in dark blue packets of 20 costing no more than ordinary brands.

At first only a limited number will be available from tobacconists in and around Coventry for market research purposes. But arrangements are in hand to step up production rapidly in response to an expected public demand.

The new cigarettes will be called **Planet**—a modern-sounding word understandable in a variety of languages.

The smoking mixture will be a roughly 50-50 blend of synthetic and natural tobacco. But the makers say the synthetic tobacco could be replaced later.

Based on the fact of the success of the "Eagle" brand cigarettes, which were produced from Canadian new smoking tobacco, the makers say the new Planet is a mild and pleasant smoke with low tar and nicotine content.

Planet will cost the same as ordinary cigarettes because the mix of synthetic and natural tobacco is the same.

A Customs and Excise spokesman said this was determined by legislation when experiments to produce synthetic tobacco started. It was estimated to safeguard the Government's enormous revenue—amounting last year to £1,125 million—from the sale of tobacco.

What are the new cigarettes like? I smoked my first Planet after lunch with Dr Vera Furness, head of Cuscuta's research division at Coventry.

It was my first cigarette of any kind since I gave up smoking more than 20 years ago. I found it deliciously different.

Dreadful

That of course is what the people who are working for Cuscuta want to produce a synthetic tobacco in England.

Dr Furness said that her attempts to smoke synthetic tobacco were "dreadful".

It is not enough to produce something that merely looks like tobacco. Many other subtle factors are involved in satisfying the smoker.

A cigarette with synthetic tobacco must burn at the right speed, the paper stay intact when held in the hand, and even the smell of the delicate, wraith-like appearance smokers are accustomed to.

Dr Furness said: "I don't think that is where people should go to make vegetable cigarettes of dried lettuce leaves or banana skins went wrong. Their products lacked genuine characteristics."

It is how synthetic tobacco is produced in a trade secret. Cuscuta are anxious that it should be kept secret. It is not to be used for a variety of industrial purposes.

Hundreds of tons of cellulose in which studies of their latest cigarette mixture had to be made for a variety of industrial purposes.

But a small quantity is now chemically treated and prepared to make suitable tobacco. Cuscuta's reason is that it costs hundreds of thousands of pounds, making the cigarette.

The makers have used a new manufacturing plant at Coventry. It is a major development in the industry at the end of 1973.

Dr Furness said: "We would like to see the production of Planet in great quantities and to test the market reaction."

Volunteers

We expect to have Planet cigarettes in local shops early in September. Cuscuta are looking for volunteers to test the cigarettes. They are looking for people who are regular smokers and are aged 18 and over. About 100 volunteers have smoked Planet at the Government research laboratories and given their opinion of various products and blends.

Last year Dr Furness and 1,000 other scientists were made in Britain but not put up on the sea before. And America reported a new 100 cent increase in cigarette prices.

Nothing is considered to be a health risk in smoking. But as the industry is looking for a new market, are exposed to according to their own terms.

At the very least Planet cigarettes should reduce known hazards by something less dangerous.

Research aimed at producing "harmless" synthetic tobacco is being carried out by ICI. Dr Furness said that the work was not advanced at Cuscuta.

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