

Availability of KODAK Astronomical Plates

We have heard from Eastman Kodak that they are having serious difficulty preparing emulsion types IIa-O, 098-04 and 156-01 (IIa-D) as well as the 103a series. This announcement was made by Gordon P. Brown, from Kodak's Professional Photography Division at the recent (January 1993) AAS meeting in Phoenix and repeated in a recent fax to David Malin.

This confirms earlier information from observatories that they were experiencing long delays in supply of these emulsion types. Apparently, these products were formulated many years ago using gelatins that are now in short supply because the animals from which they were derived are protected or no longer available. All emulsion types of interest to astronomers are threatened, though a 'temporary fix' keeps IIIa-J and IIIa-F available for the moment. Note that there is now no Kodak emulsion suitable for the fundamental astronomical B and V bands.

This situation is potentially very serious, and though Kodak have advised that they will attempt to solve the problem, aspects of it may require "an extensive research program that these products cannot support". In any case, the investigation will take some time.

It is evident that this problem has caused Kodak to review the demand for spectroscopic plates, and, at the same AAS meeting, Gordon Brown issued a questionnaire asking for information on the usage of a range of Spectroscopic Plates. Apparently, the questionnaire has only been directed to participants at the AAS meeting. Since many users of Spectroscopic Plates would not be present, with Gordon Brown's agreement, we reproduce the questionnaire in this Newsletter.

On the reverse of the questionnaire was another page inviting comments. Specifically, it said: "Please use this side for any comments that you may have regarding: plate availability, ordering, shipping, new opportunities, plate testing, etc."

If you have any interest whatsoever in the continued availability of Spectroscopic Emulsions, I strongly encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to let Eastman Kodak (through Gordon Brown) know how their demise will affect your scientific program.

Please include in your reply your name, your institute and its full address as well as telephone and fax contact numbers, if available.

The questionnaire and comments should be returned as soon as possible to:

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