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★ THE DENVER POST Sat., Oct. 6, 1979 3

Drums of Toxic PCB Found On Farm Near Lafayette

By JIM KIRKSEY
Denver Post Staff Writer

Several 55-gallon drums of a toxic, potentially dangerous chemical have been discovered on a farm near Lafayette.

Al Hazle, director of the state Health Department's Division of Radiation and Hazardous Wastes, said Friday that 17 large drums containing PCB (Poly-chlorinated Bi-phenols) were found late Thursday about a mile west of Lafayette.

He said the drums were in a deteriorated condition and possibly had been leaking, but there was no indication of widespread contamination in the area.

ANN WISLOCKI, a Health Department chemist, described PCB as an organic chemical used primarily as an industrial coolant in electrical transformers. It can be ingested or absorbed through the skin, she said.

PCB can cause cancer or mutations, she explained, and can be responsible for congenital defects if exposure is great.

She said the substance generally is stored in human and animal body fat.

The tenant on the leased farm near Lafayette, Wayne Darling, called the drums to the attention of the Boulder County Health Department, which then notified the Heads Up Toxics Program of the Environmental Protection Agency, he said.

The county and state health departments were working with the EPA on the discovery.

The EPA has taken soil samples to determine the extent, if any, of leakage of the toxic chemical, Hazle said. Samples of water, milk, other food and animal tissue from the immediate area were being collected by the county health authorities to be analyzed in the state Health Department laboratories.

Investigators from the EPA were on the scene and had secured the area, he added.

Jim McShane, coordinator of the state Health Department's emergency response efforts, said the immediate tasks are providing security for the material and making sure that feed or other agricultural products from the secured area aren't distributed for human consumption.

HE ADDED THAT as soon as it is practical, the chemical must be put in new barrels and transported to a suitable site in Idaho for disposal.

A Health Department spokesman said the samples will be analyzed over the weekend.

This past summer, PCB contamination originating in animal feed from a Montana packing plant caused the destruction of hundreds of thousands of laying hens, millions of eggs, thousands of bakery items and tons of processed chicken meat in Western states.

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