

Monsanto

FROM: K. Warren Easley -- Washington, DC

OCT 01 1976

DATE: September 29, 1976
SUBJECT: PCBs in Mother's Milk -- Government Meeting September 23, 1976

cc: Messrs: R. Potter
C. Weber

TO: Mr. Paul Wright

On September 23, 1976, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare held a meeting to review and evaluate EPA's sampling of PCBs in the fat of mother's milk and to provide advice to the medical profession and to nursing mothers on the question of whether to continue breast feeding. You asked that I attend this meeting as an observer.

The consensus was that the benefits of breast feeding outweigh by far the uncertain risks associated with contamination by PCBs and other chlorinated hydrocarbons. This advice has been accurately reported in the press. (Copies attached).

Most of the presentations consisted of reviews by EPA and FDA of data on the contamination by PCBs of the environment and the food supply -- especially fish. Most of the data was not new. However, Dr. Charles Walker of the Fish and Wildlife Service did have data which I believe to be new on the FWS monitoring program of fresh water fish in all geographical regions of the country. He said that 90% of the samples taken contained PCBs at or above the detection level, and 60% contained over 0.5 parts per million, which he said to be the biologically significant level. These figures are on the basis of the whole fish. He described the trend in PCB fish contamination as unfavorable by which he meant that it is holding steady.

Dr. Allen, after reviewing his past work with monkeys, said that he found the offspring to be small and more susceptible to infectious diseases. Some were examined by animal behavioral psychologists and were said to exhibit evidence of hyperkinesis, learning disability, and behavioral deficits. He described this as preliminary data, but reminded the audience that it is on primates and, therefore, is a clear indication that it is time to evaluate more closely the effects of PCBs on offspring. The attendees were impressed by Dr. Allen's presentation.

Dr. Savage of Colorado State presented his work on measurements of contamination in mother's milk. CSU had looked for pesticides in mother's milk for EPA and had some left over samples. EPA latched on to those samples, and to CSU's analytical capability, to look for PCB.

I have sent to you separately the extensive hand-out material that was provided by some of the speakers, including the Colorado State information. You'll note that DDE levels are comparable to PCB levels.

The meeting went on for six hours, more or less. I taped a fair portion of it although the quality of the tape is variable. HEW taped the entire session, and we could, in time, get hold of their tape, but it, too, will have alot of inaudible portions. I'll keep my tapes and my notes for a while in case you have some specific questions.

KWB:mwh

K. Warren Easley

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