

MONSANTO CHEMICAL COMPANY

Texas City, Texas

September 27, 1963

VCM
CUSTOMER COMPLAINT

TO:

W. R. Nisbet
W. H. Slager
J. W. Kongable
G. T. Ryan/W. T. Anderson
J. L. Young/A. J. Phipps

Complaint No.: 63-14-VCM-3

Date of Complaint: 9-9-63.

Date of Shipment and Carrier:

Product: Vinyl Chloride
Monomer

8-30-63 SHPX 3966

Quantity: 76,660 lbs.

Customer: Shell Chemical Company

Location: Ladora, Colorado

End Use of
Material: Used as an intermediate in
the production of compounds
in insecticides.

Details of Complaint:

While investigating a Springfield complaint (63-12-VCM-2) it was discovered that the same tank car that was the subject of that complaint had been reloaded and shipped to Shell. The retained sample of the VCM sent to Shell similarly showed contamination from tiny black metallic particles. At the time Shell received this information they had not unloaded the car. Upon examination of the material, they refused to take the car even when offered a discount equivalent to our out-of-pocket freight expenses for returning the car to Texas City.

Monsanto Losses from Complaint:

Direct - Round trip freight of \$3,050 plus handling and rerunning expense. Tank car utilization loss.

Indirect - Loss of customer confidence.

Specific Action Requested:

- By Customer:
1. Texas City to issue credit for the returned material and freight (shipped collect) to Ladora.
 2. Texas City to expedite shipment on another car of VCM.
 3. Assurance that problem will not recur.

- By Marketing:
1. Materials Handling decontaminate and inspect this car when it returns so as to prescribe cleaning procedure and to determine cause of iron contamination to prevent future recurrence.
 2. Control Lab to institute method and controls to insure detection of suspended particles such as these.
 3. Production supervision investigate doing a more complete analysis on material going to Shell in Ladora since the most economical disposition of off-spec VCM from this location is to return it to Texas City and rerun at a cost probably totaling greater than \$3,300 per car.

Samples of Complaint Material: None requested.

Investigation and Recommendations by:

1. Control Laboratory (9-10-63)

The original analysis of the questionable VCM indicated it to be good material. Filtering the retained sample did reveal a real fine black dust in the VCM. It could be seen in the VCM with the naked eye, but only with difficulty. The black dust analyzed as primarily iron with some chloride present.

The Laboratory will install additional lighting in the VCM work area in an attempt to improve the inspection.

2. Materials Handling (9-12-63)

Car SHPX 3966 was shipped to Springfield on 7-13-63. The material analyzed in spec. The car returned to Texas City on 8-27-63, re-loaded for Shell and shipped on 8-30. Material again analyzed in spec.

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Investigation and Recommendations by: (cont'd)

2. Materials Handling (cont'd)

After the car had been shipped to Shell, Springfield complained of black metallic particles that appeared in the material. The Laboratory checked the retained Shell sample and reported there were black particles in the material.

The car will be cleaned upon return.

3. Production (9-9-63)

Note: This reply by Production was actually an answer to customer complaint 63-12-VCM-2, but also serves as an answer to this complaint.

Because of the lateness of the complaint, no retainer sample of the shipment was on hand. A retainer of the next shipment (August 28) made in car 3996 showed, on very close inspection, some fine black dust. This material was analyzed by Research as mostly iron with some chlorides present. Close inspection of a sample from another VCM car loaded at the same time showed no solid particles present. Our only conclusion then is that the car was contaminated.

The tank car will be cleaned on its return from Shell. We may be able to learn more about the source of contamination when we can obtain more material from the car.

The solids observed in the retainer sample of the August 28 shipment were very fine and most difficult to detect by our normal procedures. The Laboratory will improve the methods for detecting these solids in VCM shipment samples.

We feel the improved inspection of samples will prevent a recurrence of Springfield's complaint. We can definitely give quicker answers on any future complaints if the customers would let us know as soon as trouble is experienced rather than five weeks later.

Answer to Customer by Marketing: (9-9-63)

This complaint was actually "initiated" by Monsanto since Shell had not looked at the material before we informed them it was bad. Monsanto's actions were to (1) inform them of the condition of the car, (2) expedite a second car of the material, (3) agree to issue credit for the returned material and freight costs, and (4) assure them that future quality would be up to normal standards.

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Reaction of Customer:

The customer was satisfied with our actions. They did refuse to take the material even at less than half price. Their reason for refusing the VCM was that they had no facilities for filtering and were afraid they would "contaminate" their system.

- Note:
- (1) Tank car SHPX 3966 has returned to the plant and the Monsanto seal had not been broken. Shell rejected the material sight unseen.
 - (2) Close examination of the material in the return car leaves doubt that improved visual inspection will detect this fine dust. Therefore, a program has been initiated to filter the next sample of VCM from each tank car in the fleet to be sure additional cars are not contaminated in a like manner.

AHCjr/ob

9-27-63

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