INDUSTRY TASK FORCE FOR DDT
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS ASSOCIATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE :

Madison, Wis. May 6 -- Abnormally high levels of DDT residue reported found in many wildlife species may have been inaccurately measured and exaggerated, according to testimony received today from an official of one of the country's foremost analytical laboratories, appearing at the DDT hearings underway at the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Francis B. Coon, chief of the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation's chemical department, testified that "PCB's", polychlorinated biphenyls, are compounds that produce an almost identical picture to DDT when analyzed on a gas-chromatograph, an analytical instrument which "fingerprints" chemical compounds.

Until this confusion between DDT and PCB's was recently discovered, most gas chromatographic assays over-stated the amount of DDT above that actually in the sample, due to the presence of the PCB's.

Coon said that while some sensational findings of high DDT residues have been reported in hawks, marine birds, and fish, newly uncovered data has cast strong doubt on such abnormal analytical measurements of DDT, because of PCB's masking ability and similarity to DDT.

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He reported that analysis by WARF of up to 30,000 samples of wildlife and fish has pointed to a high incidence of PCB's present. In such studies, Coon stressed that WARF has devoted approximately 60% of its work to analyses of pesticide residues in the air, water, soil, fish and wildlife.

Coon noted that WARF, as a major analytical laboratory, performs studies for individual scientists as well as corporations, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and its various bureaus, plus many Wisconsin conservation agencies. The firm has also worked with the Food and Drug Administration of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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