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STATE of INDIANA

STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

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INDIANAPOLIS

Address Reply to:
Indiana State Board of Health
1330 West Michigan Street
Indianapolis, IN 46206

December 6, 1976

Copy

IMPORTANT - PLEASE READ

To: All Indiana Inspected Dairy Farms

During the past few months, the State Board of Health has been deeply involved in a program for the detection and elimination of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) from the State milk supply. You were notified by a similar letter from this office in early August 1976, of the suspected cause of the PCB contamination. This letter is to advise you of our progress and to further remind you of the possibility of continued contamination from some upright, concrete silos with interior surfaces sealed or coated with a compound called "Cumar."

Since June 1, 1976, our laboratory has reported 1,280 milk and milk products sample analyses for PCBs. Although some finished product samples have shown low levels of PCBs, there have been none at or above the federal actionable level of 2.5 ppm. However, approximately three percent (3%) of the raw milk samples analyzed contained 2.5 ppm or more PCBs. Based on the follow-up and confirmative sampling we have done on all of those results at or above 2.5 ppm, it was necessary to remove five farms from the milk market. Unfortunately, the time off the market has ranged from 15 to 87 days. It is our sincere hope that future sampling will not necessitate prohibiting the sale of raw milk from additional dairy farms.

We have developed a state-wide plan to detect and eventually eliminate PCBs from our milk supply. It is realized and understood that this plan will not result in the elimination of PCBs overnight. We estimate at this time that the problem will take two or three years to be resolved. Briefly, we have intensified our bulk route sampling and have greatly increased individual farm sampling to identify supplies that are contaminated. Our intentions are to methodically and periodically resample all contaminated dairy farms until negative PCB results are achieved. We have received excellent cooperation from our dairy farmers, milk cooperatives, processing plants, Purdue University, and the Agricultural Extension Service in the implementation of this program. I would anticipate the cooperative atmosphere to continue, and I see no reason that it will not.

(Over)

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A final word of caution--we know that several dairy farmers chose to "clean" and recoat the interior surfaces of contaminated silos. Research available at this time indicates the recoating is effective for only two or three years; maybe less. A thorough inspection of the silo walls after emptying each spring will be a "must" for those of you who recoat the interior surfaces. A cracked, chipped, or flaked surface will be an indication of the need for some positive action by the dairyman to continue deterrence of the leaching PCBs from the silo walls into the silage.

Our office and staff will be available in the months to come to assist in any way possible, within our capabilities, to keep you on the milk market and at the same time eliminate PCBs from our milk supply.

Sincerely,

Donald R. Kimball

Donald R. Kimball, Director
Division of Dairy Products
AC 317/633-4170

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