

Editor & Chief Pat McCurdy Director of Telecommunication for Dow.

County Courthouse on Monday. The service was sponsored by...

driving. MADD and its supporters are asking people to be...

(Daily News photo by Terry Tanner)

Trade magazine claims Dow conducted secret research

By JULIE MORRISON
Daily News staff writer

The Dow Chemical Co. secretly conducted tests in 1948 which showed low concentrations of some of its products were skin irritants to humans, a chemical industry trade journal has reported.

But a Dow spokesman Monday denied the charge of secrecy, saying the study was an "insightful" measure taken by company officials about the effects of their products on humans.

In the Dec. 14 issue of Chemical Week, Dow is reported to have kept secret its 1948 contract with a now-defunct Philadelphia laboratory for the tests. The tests were conducted on human subjects and showed several compounds, including a component of Agent Orange, caused rashes and acne-like conditions.

Chemical Week reported Dow sponsored the tests, conducted at Smyth Laboratories by Dr. Joseph V. Klauder. The publication reported the tests were documented in letters written between Klauder and a Dow toxicologist.

The tests involved applications of dilute concentrations of several chemicals to the backs of 200 human subjects, Chemical Week reported. Included in those was a chemical used to produce a herbicide found in Agent Orange.

Agent Orange was a mixture of two herbicides used by the military in Vietnam to clear away vegetation that provided hiding places for the Vietcong. Several Vietnam veterans have charged manufacturers of the compound, including Dow, knew a by-product of the herbicide was dioxin. The veterans claim dioxin has caused cancer and other health problems they are experiencing.

Dow representatives have said they do not believe the chemical could cause the problems stated by the veterans.

Scientists at a conference on the dioxin issue substantially supported Dow scientists' contention that there is no proof that dioxin causes cancer. The conference met last week in East Lansing.

Chemical Week also reported the

1948 study indicated the wood treatment chemical pentachlorophenol could cause allergic reactions when used at normal strength.

Dow spokesman Bob Charlton said Monday Dow had no reason to keep the tests secret.

"It is not an accurate description in terms of being secret," Charlton said. "We had no reason to keep them closed, but at the same time we had no reason to publicly discuss them."

"We think the tests were very responsible, very constructive research back in the 1940s," Charlton said. "It was very insightful research that came about because of a concern about exposures to the product. I think that would be a very responsible approach rather than be maligned with some secrecy label."

Charlton said some of the documentation of the tests have been presented by the company during court proceedings and were shown to Chemical Week when requested.

also 70 prisoners Dr. Klingman