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MAKERS PUT CURB ON CHEMICAL AFTER BIRDS DIE

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A WELSH-PRODUCED chemical found in the bodies of some of the thousands of birds which died in the Irish Sea last winter will be banned where it could damage the environment.

Monsanto Chemicals of Newport, who produce the BCP range of chemicals, will from March 1 cut off supplies to customers who put it to uses they consider "non-controllable".

By this the company, sole BCP producers in Britain, mean applications where it is not reasonably possible to contain or prevent leakage into the environment.

Praised

It has not been proved that BCP—short for poly-chlorinated-biphenols—was responsible for the sea-bird massacre. But a Monsanto spokesman said yesterday that the company had decided on the partial ban because of the persistent nature of the chemical.

"It could build up in the environment and constitute an ecological hazard," he said.

A spokesman for a leading conservation society last night praised the Monsanto decision and urged other industries to follow suit.

Manufacturers affected by the ban will include those producing paints and varnishes, particularly for industrial use. Monsanto are developing substitutes for these customers.

Sacrifice

The ban is entirely voluntary and I understand the company have been assured by their three Continental competitors that they will not attempt to take up the business that Monsanto are dropping.

I also understand Monsanto hope to get their competitors to agree to a similar ban on "non-controllable" applications being enforced in Europe.

Monsanto would not say how much money they expect to lose, other than that the decision "represents a fair commercial sacrifice."

Nor would they give production figures, although the spokesman did say that none of the dozen men employed at the plant would lose his job.

The decision was a demand by a spokesman for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, who have four reserves in Wales, and by the Nature Conservancy.