

106 AGENT ORANGE

December 9, 1983

AGENT ORANGE UPDATE

Dow filed a brief on December 1 in federal court in Brooklyn which urges in part that apportionment of liability in the pending Agent Orange trial be based on the dioxin content of each manufacturer's product.

Included in Dow's brief is a chart which purports to show that Monsanto is responsible for 74.8 percent of the total dioxin shipped to Vietnam versus only 1.3 percent for Dow.

This action will be reported in the Dec. 14 issue of Chemical Week magazine. Our response follows:

* * * * *

"Monsanto disputes the factual accuracy of this information. These are merely assumptions based on inadequate data. The dioxin content of each supplier's product will be a matter to be litigated at the trial. This notwithstanding, Dow's argument is a classic case of putting the cart before the horse.

Monsanto, Dow and indeed all the other producers of Agent Orange have consistently held that Vietnam veterans were not exposed to harmful levels of dioxin, period. There is no scientifically credible evidence to show that the levels of dioxin in any supplier's product caused any harm to anyone.

The overwhelming evidence, gathered to date, does show that the health status of Vietnam veterans is at least as good as, if not better than, any comparative group with no exposure history. Veterans are not suffering excessive rates of cancer or any other chronic illness. Their children are not suffering from excessive birth defects.

The hallmark or first visible symptom of human exposure to dioxin is the skin condition, chloracne. Medical examinations of Vietnam veterans, done by the Veterans' Administration to date, have failed to confirm a single case of chloracne.

CONFIDENTIAL

C06008

These findings -- namely, the absence of any causal link between dioxin and the health effects alleged by some Vietnam veterans -- are consistent with the results of a scientific evaluation of the probable toxic effects of the dioxin in Agent Orange, conducted by Kingsley M. Stevens of the Department of Medicine, State University of New York at Stony Brook.

In his paper, 'Agent Orange Toxicity: A Quantitative Perspective,' published in the scientific journal, Human Toxicol, (1981), 1,31-39, Dr. Stevens concludes that 'the dioxin sprayed with Agent Orange in Vietnam cannot have caused systemic illnesses in Vietnam veterans or birth defects in their children.'

Dr. Stevens based this conclusion on first calculating the minimum toxic dose of dioxin for man from the monkey and human data; he then calculated the amount of dioxin which man takes in from his environment; the average concentration of dioxin present in Vietnam immediately after spraying Agent Orange and, finally, the amount (internal body concentration) the soldier, directly sprayed, would attain. He calculated this amount to be 1/1750 of the minimum toxic dose. Dr. Stevens further noted that soldiers moving through previously sprayed areas would ingest much less dioxin.

'Since it would take about five years of daily, close contact with Agent Orange to reach toxic levels of dioxin,' he stated, 'claims that illnesses in Vietnamese...and Americans...were due to Agent Orange are without merit.'

-o0o-

CONFIDENTIAL

C06009