FDA Discovers Chemical in Lake Pepin Carp

Lake Pepin commercial fishermen were killed last week after the U. S. Food and Drug Administration found that carp taken from the lake contained excess amounts of poly-chlorinated biphenyls (PCB).

The FDA ordered 20,000 pounds of carp disposed of recently. According to the FDA, the chemical PCB, used in industry, has caused cancer when administered at high levels to laboratory animals. The fish which was disposed had been shipped to New York by Rudolph Hogue, fish wholesaler from Pepin. The FDA made a test of the fish and found it contained from 6 to 14 parts per million of PCB. The federal maximum is five parts per million. The New York shipment was returned to Pepin for disposal.

While the incidence of PCB in carp is serious, FDA District Director Henry Roberts said that in order to have a measurable amount of it, a person would have to eat carp daily for about three years.

At the present time about 40 commercial fishermen who normally work Lake Pepin are idle because of the FDA order. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture is also making tests on Lake Pepin carp. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources reports from tests made that the level of PCB in the lake may be declining. Roberts said 1973 tests show much lower levels than 1970 analyses, although the level is still above federal maximum standards

It has been reported that a concentration of PCB doesn't begin to diminish until five years after the source of the contamination has been cut off. The heaviest concentration is between Prescott and Alma, especially in Lake Pepin. It is believed the reason for this is that the water flow in the lake is much slower than in the narrower stream which allows the chemical to settle more quickly to the bottom. Carp feed off the bottoms and are more subject to pick up the chemical than game fish. Game fish feed

higher levels and are not apt to be affected by the chemical as much as are carp.

Because the chemical is used in induhtrial plants, it is believed the concentration of it in Lake Pepin has come from the Twin Cities.

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