

Goodrich says PVC output, safety up

The B. F. Goodrich Co. has been able to safely expand production of polyvinyl chloride despite strict federal regulations imposed after it was found that 17 Goodrich workers had died as a result of producing the chemical, the firm's president said yesterday.

Eight Goodrich workers at the Louisville plant have died of angiosarcoma, a rare cancer of the liver, after being exposed to the fumes of vinyl chloride, a chemical used in making polyvinyl chloride (PVC), over many years.

John D. Ong, the Goodrich president, said at a news conference in New York City that while "we still face the possibility that, because of the long latency period, we will see other cases of angiosarcoma . . ." the company believes chances "are extremely remote of future angiosarcoma cases resulting from vinyl

chloride exposure in our current operations."

PVC is the second-largest selling plastic in the United States. Goodrich operates five PVC plants and one plant that produces the vinyl chloride from which PVC is made.

About 40 employees of chemical plants worldwide have died of the rare disease, including a total of 17 Goodrich workers.

Ong said Goodrich has under way a \$42 million program to reduce exposure to vinyl chloride. He said worker exposure is now below levels required by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Ong predicted demand for PVC will require 7 billion pounds annually by 1980, up from the 5 billion pounds currently produced industrywide.

He said that while Goodrich's PVC production was "somewhat reduced" by its program to reduce exposure to vinyl chloride, the addition of new equipment in Louisville will more than make up the difference.

The equipment will begin production next month and make the Louisville plant "as good as or better" than any other PVC plant in preventing employee exposure to vinyl chloride or allowing the gas to escape into the air around the plant, Ong said.

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