

REBUTTAL POINTS RE CHEMICAL WEEK EDITORIAL

- Monsanto has not refused to discuss the Agent Orange case. We have talked to Chemical Week reporters on the case several times in recent months, refusing only to discuss documents still under court seal in this proceeding.
- Curiously, CW did not give Monsanto an opportunity to discuss the documents recently unsealed by the court. You merely put your own out-of-context interpretation on them, leaped to unsupportable conclusions, convened Chemical Week's version of a kangaroo court and convicted Monsanto inabsentia.
- About the only accurate statement made in your "trial-by-media" piece is that you "do not know all of the factors..." What follows are just a few of the key things you don't know and could easily have learned simply by calling us:
- Dow did not offer to share with us any new process technology nor did they even tell us they had any, not in 1965, not ever. All they said was: Here's an analytical method you can use to detect for the presence of the "acne exciter" (dioxin) and here are the results of skin patch tests on rabbit ears which show that it causes chloracne.
- Monsanto had been concerned about chloracne outbreaks in its 2,4,5-T production workers long before Dow convened its much ballyhooed meeting in 1965.
- Following the well-publicized 1949 accident at the Nitro plant and the subsequent chloracne outbreak, Monsanto informed the U.S. Public Health Service and the W. Va. State Health Department and invited both to participate in investigating the incident. We certainly did not know then that the contaminant causing the acne was dioxin and did not know this until sometime in 1965.
- Chloracne was viewed then and essentially still is as an industrial hygiene problem, controllable by tightening up the process and minimizing workplace exposure.
- While chloracne is the hallmark of exposure to dioxin, it is not unique to it. The medical literature contains references to chloracne outbreaks among industrial workers occurring as long ago as 1929 in processes which, in retrospect, could not have involved dioxin.

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- Monsanto had its process under continuing review and, in fact, the dioxin content steadily declined on a year-to-year basis after 1965. The point is, during the 1960s we were not aware of any new technology that would effectively control the amount of contamination in the herbicide. After Dow shared its detection method with us in 1965, we knew how to measure for dioxin but we didn't know how to control it on a consistent basis.
- The implication that levels in the product of more than 1 ppm are unsafe was unsubstantiated in the mid-1960s and it remains so today. There certainly wasn't any scientific or industry consensus in existence in the 1960s that would suggest what constituted a "high" level of dioxin contamination in the herbicide.
- To the best of our knowledge, Monsanto never received a single customer complaint regarding our 2,4,5-T product.
- Because of the Nitro plant's past production history with 2,4,5-T, the employees there have become probably the most medically studied industrial population in the world. At least three separate health studies have been conducted on employees at this location and, other than chloracne, no long-term health problems that could be associated with dioxin exposure have ever been found there.
- The real issue in the Agent Orange controversy and, indeed, in the forthcoming trial is: Did exposure to dioxin cause the laundry list of health problems alleged by some Vietnam Veterans? The preponderance of peer-reviewed scientific and medical evidence generated to date makes it abundantly clear that this is not the case. No human death has ever been attributed to dioxin nor is there any medical evidence to show that it is a human carcinogen. On the contrary, the evidence says that other than chloracne, no long-term human health effects have ever been found from exposure to dioxin.
- Another key point, and one that is ignored by most of the media including CW, is that Agent Orange was used by the U.S. military in a war and it was extremely effective in denying the enemy cover and concealment. In this role, it clearly saved thousands of American lives.
- In summary, Agent Orange is a highly charged, emotional issue which is being immensely distorted by the premature and sometimes illegal release of documents. And if this isn't bad enough, the press, including CW, frequently "holds court," reviews these documents out of context, unfairly interprets their meaning and/or significance and proceeds to pronounce judgment. We continue to believe that this is the responsibility of the courts, not the press, and we are confident that once this case is considered in the court, our position will be vindicated.

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- In the meantime, Chemical Week and the other would-be news media judges out there, should stick to what the public has a right to expect from journalists, i.e., reporting the facts!

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