re PCB

PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

PRESS QUERY

(x) Divisional
( ) Financial
( ) Corporate

Date Time

December 8, 1970, 11:30 a.m.

QUERIED BY: (REPORTER AND MEDIA)

Victor Cohn - Washington (D.C.) Post

TO: (X) St. Louis Bulletin Board
(X) New York Public Relations
( ) New York Textiles Public Relations
( ) West Coast Public Relations
( ) Brussels Public Relations
(X) Lloyd R. Cole
(X) John Mason
(X) William B. Papageorge
(X) Howard S. Bergen
(X) James E. Springgate
(X) Elmer P. Wheeler
[redacted]
(X) Peter J. A. Marsh - Brussels
(X) John J. Spano

Q: A news report, via the Los Angeles Times news service, quotes a group of oceanographers, meeting in Rome, as being dissatisfied with Monsanto, since the company will not reveal production figures for PCB. The group is headed by Dr. Edward Goldberg, Scripps Institute of Oceanography, California. The scientists say they cannot determine the extent of the PCB problem without accurate production figures. Why has Monsanto not revealed these figures?

A: We have offered to make production figures available to appropriate goverment agencies, if we are assured they will not be made public.

Q: Has any agency requested such figures?

A: No.

Q: Why don't you want them made public?

A: For competitive reasons. Manufacturers with the capability to produce PCB could decide to get into the market based on this type of information.

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--2 MONSANTO: PRESS QUERY -- VICTOR COHN, WASHINGTON POST

Q: The scientists say PCB has been used as a plasticizer. Could you give me an example?

A: They have been used in some plasticizer applications. But let me emphasize, we have withdrawn from this market as of August, 1970.

Previously, they had been used in specialty applications, such as adhesives, sealants, specialty paints, chlorinated rubber, etc.

At one time, we suggested they could be used in a number of ways. These markets never developed to a significant degree. For example, PCB is not found in asphalt paving, or tires -- an idea that has received wide publicity

Q: What is the present use of PCB?

A: The major -- large volume -- use is in electrical equipment, such as transformers, where the fluid acts as a fire-resistant coolant. These are closed systems where the fluid is completely sealed into a closed container. We have gone to great efforts to alert our customers how to handle this material to assure none escapes to the environment. We have also offered to dispose of spent fluids via an incineration service.

Q: What percentage of PCB goes to electrical uses?

A: Again, I cannot give you a specific figure, but would emphasize the major use has always been in electrical equipment.

Q: Is Monsanto the only producer?

A: In the U.S., yes. There are other producers in Europe and Japan.

Q: Where are your plants located?

A: Sauget, Ill.; Anniston, Ala., and Newport, England.

Q: Are the U.S. plants located on large bodies of water?

A: Sauget, Ill., is located on the Mississippi River.

--3 MONSANTO: PRESS QUERY -- VICTOR COHN, WASHINGTON POST

Q: One of the statements from the Rome meeting said "PCB could be the second highest pollutant in the world." Do you care to comment?

(EVJ -- May I comment off the record?)
(Cohn -- Yes)

A: I have read volumes of information, ranging from the scientific to daily news report. In almost every case, the language is "coulds," ifs," this "might" happen, or "may be" the greatest danger. I have concluded there is no really firm evidence of the effect of PCB on the environment.

(Comment by Cohn: You are probably right. Ecology seems to be an uncertain science. For example, no one really knows the effect of mercury in the environment.

SOURCE: Files

STAFFER: E. V. John