

U.S. Aides Seek to Calm Fears Over Chemical PCB

By RICHARD D. LYONS
Special to The Times

WASHINGTON, Sept. 29 — Leading Federal health, food and environmental officials sought today to calm public concern over the possible hazards of PCB, the chemical contaminant that has been found in food and the environment.

Dr. Charles C. Edwards, head of the Food and Drug Administration, said that public concern about PCB was "exaggerated" by a few news items and headlines that had been published in the past few weeks. "Public concern about the public alarm," he said, "is still an alarm, but it is not a supply." He said that the concern is unnecessary, and that he believes the chemical is less than the fears that have been spread.

The Federal Food and Drug Administration, which has been leading over the last six months, showing that the chemical has been found in only a few food items, has been told that the contamination is not as serious as the headlines have said. The fact, however, that there has been a lot of concern about the fact that five Japanese died three years ago in the most serious case of the chemical.

Many of the other food samples had been found contaminated, but they had been found in only a few food items. Another official at the agency, said that the use of this material for pack-aging food is not a problem. The Department of Agriculture's Consumer and Marketing Service, said that the use of this material for pack-aging food is not a problem.

In addition, Dr. Charles Wolf of the Environmental Protection Agency reported that PCB had been found in human food, but only in minute quantities.

The officials used such data to underline their stated position that the use of PCB was not as serious as the headlines have said. Dr. Edwards said that the use of PCB was not as serious as the headlines have said.

However, during a news conference at the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, that the agencies had agreed to "sort out" the PCB controversy, some officials appeared to have raised more questions than they settled.

Ben Terner, Not President Dr. Edwards, for example, said that some restriction on the use of PCB, which stands for polychlorinated biphenyls, might be considered but added that "an outright ban is not feasible."

Asked why a ban was not possible in the United States when one has been in Britain since March, he and his colleagues expressed amazement that it had been in effect there.

Dr. Edwards insisted that PCB might even be beneficial, because it is "inherent flame-retardant" in plastics and, properly used, (they) directly assist government of and industry in protecting the consumer against fire. The chemical can withstand extremely high temperatures.

The officials also avoided giving an explanation of how they could maintain that a "public alarm" was unjustified when the only manufacturer of PCB in the United States has repeatedly refused to make public the amount of the chemical it has made and is making. The officials said only that they hoped that the manufacturer, the Monsanto Company of St. Louis, would provide the information to a Federal study group investigating PCB that was created early this month.

The FDA made public a statement of a report of the fact that the chemical had been found in only a few food items, but that it did not include the fact that five Japanese died three years ago in the most serious case of the chemical. The officials said that the chemical had been found in only a few food items, but that it did not include the fact that five Japanese died three years ago in the most serious case of the chemical.

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Today the department relaxed its alert for possible contamination.

When it was pointed out that 146,000 PCB-contaminated chickens were destroyed in New York State last year and an additional 63,000 chickens were destroyed in July after PCB-contaminated feed was discovered in North Carolina, Mr. Yuster said such incidents did not happen often.

PCB contamination has also been traced this year to tens of thousands of eggs and thousands of tons of fish meat. PCB is being found increasingly in a wide variety of products, and the possibility of detecting it in small amounts did not exist until several years ago.

Representative William F. Ryan, Democrat of Manhattan, who has complained for two years that the Federal Government has not been strict enough in regulating PCB, announced after the news conference that he would introduce a bill next week to ban the chemical.

No one is saying that PCB

is an acute hazard to health, that harmful effects of PCB, because it is "inherent flame-retardant" in plastics and, properly used, (they) directly assist government of and industry in protecting the consumer against fire. The chemical can withstand extremely high temperatures.

In the Cornell test, PCB was found to be a long-term hazard, fed to dosages of 10 parts per million, and may be a long-term hazard to man. We should stop its use million (5 parts per million) until we know more about it. Several scientists have testified before Congress that the concern about PCB is not that the chemical, previously been bred success-fully, is a danger to man, but that its interaction with an array of other substances in the environment may be harmful months later, with full effect period of years after the exposure.

David B. Peakall, a Cornell University scientist, said that the chemical had been found in only a few food items, but that it did not include the fact that five Japanese died three years ago in the most serious case of the chemical.

It is known to cause sterility before hatching in duck eggs, and malformations in the first 10 eggs laid. Dr. Peakall said that he did not get any results, but that chromosome changes were now under way. The results are now under way. The results are now under way.

Second Generation Affected A Cornell University scientist, comparing the formation of fat in studies on birds, found starchy eggshells.

N.Y. DAILY NEWS, Thursday, September 30, 1971

Many Birds Dead in Test of Chemical

Ithaca, N.Y., Sept. 29 (UPI)—A Cornell University scientist today reported widespread deaths among a second generation of birds in a test of a chemical used in recycled paper.

David B. Peakall, a research associate in the division of biological sciences, said it was believed the deaths were the first known effects involving non-chlorinated biphenyls, which is similar to DDT.

The PCB, used to improve plastic, rubber and paper, has been banned in Britain. Monday, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration reported finding unsafe levels of PCB in underfed, shrunken wheat and soybean processed in recycled carmenes.

Peakall said he could not explain why the first generation of birds survived PCB, but that chromosome research was being conducted to learn the answer.

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