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Some analysts said the 19% decline.

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EPA studies meat wrappings

CINCINNATI—The rapidly expanding investigation into the health risks from vinyl chloride, the chemical used in making hundreds of plastic products, now includes the use of plastic film in the supermarket wrappings of meat.

Vinyl chloride is the base material for the manufacture of thousands of plastic products, including vinyl plastic film used for food packaging.

A study is under way this week among meatwrappers in 160 supermarket stores in Houston, Tex. The study is being directed by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) here.

The study is aimed at assessing respiratory reactions in the meat wrappers from gas vapors emitted when plastic film made of polyvinyl chloride (a product of vinyl chloride) is cut with an electrically hot wire.

The Houston survey is the latest in a series of environmental health investigations since mid-January when a rare liver cancer, angiosarcoma, was identified as the cause of death of four polyvinyl chloride

The Environmental Protection Agency in Washington issued a rare emergency order yesterday to halt the sale of pesticide sprays containing vinyl chloride. The order covers 28 aerosol products intended for use in homes, hospitals, where food is handled or in other enclosed areas.

production workers in a Louisville plant.

The disclosure was startling in light of the estimate by NIOSH that there are only 21 deaths from angiosarcoma annually in the United States.

Vinyl chloride, a gaseous chemical, was singled out by NIOSH investigators as the chief suspect among more than 50 chemicals used in the plant, a Chemical Division facility of the B. F. Goodrich Co.

The implications of vinyl chloride's potential as a cancer causing agent sent shock waves throughout the chemical industry.

There are 14 plants in the U.S. producing large quantities of vinyl chloride.

In 37 other plants, 4.4 billion pounds of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) plastics and resins are manufactured annually through varied processes of polymerizing

(multiplying the molecular structure) of the vinyl chloride.

In total, they represent a \$3 billion industry.

It also has been used as a propellant in aerosol containers of hair sprays, medicated sprays, anti-perspirants and pesticides.

Until this year, vinyl chloride apparently had been regarded as a material of low toxicity.

The 1973 edition of NIOSH's toxic substances list, which gives the toxic dose information for 11,000 chemicals, lists vinyl chloride as toxic to humans when inhaled at concentrations as low as 20 parts per million in the air.

Tests have shown that when vinyl chloride-propelled hair sprays are used in a small household area—for example, a bathroom—concentrations can reach 250 parts per million (PPM).