QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR JIM LIPE - PENSACOLA
Feb. 23 or 24

Question 1: Could the loss of PCB fluid from Monsanto's Pensacola plant have contributed to the reduction of commercial fishing in Escambia Bay?

Answer: From what we know about the effect of PCB on fish, and the scientific reports from other laboratories -- and in view of the large volume of water in the Escambia River and the Escambia Bay -- we do not see how this loss could have caused widespread contamination resulting in the fish kills reported this year.

Question 2: How much PCB would it take to kill a normal adult commercial fish?

Answer: A review of the scientific literature on the effect of PCB on this type of fish indicates these fish can survive in water containing very high concentrations. The amount varies with the specie. For the hardier species it could take 4,000-5,000 parts-per-million to kill the fish. This amount of PCB is so high that it would have to be emulsified in the water. There has been no fish kill reported anywhere in the world that has shown these high-level water concentrations.

Question 3: Dr. Dukes' research shows that PCB, at certain levels under controlled laboratory conditions, kills baby shrimp. Therefore, could not the presence of PCB in Escambia Bay -- PCB lost from your plant -- be the cause of the reduced shrimp population in the bay?

Answer: I think this would be an extremely remote possibility. Dr. Dukes did not come to this conclusion. I am told that baby shrimp are one of the most delicate of nature's creatures. It would seem most logical to me that not one certain substance, but perhaps a combination of environmental events could have affected the shrimp population in the bay.

Question 4: Some years ago, there was a fish kill in the Escambia River. Some reports of that incident attributed the cause to PCB. Are you aware of that incident?

Answer: I am only vaguely familiar with it. As I recall, there was no evidence PCB was involved. The record showed, following investigation of the incident, that the fish kill could have been caused by natural occurrences such as temperature changes, water layer inversions, parasitic diseases, or a number of other possibilities.

Question 5: Wasn't PCB implicated in bird and seal deaths in the U.K.?

Answer: Scientists did find PCB in samples of birds taken from the Irish Sea and seals taken from the Cornish Coast. Subsequent reports stated there was no connection between the presence of PCB in these samples and deaths of the animals.

Question 6: Would dredging the river and bay remove the PCB?

Answer: I am not a dredging expert. But it would seem that the mere operation of dredging could cause more problems than now exist. Don't forget there are thousands of other materials in the bay -- mercury, lead, DDT to give just a few examples. Authorities in New York state have discussed dredging of Lake Champlain and have nearly concluded that the cure is worse than the disease.

Question 7: Is PCB toxic?

Answer: Since toxicity is relative, we can best answer this question by comparing PCB to many common materials found in the home. For example, PCB is less toxic than gasoline, paint thinner, lighter fluids, lye, iodine, insecticides and various cleaning compounds -- many of these products are carelessly discarded by man every day.

The important thing is that PCB is not a household item. It is an industrial chemical carefully manufactured, carefully handled and carefully used as an ingredient in certain closed-system applications to prevent fires and protect human life.

Question 8: We have read reports that PCB has been found in cow's milk and one scientist has even found it in mother's milk?

Answer: I have read similar reports. Let's try to add some perspective. Monsanto voluntarily began a program, over two years ago, to restrict the uses of PCB. One of the actions taken involved the discontinuing of sales to customers who might have been using it in "open systems" -- ie: specialty paints, sealants, adhesives, chlorinated rubber, etc.

Monsanto took this action voluntarily based on the fact that scientific evidence revealed PCB is a persistent chemical.

PCB continues to be used in "closed systems" where it acts as a safety fluid preventing possible explosions and fires which in turn protects human life.

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