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PCB'S IN FISH STILL A PROBLEM, REPORT TO EPA AND DRAFT MEMO SAY

Polychlorinated biphenyl levels in fish appear to have increased, according to a draft memo by the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Toxic Substances (OTS).

And, a report to EPA by the Lake Michigan Toxic Substances Committee concluded that PCB levels in the lake have not been reduced despite joint government-industry control efforts and that "an economic loss has already resulted to the commercial fishery as a result of PCB contamination."

The OTS draft memo, the Lake Michigan report, and a report EPA expects to get soon demonstrating PCB carcinogenicity are all being considered as the Agency pieces together a PCB's policy (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, Aug. 18, Page 2).

EPA regulatory considerations range from controlling water effluent discharges under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to advocating an eventual phase out of all PCB uses.

The OTS draft memo noted that while PCB levels in food appear to be declining because of Food and Drug Administration tolerance regulation, "the levels detected in fish and wildlife appear to have increased." It said:

> "... Unusually high levels of PCBs have been detected in recent months in the fish in Lake Michigan (up to 165 p.p.m.), Lake Pepin (up to 40 p.p.m.), the Hudson River (up to 350 p.p.m.), and Southern California (up to 6.6 p.p.m.)."

"The concentrations of PCBs in Lake Michigan fish are probably not decreasing and salmonids, particularly larger specimens, currently exceed the 5 p.p.m. maximum allowable levels," the Lake Michigan report said, adding, "Reported efforts by the manufacturer to restrict distribution and efforts by the agencies to restrict discharges have not resulted in PCB reductions in the lake" (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, June 2, Page 36).

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