

March 14, 1969

Robert A. Rivera
Little Ave.
1, California 94602

Mrs. Rivera:

As requested that I reply to your letter about the
contamination of wildlife by polychlorinated
dibenzodioxins (PCB).

When your note was prompted by the recent article
in the San Francisco Chronicle on work done by
Risebrough at the University of California. Unfortunately,
the headline of the writer, David Erlman, did not give
me the opportunity to supply Monsanto's answer. Here are the facts
which should have been presented:

Mrs. Rivera, let me assure you that Monsanto has
the greatest concern for proper use of our products and
will not allow them to affect mankind. In fact, we recently began a
campaign to provide cities and industry with new techniques
for eliminating pollution. One facility demonstrated in
which it removes pollutants from the stacks of coal-fired
power plants. Another unit offers cities an improved method
of treating materials released into the water.

If the implications in the Chronicle story are not
correct, Monsanto does not make DDT. As you know, Dr. Risebrough's
concerned measurement of residues found in wildlife.
In studying his full report, I have no doubt if he made a
correct identification of these materials. It seems he
has depended upon earlier work done in Sweden by
scientists using entirely different sources.

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I should explain that PCB is not a pesticide. Its market is as a functional fluid such as an insulating oil in electrical transformers. Here the chemical is entirely sealed metal containers. Another PCB market is a modifier in specialized adhesives and coatings. Here the chemical is an integral part of the material and cannot be removed away, etc.

With knowledge, PCB is not spread over the land as are pesticides, is not used in automobile tires, is not found in plastic, is not used in house paints -- as has been claimed.

Earlier work done in Sweden reported traces of residue, identified as PCB, in quantities approaching that of DDT pesticides. Even though these residues required measurement to find them in the parts-per-billion range we are highly puzzled by one fact. How could that commercially produced PCB appear in the natural environment? The chemical is a highly specialized product used in restricted

A possible answer is that the substance is not really PCB, but a material which only appears as such.

It has also been implied that PCB is a "highly toxic" material. Toxicity is a relative matter when we are considering chemicals, drugs or even food. Like thousands of industrial and household products, PCB is not a hazardous material if it is properly used. In more than 30 years of industrial use, the chemical has an excellent record.

However, Monsanto is not content to just raise questions. It continues to exercise the highest degree of control over the manufacture and shipment of PCB -- as we do with all chemicals. We also have our own research program to identify substances reported in California and Sweden. Some of this work is in cooperation with federal and university laboratories.

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Mrs. R. A. Rivera

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The source of the residues identified as PCB is not yet known.
It will take extensive research, on a worldwide basis, to confirm
or deny these initial scientific reports.

Sincerely,

Don C. Ford
Manager
Divisional Public Relations

TCF:sfh

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