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Monsanto to 'phase out' PCB product

ST. LOUIS (UPI) — Monsanto Co. yesterday sought to head off environmentalists' efforts to ban a group of toxic chemicals known as PCBs by announcing it will phase out production of them.

Monsanto is the sole maker of PCB, or polychlorinated biphenyl, which is used primarily a a nonconductor of direct electrical current. The chemical has been a necessary ingredient in most power-generating equipment.

Environmental groups had petitioned the federal government to lower the permissible levels of PCBs in food on grounds the chemicals are a cancer hazard.

Federal officials have said PCBs had been responsible for and some workers using the chemicals have complained of allergic reactions.

F.J. Fitzgerald, a Monsanto vice president, said no timetable has bee set for the phase-out, but "it would be in a planned and orderly manner."

PCBs have been used in manufacturing processes since 1930, but their presence as toxic substances in the environment was not detected until 1966 because they were confused with DDT, with which they have a similar chemical structure.

At a three-day conference on PCBs last November in Chicago, assistant Secretary of the Interior Nathaniel P. Reed recommended that the federal government impose a nearly total ban on the chemicals.

Reed said he was "deeply shocked by the pervasiveness of PCBs; they are literally everywhere."

He said exceedingly high levels of PCBs were found in fish from all parts of the country, indicating the nation's rivers and lakes were "in mortal danger."


TIMES DO CHANGE
By Overgard & Saunders
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IF YOU HADN'T BOXED THE MUSCLE BOY'S EARS, I'D BE ONE SQUASHED TOMATO./
HOW QUICK CAN YOU PACK YOUR STUFF AND LEAVE TOWN ?
GIVE ME TEN MINUTES./
ANGEL./ ··NO.!!