ANDERSON, S. C.
INDEPENDENT
D. 52,000

SEP 24 1975

Monsanto Denies PCB Suit Charges

By MICHELLE GREEN
Staff Writer

Responding to a report Thursday morning that the Monsanto Corp. had been named as co-defendant in the $1 billion class-action suit against Sangamo Electric Co., a Monsanto spokesman said, "We don't feel any suit alleging culpability on our part has any grounds."

Dan Bishop, Monsanto public relations representative, said Thursday that his company has "a long and proud history of responsibility" toward manufacture and distribution of its chemicals.

Bishop replied to the charges of negligence against his company by saying Monsanto had "taken every precaution humanly possible" towards insuring the safe handling of the industrial chemical by its customers.

Monsanto is the sole U.S. manufacturer of the cancer-causing industrial chemicals polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

Monsanto, Bishop said, "goes to great lengths to advise our customers about the potential dangers and the safe disposal," of PCBs.

Monsanto Wednesday was brought into the class-action suit against Sangamo by Lake Hartwell business and property owners.

The Anderson firm of Anderson, Kenyon and Epps filed an amendment to the original suit of Sept. 10. The suit alleged that Sangamo had "wilfully, wantonly, negligently, recklessly and-or intentionally" allowed its PCB-laden treated wastewater to pollute Lake Hartwell and its fish.

The amended version of the suit included charges of negligence against Sangamo and further charged that Monsanto, which sold the Pickens plant the PCBs it uses in its manufacturing process, is "strictly liable" for health hazards resulting from the handling and discharge of the chemicals.

The suit filed in federal district court in Greenville Wednesday marked the second time in as many days that the Missouri-based Monsanto company had been named as co-defendant in a class-action involving PCB pollution.

In a $500 million suit filed in Atlanta Tuesday, the company was charged with selling the chemical to the General Electric Co., which then released PCBs into a tributary of Georgia's Coosa River. The release of PCBs poisoned the river, its fish and ultimately forced the waterway to be closed to commercial fishing.

Bishop confirmed that Monsanto had sold PCBs to both General Electric and Sangamo, but said it had "most assuredly" informed both companies of the environmental and human health hazards associated with the use and discharge of the compound.

According to Bishop, Monsanto has imposed self-regulatory measures to help prevent PCB pollution for several years.

When, in 1971, it was first recognized that the compound was extremely persistent in the environment and could have ill effects on humans, the company "made the voluntary and unilateral decision to limit" their sales to manufacturers who used the compound only in "closed" systems." In such systems, the chemicals could not easily escape into the environment.

MONS 036770