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ST.LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

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10A Mon., August 30, 1976

Mothers' Milk Tests Are Called Unofficial

WASHINGTON, Aug. 30 (UPI) — Reports that a poisonous industrial chemical was found in samples of mothers' milk in 10 states are still preliminary and not officially supported by the agency responsible for the tests, an Environmental Protection Agency official said yesterday.

The Washington Post reported Saturday that measurable amounts of polychlorinated biphenyls — PCB — had shown up in mother's milk tested in Maryland, Virginia, Michigan, North Carolina, New Jersey, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Pennsylvania and South Carolina. The chemical has many industrial uses and is an ingredient in inks, paints and plastics.

George Wirth, head of the agency unit that is examining the samples, refused to confirm the figures in the Post report. He said, "We are still getting in samples and the amounts we are talking about are very small."

The Post said the average amount of PCB in samples from the 10 states was 2.1 parts per million. The Food and Drug Administration has set a "provisional tolerance level" of 2.5 parts per million for PCB in whole milk fat.

Although he refused to confirm the figures, Wirth did not deny their accuracy. But he said, "I'm not ready to say we have found PCB in mothers' milk. Numbers like this come in with errors as often as they come in correct. We are still working on it."

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Chemical That Caused Italian Scar

Stored In Verona, Mo., Paper Say

GARDEN CITY, N.Y., Aug. 30 (UPI) — A potentially lethal substance that forced the evacuation of Seveso, Italy, last month because of a chemical plant explosion is present in the American environment and the food chain, according to an article in Newsday Sunday.

The newspaper article said the compound, known as TCDD, is the most deadly of 50 laboratory-made substances known as dioxins and can sicken and kill, and produce major birth defects and deformities.

"Halfway across the country, in the tiny town of Verona, Mo.," Newsday said, "in the middle of tornado country, 4500 gallons of waste oil have accumulated so deadly a concentration of TCDD that no one will take the responsibility of disposing of it at any price." Verona is about 30 miles southwest of Springfield, Mo.

Newsday said TCDD is found in herbicides spread in national park forests and has turned up in samples of beef fat and liver taken from cattle that grazed on land treated with the chemical.

The article also said scientists are checking out preliminary indications of TCDD in mother's milk.

Newsday said dangerous amounts of TCDD are stored in locations such as Wilmington, Calif., 20 miles south of Los Angeles, and at Navy bases in Gulfport, Miss., and Johnston Island in the Pacific.

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Verona

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ic, 800 miles south of Hawaii.

TCDD is short for "2,3,7,8 Tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin," a substance created as a byproduct of any chemical process that breaks down another chemical, Trichlorophenol, an essential ingredient of 2,4,5,T, a common herbicide, the article said.

The explosion in Seveso last month spewed about 4½ pounds of a gaseous form of TCDD into the air and killed small animals in the vicinity. It forced the Italian government to evacuate the area and produced warnings that women should avoid getting pregnant for a period of time because of potential deformities.

Newsday said that as the result of 1953 accident in a German plant, a number of workers died, some of them 10 years later, while others suffered severe skin, respiratory, pancreatic and neurological diseases."

Dow Chemical Co., largest producer of 2,4,5,T, contends that an explosion such as the one at Seveso "could not occur within its plant because the company has instituted elaborate safety precautions that are rigidly enforced," the article said.

Newsday said TCDD plants in Britain and Germany have been shut down since the Seveso incident.

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