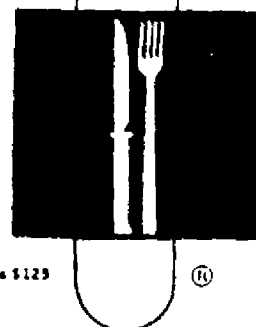


FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS

A weekly Washington publication for executives providing in-depth information regarding regulation of food additives, colors, pesticides, and allied products.



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However, comments objecting to the proposal were received from Virginia Knauer, consumer advisor to the President (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, Aug. 11, Page 16) and from Knouse Foods, as well as from consumers. Knouse later withdrew one of its objections (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, Sept. 22, Page 9).

In response to another objection from Knouse concerning limitation of consumer choice, the Institute noted that it expects "that the colored product will initially represent a very small portion of the water processed pack," and that "increased use of color will depend entirely on consumer acceptance of the product. The choice...will, therefore, be made by the consumer."

Responding to the Knauer criticisms, the Institute stated that "the consumer will not be deceived as the fact of the addition of color will be noted on the label," and that "the color, Red #40, which will be used, has been accepted by the (FDA) as safe for use on tart cherries."

The Institute acknowledged the drop in sales attributable to appearance is circumstantial, but maintained that the consumer will not accept "a dull gray or tepid brown colored cherry."

Knauer's objection that the aging of canned cherries would be masked by the added coloring would be valid, the Institute noted, "if we were dealing with a commodity that was subject to continual fresh processing..."

However, it stated, the "industry basically only packs the market requirements of twelve months," during the tart cherry season which is from early July to mid-August.

21 WHP DW
JPM WCH
RHM JCW

FDA IS DEVELOPING METHODS FOR DETECTING INDUSTRIAL CONTAMINANTS IN FOOD

The Food and Drug Administration is developing new methods which the agency hopes will help spot potential food contamination problems resulting from industrial discharges into the atmosphere or water supplies.

FDA scientists reported some of the new developments at the 89th annual meeting of the Association of Official Analytical Chemists Oct. 13-16 in Washington (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, Oct. 20, Page 23) during a Symposium on Analytical Methods for the Identification and Measurement of Chemical Pollutants in Aquatic Biota.

The symposium was one of four held during the AOAC meeting. The AOAC sponsored a joint symposium with the Society of Cosmetic Chemists on Cosmetic Analytical Techniques while the others included a Symposium on Mass Spectrometry and a Symposium on Forensic Sciences.

Almost 250 papers were delivered during the meeting dealing with methods for a myriad of food contaminants.

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In the symposium on chemical pollutants, FDA-ers reported on new methods for detecting halogenated industrial chemicals from fish. Analyses revealed residues of 7 chlorinated benzenes, 4 brominated benzenes, 3 chlorinated norbornene derivatives, hexachlorobutadiene and pentachloroanisole.

Another procedure was described as detecting levels at a sensitivity as low as 0.02 p.p.m. of a number of industrial aromatic amines in fish. Recoveries were made from fortified fish of diphenylamine, 1-naphthylamine, N-phenyl-1-naphthylamine, N-nitrosodiphenylamine and 3,3'-dichlorobenzidine.

During the symposium, FDA-ers reported on surveys of shellfish for eight heavy metals in 14 major estuaries on the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts. Lead levels had decreased in most areas (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, Oct. 20, Page 3), according to the report, which found mercury well below guideline levels in all areas. Analyses also covered arsenic, cadmium, chromium, copper, selenium and zinc.

Hexachlorobutadiene Survey Results Reported at AOAC

FDA also reported on a special survey of hexachlorobutadiene in fish, eggs, milk and vegetables from 10 sites in five different states within a 25 mile radius of perchloroethylene or trichloroethylene manufacturing plants. FDA found hexachlorobutadiene in 10 of 28 fish samples at levels ranging from .01 to 1.20 p.p.m. No residues were found in 15 samples of eggs and 20 samples of a number of different vegetables. Residues were detected in one of 20 milk samples, at 1.32 p.p.m. Milk re-sampled in the same area showed no residues of hexachlorobutadiene.

The fish contamination was limited largely to fresh water areas in the lower Mississippi.

In a survey for polychlorinated biphenyls in fish in 1973, FDA reported 45.6% of all samples were positive while 3.3% would be considered violative. In Great Lakes fish, FDA found 82% samples positive for PCBs, with 17.3% considered violative, according to the agency's tolerances for unavoidable residues (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, Oct. 13, Pages 9 and 21).

EPA Chief Stresses Need for Toxic Substances Act to Deal with PCB Problems

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Russell E. Train recently made a pitch for passage of the Toxic Substances Control Act (S 776), saying that the regulation of PCBs is an area in which EPA does not have adequate authority.

He told Sen. Hart (D-Mich.) his agency is hamstrung because it cannot regulate the manufacture of PCBs or imports of the products without new authority.

In a letter in which he responded to charges by Hart that the agency was not doing enough about PCBs, Train said EPA has numerous programs underway on the PCB problem, including more than a dozen newly initiated ones. However, he emphasized that the agency's "ability to address the PCB problem" would be greatly enriched by passage of the pending bill.

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In the letter to Train, Hart cited increasing hazards from PCBs, noting that levels in Lake Michigan and the Hudson River have resulted in fish containing PCB above the action level of 5 p.p.m. established by FDA.

Hart also cited new research data "which would lead one to believe that the human health hazard associated with PCBs has been substantially underestimated." The Michigan Senator mentioned research conducted by Dr. Renata Kimbrough of the Center for Disease Control showing a significant increase in the incidence of carcinoma in rats at 100 p.p.m. In addition, he cited studies by Dr. J. R. Allen of the University of Wisconsin which revealed substantial impairment of reproductive capacity in rhesus monkeys.

"EPA is in a unique position to act to control the discharge of PCB to the environment," Hart maintained, noting it has authority under various statutes, including the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act and the Water Pollution Control Act.

"While it is indisputable that passage of the Toxic Substances Control Act would aid EPA in controlling use of this and related substances, I would urge your agency to redouble its efforts in laying the groundwork for a standard under this bill when it becomes law," Hart wrote.

The Senator also noted that many were hopeful that PCBs in the environment would be controlled significantly by the voluntary action taken by the Monsanto Company at the joint urging of EPA, FDA and the Council on Environmental Quality to limit the use of PCBs to closed systems.

Hart noted, however, that "we appear to have made little progress under this program in reducing the hazard posed by PCBs and some of their sister compounds, polychlorinated terphenyls and polybrominated biphenyls."

EPA Has Learned of at Least 20 PCB Spills Since 1972

A letter from EPA's Assistant Administrator for Enforcement Stanley Legro to Sen. Tunney (D-Calif.) noted that the agency "has no evidence that the Monsanto Company has violated its voluntary agreement to restrict sales to customers involved in the manufacture of closed electrical systems."

"On the other hand," Legro continued, "there are indications that several of Monsanto's customers are using PCBs for other purposes, such as heat transfer fluids and vacuum pump seal oil in their own manufacturing operations."

"In addition," Legro wrote Tunney, responding to the Senator's concern about PCB use and distribution with respect to its potential control by the Toxic Substances Control Act, "evidence suggests that importers are also distributing PCBs for uses other than in closed electrical systems."

Tunney asked about "the number and seriousness of PCB spills that have occurred within the last 5 years," and Legro noted that "while only five spills had previously been reported to EPA Headquarters since 1972, information concerning approximately 15 others has been provided in responses to EPA's recent letters."

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The Senator also asked about the disposition of PCBs following "final use." Legro reported that "in general, disposal of PCBs is primarily as waste in landfills and to a lesser extent by incineration."

"In addition," the EPA-er noted, "responses to EPA's recent inquiries indicate that PCBs are also 'disposed of' by the original users through processors who reclaim PCBs for further use ('reclaimers') and oil companies."

The EPA-er reported that the agency examined 106 finished water samples from interstate carrier systems for chlorinated hydrocarbons during the past 18 months, and found two containing PCBs: 3.0 ug/l Aroclor 1242 in the finished water of Winnebago, Ill., and 0.1 ug/l Aroclor 1260 in the water of Sellersburg, Ind.

"Recent responses to EPA's letters have indicated possible contamination of several other drinking water supplies, as well," Legro wrote, adding: "Three identified to date are Escondido, Calif. (0.4 ug/l), New Bedford, Mass. (2.5 ug/l), and Bridgeport, Conn. (1 ug/l).

Other chemical pollutant papers at AOAC dealt with methods for detecting phthalate esters and chlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxins (CDDs).

FDA's Brooklyn, N. Y., lab reported advances with a quick screening method for Salmonella detection in foods and feeds, which can run 50 to 60 samples a day using 2/3 less personnel than traditional methods. Improved methods for detecting Clostridium perfringens in food and seven strains of Staphylococcus aureus were reported.

FDA Reports Methods for Determining Impurities in Red 40

In work on color additives, FDA reported methods for detecting impurities in FD&C Red No. 40.

FDA-ers reported results from a number of foods analyzed for 14 volatile N-nitrosamines. Nitrosamines were found only in fried bacon and spice-cure mixtures, with negative results reported in all samples of pork products, baby foods, total diet samples, cheese, lard, sausages and Icelandic national dishes. FDA said results from fish and shellfish analyzed for nitrosamines would be reported later.

Canadian scientists identified 11 impurities in saccharin, while FDA's laboratory in Brooklyn was able to quantify levels of o- and p-sulfamoylbenzoic acid residues in saccharin.

New York State officials reported on a rapid screening procedure for determination of unpermitted sulfites, sorbates, benzoates and ascorbates in ground beef.

The Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation, after completion of a collaborative study comparing two methods, recommended AOAC adoption of a modified method for determination of cholesterol in multicomponent foods. Work was done on deviled ham sandwich spread, vegetable beef stew, frozen chicken pot pie, frozen fish sticks and mayonnaise.