Monsanto

JUN 1 0 1982

FROM (NAME LOCATION PHONE) Dept. of Medicine & Environmental Health W.C. Barnes-G2WF-8806

DATE: June 8, 1982

CC: D.L. Coleman

SUBJECT: June 5 Askeril Spill
Knoxville, Tennessee

REFERENCE:

TO J. H. Craddock - A2BA

On the evening of June 5, 1982, I received a call from "B" building guards indicating that a Dr. Bob Lash, Director of the Poison Control Center in Knoxville, Tennessee, had phoned. I immediately placed a long-distance call to Dr. Lash, but found that his line was busy for approximately 30 minutes. When I finally got through, Dr. Lash explained the situation. A truck with many barrels of Askeril drove right through the heart of Knoxville, Tennessee, on a freeway. The truck was apparently leaking a stream of PCB's that contaminated the autos following immediately behind the truck. The automobile windshields were covered with a film of the material and about 13 persons, including one six-month-old baby, were contaminated. Of the 13 persons, only 4 complained of symptoms of eye and skin burning.

My response was to advise disrobing, storage of the contaminated clothing in plastic bags, and thorough soap and water decontamination. I reassured Dr. Lash that the hazards of PCB's had been greatly overrated and that the major concern was chloracne. I encouraged him to attempt to minimize any hysteria relating to these exposures and asked him to call me back later when the situation had calmed down.

Due to the nature of this exposure, I notified Dr. Donald Coleman, my supervisor, of the inquiry and he subsequently notified you. Dr. Lash called back at 11:30 p.m. stating that everthing seemed to be under control. The leaking barrell was confirmed to contain PCB's estimated to be 45%. Other officials had recommended impounding of the contaminated automobiles and two (2) environmental cleanup firms had been called in to respond to the situation. I recontacted the Poison Control Center on Saturday, June 6, and spoke to Dr. David Rankin. The spill episode seemed to be under control but one family of 3 persons had just come in. They had been behind the truck but did not report to the emergency room the night of the exposure. Dr. Rankin promised to send me a newspaper article on the incident and I promised to send them a review of the epidemiological studies on the effects of PCB's.

I would appreciate any recommendations or comments you have about the response to this inquiry.

Walter C. Barnes, Jr., M.D., Ph.D.
Senior Physician-Occupational Medicine

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