"If the FDA now allows a product to be marketed as peanut butter when it contains only 75% peanuts, this will open many disputes which were dealt with with great difficulty over recent years."

Rep. Omar Burleson (D-Texas) also wrote FDA Commissioner Edwards that FDA's consideration of a temporary marketing permit is "very serious to the peanut producing area which I represent in Central West Texas." He said: "This will cause many additional thousands of tons of peanuts presently used in peanut butter to be diverted to (USDA) Commodity Credit Corporation stock, consequently raising the price support program cost to the government."

He "strongly urged" that FDA maintain its position that "consumers believed peanut butter to contain primarily peanuts."

PCB PROBLEM UNCOVERED IN FOOD PACKAGING MATERIALS

Problems with polychlorinated biphenyls took on new dimensions last week with the disclosure by the Food and Drug Administration to other government agencies that it has discovered some PCB contamination in packaging products made from recycled paper, and in food products in the packages (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, Aug. 30, Page 3).

FDA revealed its latest data on PCB problems to a number of government agencies Sept. 1. It was decided at the meeting to establish an inter-departmental task force, coordinated through the President's Office of Science and Technology, to undertake a government-wide study of the PCB problems.

FDA revealed that a number of packages, including clapboard containers made from recycled paper, contain PCBs, probably from use in inks.

Cartons containing hot roll mixes, macaroni, spaghetti, noodles, spaghetti dinners, noodle dinners, cookies, gelatin, crackers, shredded wheat, and bread crumbs have been discovered with varying amounts of PCBs, mostly in trace amounts. FDA has not established guidelines for PCBs in packaging materials, and presumably, the cartons, if not the products themselves, are violative.

Noodles and shredded wheat in the cartons also have been discovered with PCBs, and FDA is preparing a hurry-up program to the field for wide-scale sampling of cartons and packages which are believed suspect.

Monsanto Officials to Meet with FDA-ers

Monsanto officials are being called to Washington this week to help FDA get a better handle on the use of PCBs, which the agency believes may become a problem of wide environmental potential.

MONS 032582

FDA and the Department of Agriculture began probing more deeply after the accidental spillage of PCBs from a heat exchange unit that ultimately led to contamination of

feed and subsequently of hogs, poultry, and eggs (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, Aug. 23, Page 20; Aug. 16, Page 31; Aug. 9, Page 7; Aug. 2, Page 38; and July 26, Page 42).

Agencies participating in the interdepartmental agreement include FDA, USDA, OST, the Environmental Protection Agency, Council on Environmental Quality, and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.

FDA began including fish, cheese, milk and shell eggs in its surveillance samples for PCBs during the last fiscal year. Some contamination was uncovered, and results were relayed to State agencies, which handled the problems within their jurisdictions.

Meanwhile, USDA has instituted an ongoing program for preclearance of all turkeys and fowl prior to slaughter, which is expected to continue until all birds presently on farms that could possibly have received any of the contaminated feed are accounted for.

Additionally, USDA is monitoring products from all 20 egg products plants in the southeastern part of the United States, as well as testing the production of all seven suppliers of dried egg mix. Samples of frozen egg products are being tested from some plants in the northeast, midwest, and west coast.

Food and Drugs Commissioner Edwards, in a speech presented at the Western Hemisphere Nutrition Congress at Bal Harbour, Fla., last week, drew attention to the PCB problem, calling it one of the most widely used family of chemicals known to man. Used for several decades, PCBs have been employed in the manufacturing process or as actual components of numerous products, including some plastics and adhesives, printing inks, electrical and building materials and paper products.

Edwards noted that "this very usefulness has brought PCBs into undesirable and perhaps unacceptable contact with our food supply." Noting the incident that led to the feed contamination, Edwards pointed out that "it is ironic and illustrative of the mixed blessings of modern technology that the PCBs were being used in a system to pasteurize foreign fish meal before we would allow the product into the domestic market." He continued:

> "The more we look at PCBs the more complicated the problem gets . . . . It is now clear that with the PCBs we must prod science to measure the effect of what it has created. And science must supply the answer, not scare headlines and not politically inspired outrage. Here as in all matters of regulation it is one thing to stand in the public forum or before the TV lights to demand action and solution. It is quite another to bear responsibility for the hard judgments of actual regulation."

Edwards' references were obviously to Ralph Nader and other critics of the agency's position on PCBs.

Nader's battle with the agency over PCBs entered a new round last week with another letter challenging the agency's handling of the PCB problem.

Bearing down on a Washington, D.C. distribution of shell eggs that wasn't stopped by FDA and on replies by the agency to press inquiries, Nader also insisted that PCBs constitute a "grave health danger." Nader said:

> "While much is uncertain concerning PCBs, it is perfectly clear that they are pervasive, persistent poisons which accumulate in the body tissues and, at threshold concentrations, constitute a grave health danger. Any ingestion of these poisons contributes to that accumulation."

Quoting newspaper accounts of the statements of several FDA-ers, Nader said, "If the PCB levels found in eggs (up to 4.2 p.p.m.) are really like a 'drop in a tank car' and do not contribute to undesirable concentrations in human tissue, then FDA's action levels are unnecessary and should be withdrawn by appropriate procedures, rather than being glibly subverted by FDA spokesmen." He continued:

> "The FDA's job is to protect the public from exposure to such substances, not to reconcile the public to low level contaminations through scientifically indefensible statements to the press."

He asked Commissioner Edwards if he agreed with statements by John T. Walden and Donald Berreth of FDA's public information office and demanded to know which, if any, scientists were consulted before statements were made to the press.

Nader objected that when a shipment of 60,000 eggs consigned to a District of Columbia distributor was found to have already reached retail levels, FDA did not "alert consumers to the danger so that they could destroy those contaminated eggs not yet ingested." He also charged: ". . .It seems likely that FDA's sampling procedures for PCBs are not adequately detecting contamination and/or that state authorities are letting contaminated eggs out."

Nader continued his criticism of the FDA interim guidelines as arbitrary, and discussion of the guidelines appeared in other publications and statements as general interest in the problem began to spread. Referring to the guidelines, an anonymous FDA-er was quoted in the Sept. 3 issue of Science magazine as saying:

> "It's (scientific information) not complete. But you got to go on what you have. We can't be held accountable for every goddamn chemical!"

Development of a "long range strategy for coordinating scientific resources to better define the PCB problem and its possible implications for public health" is one of the objectives of the newly formed interagency committee. The other major objective is to:

> "Insure maximum, effective coordination of government response against specific and preventable PCB contamination as such problems may arise."

These objectives were included in a joint statement made by the involved agencies and released on Sept. 5. The statement also said:

> "Based on current scientific knowledge, the government sees no imminent threat to the safety of the food supply or to the public health from this broadly used family of industrial chemicals."

The statement said present mechanisms appear adequate to protect the public from "occasional" accidents, but that it is "more difficult to assess on the basis of current information . . . the size and significance of long term, low level human exposure to PCBs from the environment."

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FTC AND ITT CONTINENTAL TO GO TO HEARINGS ON TWO PRODUCTS

ITT Continental Baking and the Federal Trade Commission are going to take their differences over ads for Wonder Bread and Hostess Snack Cakes to a hearing.

After settlement by consent order of an FTC complaint on Profile Bread, negotiations broke down on ads for the other products , FTC noted last week.

The complaint included Continental's ad agency, Ted Bates & Co. The Profile Bread consent order includes the first "corrective advertising" provision obtained by FTC, a provision under which the company will have to publicly repent for ad claims (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, July 5, Page 41).

Continental is expected during the hearing to insist on a company's right to advertise nutritional values held in common with other similar products.

FTC's determination to move into subtle kinds of behavioral research was further spelled out last week by Commissioner Mary Gardiner Jones, who spoke to the Association for Consumer Research, meeting in College Park, Md. She suggested that industry might want to sponsor consumer behavioral research and also said:

> "The Commission in recent years has become increasingly aware of the fact that the goals of law enforcement can be achieved by a variety of tools which in no sense are or should be limited to formal individualized adjudicatory action. In this connection, the Commission has increasingly recognized that disseminating information directly to consumers about marketplace practices or product characteristics may be as effective in achieving the ultimate statutory objectives as its own investigations and adjudicatory proceedings."

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SECOND RECALL OF CAMPBELL SOUP MYSTIFIES FEDERAL OFFICIALS MONS 032585

A second recall from the Campbell Soup Company's Paris, Tex., plant sent federal officials into numerous huddles last week to speculate on the causes of the contamination of two production lots of the firm's [illegible] (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS,