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MONSANTO INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS CO.

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PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT
800 N. Lindbergh Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri 63166

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FROM ONGOING PCB STUDY RELEASED BY MONSANTO

ST. LOUIS, Sept. 00 -- Monsanto Company today reported that it has found no cases of either malignant melanoma or pancreatic cancer among current or former employes engaged in the production of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) at its U.S. manufacturing site.

This information, announced by George Roush, M.D., director of the company's medical and environmental health department, was released in response to questions from the news media, prompted by a recent Mobil Oil Corporation study which reported three cases of melanoma and two cases of pancreatic cancer developed among 72 employes who had been exposed to a PCB product while working at a Mobil plant in New Jersey.

Dr. Roush said that if either melanoma or pancreatic cancer were related to PCB exposure as the Mobil report suggested, then it would follow that these malignancies would have also been seen in a worker population over four times as large. "The fact that we have found no cases of either of these cancers casts doubt that the findings of the Mobil study were in fact related to PCBs," he said.

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The Monsanto information was based on a review of the records of more than 300 employes and former employes who were identified as having worked in the PCB production unit of the company's William G. Krummrich plant, dating back to 1936 when the unit first became operational. The Krummrich plant, located just south of East St. Louis at Sauget, Ill., is the sole U.S. manufacturing site for Monsanto-produced PCB products. Based on an analysis of the 50 death certificates that Monsanto has been able to locate thus far, not one case of either melanoma or pancreatic cancer was observed.

Dr. Roush said that this information was extracted from an ongoing epidemiological study that will require another 12 to 18 months to complete. "We would not normally release clinical or medical data from a still-ongoing study," he continued, "without first subjecting it to full scientific investigation and review." He emphasized that, while some facts and tentative findings have surfaced, much additional work needs to be done before a final assessment can be made.

"With these qualifications in mind, and because Monsanto is aware of the obvious concern that has been generated by the Mobil report, the company is releasing the following additional information, some of which I must re-emphasize is very preliminary.

"One tentative finding from the statistical computation was that these PCB workers lived longer than the national average.

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"The statistical review also revealed that the mortality rate for lung cancer was higher than the national average. At this point, we don't know what this means. We are still trying to determine what, if anything, it may be related to.

"For example, and while it may be difficult to reconstruct, we hope to determine the smoking habits of these workers and, if possible their prior and post Monsanto work experience and exposure. We would also hope to compare this incidence of lung cancer with the lung cancer mortality rate for the East St. Louis area. There are a lot of things we still don't know and the answers could be extremely significant, especially with a sample this small.

"To date, the evidence developed from this preliminary study would suggest that the cases of lung cancer are not PCB dose-response related," he said. Dr. Roush added that Monsanto's extensive long-term feeding studies with animals would further indicate that PCBs are not carcinogenic.

The Monsanto official said that the study will be published and transmitted to appropriate Federal agencies upon completion.

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