Production Of PCB Cut By Half

Monsanto Co. production of PCB, a DDT-like substance often blamed for injury to the environment, is only half what it was last year, the company said today.

In its first public disclosure of its production figures, the company, which is the sole United States manufacturer of PCB, reported 1970 production was 63,327 tons; 1971 production is expected to be 29,236 tons.

The 1970 figure was the highest in a decade and the 1971 figure the lowest in the same period. A large proportion of the decline reflected the fact that Monsanto no longer sells the chemical for uses in which it might escape into the environment.

PCB, the chemical nickname for polychlorinated biphenyl, is a chemical cousin of the hard pesticides. It has a wide variety of industrial uses: as a heat transference material, as an insulating fluid in electrical equipment, as a plasticizer, an additive in inks and in hydraulic and lubricating systems.

Because of its widespread use and its resistance to decay, it is almost everywhere in the environment. It has been found in substantial concentrations in the body tissue of fish in the Great Lakes and predatory birds.

PCB that has leaked out of heating systems has contaminated human food.

Because of furor about its widespread use, Monsanto announced last year that it would stop sales of the chemical for any but closed systems. However, actual shipments did not cease until early this year.

The company chose to make the figures public "because scientists have continued to express a need for the data to make a proper estimate of how much PCB might be in the environment," a spokesman said.

"It would be a completely false and irresponsible conclusion to say all PCB produced is in the environment," he continued. "Over 80 per cent of all sales in the past 12 years have been for closed-system electrical uses."

Chemical Weapon Use Told

STOCKHOLM, Dec. 1 (AP) — The United States dumped about 90,000 tons of chemicals, largely defoliants, over Vietnam between 1965 and 1970, an independent research organization said yesterday.

In a report on chemical and biological weapons, the Swedish International Peace Research Institute said that the risk was growing that such weapons, relatively cheap and easy to produce, would be used for mass destruction.

It urged the United States and the Soviet Union to resolve their differences and seek a comprehensive disarmament treaty on chemical and biological weapons.

The institute issued the first three volumes of a six-volume study based on four years of research on the historical, technical, military, legal and political aspects of chemical weapons and on possible disarmament measures.

The remaining volumes will be published next spring.

The organization, set up in 1966 and financed through Swedish government funds since 1968, issues an annual yearbook of world armaments and disarmament and has published extensive special reports on nuclear arms and world arms trade.

Chemical weapons have been used on a large scale at least four times in the last 60 years —in World War I, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia, the Japanese invasion of China in the 1930s and in the present war in Indochina.

The United States was singled out for its introduction of defoliants and a wide range of infantry gas weapons containing irritant agents.

However, the U.S. was mentioned favorably for unilaterally having changed its policies on such weapons.

The institute said the United States "has renounced possession of biological weapons and first use of chemical weapons, other than irritants and defoliants" and "it is ending the use of defoliants in Vietnam."

MONS 062958