The Environmental Protection Agency, concerned with PCB contamination of the environment, plans to call an international symposium on PCBs. The symposium might be held in October or November, an EPA-er said.

Meanwhile, FDA scientists have completed several research projects on PCBs, reports of which are being submitted for publication.

In an experiment where male rats were fed diets containing 0, 5, 50 or 500 p.p.m. of a PCB for 4 weeks, ingestion at the 2 highest levels caused significant fatty changes in the livers. These changes were still apparent 46 weeks after the treatment period in most rats fed the 500 p.p.m. diet. The researchers believe that the slow release of PCB from fat may cause a continued exposure of the liver and other organs to the compound.

Another FDA study investigated the effect of PCB on the cardiovascular system. Anesthetized cats were given a PCB product intravenously at a dose of 100 mg/kg of body weight at 30 minute intervals. All the animals died within 60 minutes following initial dosing. Blood tests showed that oxygen was decreased and that carbon dioxide and respiration rates increased. Blood pressure remained relatively constant but changes occurred in the electrocardiograms. Post-mortem examination of the cats revealed hemorrhages and congestion in the lungs.

The scientists believe the study suggests that an interference or blockage in the interchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the lung occurred as a result of PCB treatment.

In another study in which rats were fed doses of a PCB ranging from 0 to 500 p.p.m. for 4 weeks, the results showed that PCB disappeared more rapidly from fat of males than from fat of females. These results are in line with sex-linked differences reported previously for other chlorinated hydrocarbons, according to the researchers.

●