THE NEW YORK TIMES
Saturday, April 11, 1970
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CURB URGED IN USE OF PCB CHEMICAL

Ryan Asks a Partial Ban on Substance in Pesticides

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An industrial chemical called PCB, which is chemically similar to DDT, has worried scientists for some time because, like DDT, it is persistent and can hamper the reproductive capacity of animals.

Yesterday Representative William F. Ryan, Democrat of Manhattan, called for at least a partial ban—and perhaps even a total ban—on the use of PCB.

Mr. Ryan, whose staff has been studying PCB, called on the Department of Agriculture to ban immediately its use in pesticides. He also called for an investigation by the Food and Drug Administration to set food tolerance levels for the chemical and ban it altogether if necessary.

PCB, short for polychlorinated biphenyls, is made in this country only by the Monsanto Company. Officials at the company's St. Louis headquarters said yesterday that the company had been making the chemical for 40 years and that it had only been recently that Monsanto has realized the possible danger from PCB.

Monsanto said that PCB was developed for use in closed systems, which would keep it out of contact with the environment. One of its major uses is as an insulating fluid in large electrical transformers.

The material also has the ability to impart flexibility to other materials. As such it stirred the attention of some Monsanto officials who sought to promote its wider use.

About 1960 the company issued a 50-page catalogue suggesting a wide variety of uses for PCB in such things as bottle coatings, pesticides and plastic containers.

The catalogue was withdrawn about a year ago following increasing scientific reports that PCB was being found in fish and birds.

Bill Papageorge, Monsanto's manager of environmental control, dismissed the book as just a "typical sales type of pitch."

The company declined to disclose how much PCB it sells. Monsanto recommends that it not be used for anything but closed systems, but Mr. Papageorge said he though it was still probably being used "in caulking materials around windows in big buildings" because it was so flexible and long-lasting.

The company said it had joined in urging that PCB be banned from use in pesticides.

DSW 201349

STLCOPCB4059414