

August 1, 1960

AIR MAIL

Dr. K. Akatsuka  
c/o Tokyo Medical College  
412, 1-chome, Higashi Okubo  
Shinjyuku-ku, Tokyo, Japan

Dear Doctor Akatsuka:

I have received from Mr. Carter of Ethyl Corporation a copy of your letter of June 15, 1960, in which you outline your proposal for obtaining approval of the use of tetramethyl lead in Japan. Mr. Carter was acting for me, at my request, in looking into this matter. I think I should point out that my role in this is that of acting for the American and British manufacturers of antiknock compounds, rather than for any one of them, and that I would like you to view your activities in this matter in that same light. It is my purpose to present the scientific and hygienic facts for the consideration of the appropriate officials of the Japanese Government, without any necessary reference to the distributors of gasoline, or any one specific manufacturer of tetramethyl lead. I do not mean by this that there is any reason to conceal the interest of Ethyl Corporation, or du Pont, or the Associated Ethyl Company in this, but there is no point in emphasizing that of any one company.

In considering your proposal, I regard your investigation of the toxicity of tetramethyl lead to be unnecessary. Certainly, I would not undertake to deter you or your scientific colleagues from following up your interest in this matter, but in view of the position occupied by this Laboratory in your country, I think it unlikely that any corroboration of our findings is necessary. This, however, is not the main reason for my opinion. Rather, I think it correct to say that tests of the toxicity of TML in the laboratory will not contribute much toward the consideration of this matter. We are conducting a fairly elaborate investigation of the effects of prolonged exposure to low dosages and concentrations (in air) of TML. Certainly no very useful purpose will be served by your duplication of this work. The present problem, however, is not the relative toxicity of TML and TEL, but instead is that of the extent of any increase in the exposure of gasoline handlers to lead in consequence of the use of TML. This is the problem dealt with in our field investigation, reports of which are being sent to you. I send you also, however, two copies of a brief summary of toxicological observations made some years ago which show that TML differs somewhat, but not greatly, from TEL, being somewhat less toxic on the whole.

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Considering the need for fairly prompt action in this matter, I suggest that you approach the appropriate officials as soon as you have received this letter and the reports, and initiate the steps required to obtain clearance.

The other steps, as proposed, seem entirely appropriate. I should appreciate it greatly, if you would acknowledge the receipt of this letter promptly, and let me know the schedule of time involved in initiating and completing the various steps. In view of the manner followed thus far in other countries, especially in Western Europe, I should think this matter could be cleared up within a short time.

I am fairly well acquainted with Professor Horiuchi, and no doubt it will be well to inform him about this matter. I should think it might be wise and courteous to inform Professor Susuma Harashima also, considering his position in the field of Preventive Medicine.

Cordially yours,

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Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.

RAK ef  
C.C.:

Mr. C. D. Carter  
Mr. Julian Frey

Enc. Summary of Preliminary Toxicologic Investigation of the Lead Alkyls - Machle, Brust and Kehoe - June 18, 1959

An Investigation of the Potential Hazards of Exposure to Lead Associated With the Handling and Use of Gasoline Containing an Antiknock Fluid in Which Tetramethyl Lead is Substituted for Tetraethyl Lead - Cholak and Kehoe - Nov. 10, 1959 - (2 copies)

KE 0002904