

Monsanto

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The Editor
Electrical Review
Quadrant House
The Quadrant
Sutton
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UNITED KINGDOM

September 15, 1982.

Dear Sir,

I was dismayed and disappointed to see polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) described as "highly toxic" and "carcinogenic" in the article, "P.C.B. pollution alarm for Hawker Siddeley," Electrical Review, 3 September 1982.

I must point out that the overwhelming weight of scientific evidence (see enclosed background information) supports neither the "highly toxic" or "carcinogenic" label. As to toxicity, PCBs on an acute basis are about as toxic to humans as common table salt and are thus classified as only mildly toxic.

You should also know that since 1978 there have been 10 epidemiology studies of the human health effects of PCBs performed by scientists throughout the world and that none of these studies produced evidence of a link between PCBs and any human cancer or, indeed, any other chronic health effects.

On the other hand, there is no question that PCBs are a persistent class of compounds requiring proper handling and disposal. In addition, they are not innocuous, i.e., like most chemicals, PCBs can produce harmful effects at very high doses.

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Monsieur

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We realize that there is a substantial amount of misinformation in print and, unfortunately, "on the record," regarding PCBs. Thus, we can understand how even a respected technical journal such as Electrical Review could be misled -- indeed, this is how myths are perpetuated.

At the same time, as a former manufacturer of PCBs and an unrivaled source of scientific expertise on them, we have a responsibility to combat the grossly exaggerated perceptions of risk associated with exposure to PCBs wherever encountered.

It is in this spirit that we provide the enclosed information.

Sincerely yours,


Don R. BISHOP
Director, Public Affairs.

Encl.

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