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Monsanto to Phase Out Toxic Group of Chemicals of PCBs

ST. LOUIS (UPI) — Monsanto Co. announced today it plans to phase out the manufacture of a toxic group of chemicals known as PCBs, which environmentalists contend are threatening public health and the nation's rivers and lakes.

F.J. Fitzgerald, a corporate vice president, said he could not give an exact timetable for the phase-out but "it would be in a planned and orderly manner."

"As soon as we are satisfied that the electrical power supply industry's needs for usable, acceptable alternate dielectric fluids have been met, by whomever, Monsanto will voluntarily shut down its PCB manufacturing unit," Fitzgerald said.

Monsanto is the sole maker of PCB, or polychlorinated biphenyl, which is used primarily as a nonconductor of direct electrical current. The chemical has been a necessary ingredient in most power-generating equipment.

PCBs have been used in manufacturing processes since 1930, but their presence as toxic substances in the environment was not detected until 1966 because they were confused with DDT, with which they have a similar chemical structure.

At a conference on PCBs last November in Chicago, Assistant Secretary of the Interior Nathaniel P. Reed recommended the federal government impose a nearly total ban on the chemicals.

Reed said he was "deeply shocked by the pervasiveness of PCBs; they are literally everywhere." He said exceedingly high levels of PCBs were found in fish from all parts of the country, indicating the nation's rivers and lakes were "in mortal danger."

PCBs have caused liver cancer and reproductive failures in laboratory animals and some workers using the chemicals have complained of allergic reactions, according to federal officials.

Environmental groups had petitioned the government to lower the permissible levels of PCBs in food on grounds the chemicals are a cancer hazard.

Monsanto said it has informed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and its capacitor and transformer industry customer of its decision to eventually phase out the chemicals.

"Monsanto has been working for a number of years on non-PCB replacement products," Fitzgerald said.

"The problems that we face collectively are rooted in the unique fire resistant and dielectric characteristis of PCBs, and the irreplaceable role they have played in electrical and industrial applications for the past 48 years."

Custody Not Coercion

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WASHINGTON (UPI) — Th Supreme Court ruled 6 to Monday that the mere fact a person is in custody does not constitute coercion to allow a warrantless search of his property for evidence.

The court reversed a federal appeals court and restated its view that arrests can be made without warrants when there is suspect his rights, then the mere fact the person is in custody does not constitute "coercion" to search for evidence, the court ruled.

The case involvd Henry Ogle Watson, convicted of possessing two stolen credit cards. He was arrested without a warrant in a

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