

May 28, 1969

Editor
Gainesville Sun
101 Southeast Second Place
Gainesville, Florida 32601

Dear Sir:

I recently saw your April 25 editorial on "Lethal Pollution" which made reference to the polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) sold by Monsanto. I thought you might be interested in some additional information on this matter.

Evidently your editorial was based on a story which appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle late in February. Unfortunately the deadline of that writer did not give us time to supply an answer to his questions. Enclosed is a statement which contains information which should have been presented.

A number of the reports about PCBs are incorrect. They are not used in vinyl plastics, automobile tires or epoxy resins -- as has been stated. They also have no agricultural uses.

PCBs are highly specialized materials used in closed systems or a manner where they are an integral part of the product. We, therefore, question how commercially made PCB could be showing up in the environment in the quantities reported. We think the answer could lie elsewhere.

-more-

DSW 200973

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May 28, 1969

We are conducting our own research programs to confirm or deny these initial, scientific reports. Monsanto is not ignoring this matter and will exercise the same high degree of control and concern on PCB as we do with all our products.

Sincerely,

Tom C. Ford
Manager
Divisional Public Relations

TCF:sfh
attach: position statement

bc: Mr. H. S. Bergen
Dr. W. R. Richard
Mr. E. P. Wheeler

attach: Gainesville Sun article

DSW 200974

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Lethal Pollution

It took years for scientists to discover that the pesticide DDT has permeated the world's water, air and land and was raising havoc with wildlife populations. In the meantime, such predator birds as the peregrine falcon and bald eagle were faced with extinction; DDT-contaminated fish and milk have been declared unfit for humans; songbird populations dwindled in some areas.

Only in the last year or so did biologists pinpoint how DDT prevents bird reproduction by attacking the female's sex hormones. As research continues, governments at all levels are groping for ways to control growing concentration of the pesticide. Foes of DDT advocate strictly selective use or an outright ban.

Even as the DDT controversy is thrashed out, scientists have elected new, more toxic chemicals building up in the environment. Relatives of DDT, though not pesticides, the new chemicals are polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). They are used in making paints, plastics, electrical insulators, tires, waxes, sealants and epoxy resins.

PCBs are produced under the trade name Aroclors by Monsanto Chemical Co., St. Louis. They were first identified in European birds by Swedish scientists. They are apparently released into the atmosphere and waterways by vaporizing, from factory smokestacks, by discharge into rivers and oceans and, possibly,

even by the wearing of tires on freeways.

A team of University of California and Cornell University scientists has determined the PCBs are five times more powerful than DDT in hormone-destroying activity. Like DDT, they are found throughout the environment and their quantities are increasing rapidly. They have been found in the milk of nursing mothers in Colorado and in marine life off California, as well as in European birds.

What effects PCBs will have on man is not known, although in vapor form these chemicals are highly toxic. It is known that, again like DDT, they do not break down into harmless chemicals in a short period of time. Once in the environment, they won't go away.

The federal government has not set tolerance limits for PCBs in human food supplies at this stage, and Monsanto company spokesmen only say that their scientists and sales executives are studying the problem.

Dare we hope that study by government and industry will not drag out over years and years while the concentration of these lethal chemicals continues to build?

Is it too much to ask that new synthetic chemicals, devised to increase agricultural and industrial production efficiency, be thoroughly tested for possible deleterious effects on us and our environment before they are placed in use?

DSW 200975