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NEWS

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

USDA MONITORING MAINE POULTRY FOR PCB's CONTAMINATION:

WASHINGTON, Feb. 24--The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced it has initiated a monitoring program for all poultry produced in Maine, because some broiler and roaster chickens have been contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's).

USDA's Consumer and Marketing Service said that 10 lots of birds -- approximately 200,000 -- were contaminated with PCB's and that the feed was suspected as the source of contamination.

C&MS said the birds are being held at Penobscot Poultry Co., in Belfast and at Fort Halifax Poultry Co., in Waterville. All farms known to be associated with the feed problem are having their poultry tested before slaughter under USDA supervision, officials said.

While USDA is monitoring birds coming to slaughter, the Food and Drug Administration is continuing its investigation of the source of the contamination. Preliminary findings indicate that the feed produced at one feed mill during one day was the source of the contamination, C&MS officials said.

C&MS said none of the birds being held would be released for food unless they comply with PCB guidelines established by the Federal Food and Drug Administration. Birds not in compliance will be destroyed, C&MS said.

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