Monsanto

FROM (NAME & LOCATION) St. Louis - General Office

DATE March 3, 1969

SUBJECT POLLUTION STUDIES

REFERENCE

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On February 24, the San Francisco Chronicle carried a feature about "a menacing new pollutant" found in the San Francisco Bay area. The article was based on marine life research by a scientist at the University of California. It stated that residues of polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) were killing certain marine birds and posed a long-term threat to humans.

This sensational story has caused considerable comment on the West Coast and its claims may be repeated elsewhere. Our Aroclor polychlorinated biphenyl was used by the scientist in his work and we were identified as a producer.

A few facts are in order. This research dates back to earlier work done to analyze pesticide residue in wildlife, soil and water. The search for these materials, in the parts-per-billion range, also brought out other unidentified materials. Several years ago, two Swedish scientists reported they had identified these other substances -- with one of them being PCB. Since commercial PCB, such as Aroclor, is not spread around the land as are pesticides, the scientists theorized that the source must be the industrial waste of PCB users.

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These conclusions are puzzling in several aspects. As you know, Aroclors are either used as functional fluids in "closed systems" or as a plasticizer which is an integral part of the polymer. They are not easily released to the natural environment. This raises the question whether the substance identified by the scientists is actually PCB -- or whether it is a compound which only appears to be PCB due to metabolism of other materials in the marine environment.

We have expanded our research program to confirm the identity of the compounds reported to be PCB. It will take extensive investigation to confirm or deny the initial scientific conclusions. We will keep you advised, and we are also directly writing our major Aroclor customers with background information so they will be prepared for any inquiries.

If customers or pollution control authorities in your area contact you, please have their medical/pollution representative contact Elmer Wheeler in the Medical Department. If a member of the press contacts you, please immediately notify Tom Ford in Public Relations.

P. G. Benignus
N. T. Johnson

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