POST DISPATCH

Calls Alarm Over PCBs Unjustified

WASHINGTON, Sept. 30 (AP) — The commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration has blamed alarmists and unbalanced reporting for what he calls unjustified public alarm over discovery of industrial chemicals called PCBs in food.

"Public confusion has created public alarm and a feeling of still another crisis in the food supply," Dr. Charle C. Edwards told a press conference yesterday. "I know the confusion is unnecessary and I believe the alarm is greater than the facts will justify."

Edwards did not name the alarmists or cite the unbalanced reporting he said had caused the confusion.

The FDA announced Monday that it had discovered PCBs, which have been connected to human skin and liver ailments and birth defects in animals, in seven packaged foods. So far this year, PCBs have forced the destruction or detention of chickens, eggs, turkeys and fish.

Dr. Albert C. Kolbye Jr., deputy director of FDA's bureau of foods, noted that a person would have to eat a half pound of food at the highest level permitted by the agency every day for six months to show ill effects of PCBs.

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