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U.S. to Curb PCBs, Industrial Chemical

United Press International

The Environmental Pro- terday it would curb industri al task force report, said yesterday it would curb industrial discharges of PCBs, a chemical used as a machinery coollant which has caused birth defects in laboratory rats

The task force, representing eight federal agencies, recommended in a 181-page report that PCBs be "restricted to essential or nonreplaceable uses which involve minimal direct human exposure" butadvised against an outright ban.

The EPA said it would curb industrial discharges so that PCB levels in lakes and rivers do not exceed 0.01 parts per billion.

FDA Poropsed Rules

The Food and Drug Administration already has proposed regulations designed to keep PCBs out of food, and to prevent leaks in food plant machinery like the ones that contaminated poultry feed with PCBs four times in the last 18 months. A total of 487,000 chickens and turkeys was withheld from the market because the poulty were fed contaminated feed.

PCBs is an abbreviation for polychorinated biphenyls, a class of chemicals used for 40 years in electrical machinery and in some plastics, petroleum products and carbonless carbon paper.

In laboratory rats, PCBs caused skin and liver ailments and birth defects. In addition, the task force said, the chemical was linked with "adverse effects on certain forms of animal life" which encountered PCB.s in the environment.

Retain Toxicity

Like DDT, which PCBs resemble chemically, the compounds are "persistent," meaning they retain their toxicity for years. "PCBs are widely dispersed throughout the environment and . . . can have adverse ecological and toxicological effects," the task force said. It added here was no evidence that present PCB levels in the environment "constitute a threat to human health."

The task force said Monsanto Co., the only U.S. producer of PCBs, already had acted to limit sales of the chemical. But, noting that the government lacks authority to control imported products containing PCBs, the task force urged congressional passage of legislation that would empower the government to ban or limit imports, production and use of all toxoc substances.

The task force included the EPA, the FDA, the Agriculture Department, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences; the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, and the White House Council on Environmental Quality and the Office of Science and Technology.

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