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Poisonous Compounds Found in Rice Bran Oil

FUKUOKA (Kyodo)—A research group at Kyushu University has extracted a considerable amount of poisonous organic chlorine compounds from rice bran oil which may have caused the recent case of mass poisoning in western Japan, it was revealed Saturday.

A spokesman for the group hinted at the possibility that the organic compounds might have caused the mass poisoning, which has affected more than 10,000 persons in western Japan.

The organic chlorine compounds, amounting to 4,000 to 6,000 PI'M (parts per million), were discovered when Prof. Kaoru Inagami of the Faculty of Agriculture and Prof. Sumisaburo Maki of the Faculty of Medicine jointly analyzed five samples of rice bran oil submitted by patients, he said.

The experts' group was conducting an analysis of fats taken from patients' pimples in an attempt to determine the relationship between the organic compounds and the mass poisoning, he said.

In the United States, the tolerance of the organic compounds is set at one milligram per one cubic meter of air, equivalent to 0.001 ppm, he said.

The skin of a victim of poisoning by organic chlorine becomes darker and "chloric pimples" break out. In a serious case, the patient shows symptoms of jaundice and liver trouble, the spokesman explained.

Similar findings had been revealed by the National Institute of Hygienic Sciences Oct. 27 after it conducted a series of analyses of the rice bran oil produced by the Kanemi Warehouse Co. in Fukuoka, using X-ray and chromatography.

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Rice Bran Oil Plant Inspected by Experts

KITAKYUSHU (Kyodo)—Kyushu University scientists and others Wednesday examined the manufacturing processes in operation at Kanemi Warehouse Co. whose rice bran oil, contaminated with organic chlorine compound, caused widespread poisoning. Results of the check were not made known immediately.

This was the first time an inspection was conducted by technical experts while past checks at the oil manufacturing plant had been made by administrative officials.

The specialists were from the Kitakyushu Municipal Government and Kyushu University, including Prof. Hisashi Shinohara.

They were accompanied by four officers of the Fukuoka prefectural police.

The experts were briefed for one hour and a half on food oil production methods by the plant manager.

One of the deodorizing tanks, suspected of having been contaminated with chlorine, measuring two meters tall and one and half meters in diameter was most thoroughly checked.

A 20-meter pipe in which Kanekuroru, the organic chlorine compound, circulated ran inside the tank. The plant manager said the chlorine had been used as a catalyst.

The bottling and canning processes (the food oil was bottled or canned, depending on the demand of consumers) were also examined and photographed.

Food specialists of Kyushu University and officials of the Fukuoka Prefectural Health Department also attended the inspection as observers.

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