Q. PCBs recently contaminated Ralston Purina animal feed and hundreds of thousands of chickens had to be destroyed. What does Monsanto think of this incident and what are you doing to prevent a reoccurrence of this type?

A. Briefly, here is a summary of this incident. A Ralston Purina subsidiary, National Packing Co. had a fire in 1977 in their warehouse. Damage included rupture of two transformers containing PCB coolant. Fish meal in this warehouse was contaminated with PCB and inadvertently ended up in poultry feed. Since that accident, all contaminated material has been withdrawn from the market or destroyed.

Preventing a reoccurrence is important and the federal EPA has addressed this problem. As of January 1, 1979, all transformers containing PCB coolants must be so labeled. In the event of draining the fluid or with damage caused by a fire a company will in the future be able to identify the type of coolant used. The EPA has detailed regulations for PCB incineration by transformer users. Commercial label companies are already selling the required labels to transformer manufacturers.

(NOTE: Approximately 400,000 chickens and 15,000 eggs a day since March 16, 1978, were destroyed.)

Q. The National Cancer Institute recently reported tests that show PCBs do not cause cancer. What do you think of these test results?

A. While our medical people have not had a chance to review the NCI's just published data, we're not surprised to find PCBs are not carcinogens. Our own preliminary studies of workers in our PCB production units announced in 1976 indicated there was no link with worker safety.

(NOTE: Summary was published in April 21, 1978, Federal Register. Full test results not yet analyzed by Medical.)