Monsanto

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DATE : March 3, 1981

SUBJECT : FEBRUARY MONTHLY REPORT

REFERENCE :

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FILE PCBs

[redacted]

PCB Disposal

Neither commercially approved PCB incinerators -- Rollins Environmental Services, Deer Park, Texas; ENSCO, El Dorado, Arkansas -- has started processing PCB wastes yet. Formal contracts and proposals are still being developed. Monsanto has received no proposals to date, although discussions are progressing through Corporate Purchasing.

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Major Media Coverage -- PCB Incidents

Two major PCB incidents occurred and received extensive media coverage this month. Both incidents occurred in New York State.

1. PCB's in natural gas pipelines - PCB's were identified as a contaminant in natural gas pipelines in Long Island, New York, and subsequently, have been traced as contaminants in many nationwide gas transmission pipelines from California to New York and Canada to Texas.

   The PCB's were most probably residuals from compressor fluids used in the 1950's to early 1970's. A number of factors, including extremely cold weather and high flow (usage) rates, caused the PCB's to condense and concentrate in above-ground gas meters.

   Concentrations in condensate as high as 2,000-5,000 ppm have been found by analysis. Gas analysis from cooking ranges shows levels of a few hundredths of a part per billion.

   Health and regulatory officials have constantly pointed out that there is no health hazard as a result of this contamination.

2. Highrise office building transformer fire - A transformer fire in a state office building in Binghamton, New York, has received a disproportionate share of media coverage.

   Conflicting reports of degree of hazard and contamination have changed back and forth for the past several weeks. The most recent charge by County health officials is that the building is contaminated with chlorinated dibenzofurans and chlorodioxins as a result of the PCB incident. Officials' latest recommendation (2/26/81) was to close the building, dispose of furniture, carpeting, records, etc., "gut" and clean, and decontaminate the building. This over-reaction is estimated to cost millions of dollars and take up to a year.

Los Alamos Study of Garment Permeation by PCB's and Other Chlorinated Hydrocarbons

A study performed at Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory under NIOSH contract has received wide circulation and media attention. The study reportedly measures the effects of Aroclor® 1254 on various protective garments and concludes



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that only one material, Viton, is suitable to protect workers and for only a short time. The author of the paper has since discovered that the "Aroclor 1254" employed was a used transformer fluid containing about 50% of trichlorobenzene. The paper has subsequently been introduced as evidence in the Cal/OSHA hearings.

We have received calls from several certified industrial hygienists as to the reported results asking for clarification. We have discussed the results with Dr. Weeks and he is attempting to recall and correct the paper.

Miscellaneous

Despite a short month, over 150 PCB inquiries were handled. These mostly involved the two New York PCB incidents.

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