PCB US-Agencies Dept. of Ag

- - Delete the so-called "dangerous materials" section, which would extend a Food and Drug Administration monitoring program to all foods in addition to fish.

The Senate leadership asked for and received permission to limit debate on the fish bill to three hours when it comes before the Senate.

A provision of the bill which FDA has interpreted to mean that the agency would have to station inspectors abroad may come under challenge on the floor. Attempts are also expected to try to cover foreign products through a general section which empowers the HEW Secretary to review inspection programs abroad.

The new legislation would give FDA continuous inspection powers for the first time since the Agency was authorized to set up a Seafood Inspection Service in the 30's and 40's, which helped bail the shrimp and oyster industry out of difficulties that had led to lack of consumer confidence at that time.

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USDA SEEKS TO RESTRICT USE OF PCB POULTRY

The Agriculture Department has instructed its inspectors to make certain that poultry with polychlorinated biphenyls higher than 5 p.p.m. in the fatty tissue of the birds does not get into trade channels where this PCB would be concentrated in broths, soups or other processed foods.

The Food and Drug Administration's poultry guideline allows up to 5 p.p.m. in the whole bird. Poultry with 5 p.p.m. in the fat would be well within the guideline if the whole bird is to be used. This sale of the whole bird - - "consumer packed" - - is an allowable use under the USDA instructions to its inspectors where 5 p.p.m. in the fat is found.

However, if the bird is to be subjected to further processing, it must undergo salvage procedures in which the fat, bone and skin are trimmed from the flesh. PCBs tend to concentrate in fatty tissue. Thus, trim of the fat effectively removes PCBs from the poultry. USDA instructed its inspectors:

> "When consumer-packed birds are received in a further processing plant for use other than resale as a unit, the plant shall be required to present evidence that these birds have 5 p.p.m. or less of PCBs in the fat. Otherwise, such birds must be retained and processed under salvage procedures."

Swift & Co. recently was forced by news media and public pressure to forego salvage procedures for some 50,000 turkeys contaminated by PCBs (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, Nov. 8, Page 2). PCB-contaminated poultry from an incident in January in New York State still are being processed through salvage operations (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, Feb. 1, Page 2).

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USDA last week certified the Rhode Island poultry inspection system as "equal to" federal inspection, bringing to 34 the number of States whose poultry programs have been certified, with 16 states having intrastate plants subject to federal inspection.

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