Message

From: HELSCHER, THOMAS M [AG/1000] [/O=MONSANTO/OU=NA-1000-01/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=133984]
Sent: 5/7/2010 5:08:25 PM
To: PEIRCE, BOB [AG/1000] [bob.peirce@monsanto.com]
Subject: RE: AO and PCBs

To me, the phrase developed by the US govt suggests they invented it versus specified a formulation of existing herbicides

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From: PEIRCE, BOB [AG/1000]
Sent: Friday, May 07, 2010 12:06 PM
To: HELSCHER, THOMAS M [AG/1000]
Subject: FW: AO and PCBs

Here's what we say:

Agent Orange was a 50-50 mix of two common herbicides, 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T, which had been used domestically since the late 1940s without incident by U.S. farmers, railroads and others. Since the Vietnam War, both scientific and public concern has arisen over the dioxin compound 2,3,7,8-TCDD, a byproduct of the manufacturing process used to produce 2,4,5-T (which, again, was one of the herbicides in Agent Orange.) TCDD was present in trace amounts. Research on the issue of Agent Orange has gone on for decades and continues today.

From: PEIRCE, BOB [AG/1000]
Sent: Friday, May 07, 2010 12:02 PM
To: HELSCHER, THOMAS M [AG/1000]
Subject: RE: AO and PCBs

The government specified that mixture of the two chemicals, after testing several combinations of chemicals. It also prescribed the concentration. The two chemicals were commonly used in agriculture, although not together and in the combination specified by the military.

From: HELSCHER, THOMAS M [AG/1000]
Sent: Friday, May 07, 2010 11:54 AM
To: PEIRCE, BOB [AG/1000]
Subject: RE: AO and PCBs

Is "developed by the federal government" correct? I thought AO was a mixture of two existing herbicides – 2-4 D and 2-4-5 T – at least one of which MON made and sold prior to the AO era. T

From: PEIRCE, BOB [AG/1000]
Sent: Friday, May 07, 2010 11:46 AM
To: HELSCHER, THOMAS M [AG/1000]
Subject: AO and PCBs

If question is: How can we trust a company that made Agent Orange:
(bob version)

"That issue was more than 40 years ago. It involved a military herbicide developed by the federal government that we and a number of other companies manufactured at the request of the government.

Today, we are an agricultural company that makes seeds and other products needed to make agriculture safer and more productive. We are exclusively involved in bringing technology to agriculture that will be necessary to double food production by 2030, and to do it in a way that requires fewer resources and protects the environment."

If the question is: How can we trust a company that made Agent Orange and contaminated an entire town in Alabama with PCB's?

"Those issues were from more than 40 years ago. One involved a military herbicide developed by the federal government that we and a number of other companies manufactured at the request of the government. In the case of PCB's, these environmental issues occurred many decades ago before current standards were in place. We accepted responsibility for addressing the contamination issues

We are now a agricultural company that makes seeds and other products that make agriculture safer and more productive."

Helscher version:

"Monsanto was founded over 100 years ago. We know more today about many things – environmental protection is a good example – than people knew 25 or 50 years ago. We are taking steps to address issues related to our past and we have not walked away from the past. Biotech crops are safe for humans and the environment. That's not just Monsanto's view. That's the overwhelming conclusion of scientific experts and regulatory agencies around the world."

Follow up: we can disagree on whether we're doing enough on any particular issue – I'm not going to debate that.

In the other cases involving PCB's,