

FIVE RAIL SYSTEMS SAY THEY CANNOT MEET JAN. 1 PCB DEADLINE

Five railroad systems have informed EPA that they cannot meet a Jan. 1, 1982 deadline for reducing the concentrations of polychlorinated biphenyls in their transformers to less than six percent.

The one system which said it could was Conrail.

EPA officials met Aug. 17 with representatives of the New York, Connecticut and New Jersey departments of transportation, Conrail, Amtrak and SEPTA. They requested that the PCB deadline be extended to Oct. 1, 1983.

Hudson River Dredging Project Advances

In another PCB development, New York state and EPA's Region II announced a supplemental Environmental Impact Statement Friday on the proposed \$26 million project to dredge some of the PCB "hotspots" in the Hudson river. The supplemental EIS addresses the security procedures for containing PCB-contaminated soils in landfills. Specific sites to be dredged have not been identified.

URL 05151

TODHUNTER SAYS CANCER RISK OF EDB FOR FRUIT FLY EQUALS 1-70 CIGARETTES IN LIFE

The estimated cancer risk from use of ethylene dibromide (EDB) for one year to fumigate citrus from areas in California infested with Mediterranean fruit fly is about equal to smoking between one and 70 cigarettes over a lifetime, Dr. John Todhunter, EPA's Assistant Administrator-designee for Pesticides and Toxic Substances, said this week in correcting his earlier statement that the risk of the one time use of the pesticide was 100 times less than the risk of smoking one cigarette in a lifetime (See Aug. 26, Page 19).

He noted that EDB was not yet being used in California because the fumigation chambers had not been adjusted to hold the necessary pressure.

Dr. Todhunter said the agency's position on EDB had not changed from that of the previous Administration.

The likely use of the pesticide in California would probably extend over two years, he indicated.

Dr. Todhunter said the EDB cancer risk which equated to one to 70 cigarettes over a lifetime was based on exposure to fruit held between 4 and 8 days after fumigation.

The agency does not know the risk for EDB-fumigated fruit held one or two days after fumigation because EDB residue levels in such fruit have not been determined, he said.

EPA, in a "note to correspondents" about EDB, observed that "if the fumigated fruit is allowed to stand in storage or in transit for a sufficient time, (4 to 8 days usually,) the risk is minimal."

In an EDB document prepared for use in responding to press inquiries, the agency said, "First, the proposed use is a currently registered use and one which EPA's Science Advisory Panel has recommended be retained." EPA's document continued:

"Second, in calculating the level of risk for the RPAR position the agency staff has used a process which gives a 95% chance that the real risk is substantially below that given in the RPAR documents.

"Third, in re-calculating the probable risk from the one year exposure expected to result from fumigation against the Med-fly, the agency's staff started with a risk level appropriate to a 70-year continuous lifetime exposure. In preliminary calculations, the staff used a linear correction for exposure time. This is an incorrect procedure. To correct for time effects there are several ways of treating the problem mathematically, none of them are linearly dependent on time. All predict at least some form of exponential decay of risk levels as exposure time is reduced ...

"Revised estimates by senior EPA scientists suggest that the risk involved with the use of EDB in the California fumigation program is indeed negligible. This is, again, by comparison to a risk level over a lifetime of exposure which the FIFRA Scientific Advisory Panel recommends is not sufficient reason to alter the registration status of EDB as a citrus fumigant.

"All these considerations lead to the conclusion that EDB use in California (to) protect against Med-fly contamination of citrus fruit exports, will not pose any danger to the public which eats that fruit."

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NRC COMMITTEE URGES INDEFINITE DELAY OF 2 USDA COTTON BOLL WEEVIL PROGRAMS

A National Research Council (NRC) committee has recommended an indefinite postponement of USDA's boll weevil eradication (BWE) and optimum pest management (OPM) programs and that IPM practices "be the thrust of boll weevil and other cotton pest programs for the next several years."

The recommendation was in a report, "Cotton Boll Weevil: An Evaluation of USDA Programs," Committee on Cotton Insect Management, Board on Agriculture and Renewable Resources, Commission on Natural Resources, NRC. Committee conclusions included:

-- "The NRC Committee believes that a BWE or OPM program would increase pesticide concentrations initially by adding substantial amounts of insecticides (five or more additional applications per season) to the 10 to 12 applications per season now made in some areas. The duration of this intensive application period in any given area cannot be predicted ... At least 16 different insecticides have been employed in the OPM and BWE trials. The environmental effects of some of these insecticides over extended areas and extended period of time are little known.

-- "Several important pesticide concentration rates, and the beltwide environmental impacts of the insecticide applications proposed in the USDA's OPM and BWE programs, have not been estimated adequately. Areas of particular concern are: (1) the effects of