EAU CLAIRE, WIS.
LEADER TELEGRAM
D. 22,500

MAY 2 3 1975

Ruling slows Pepin fishing industry

PEPIN — The Federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has ordered that carp taken from Lake Pepin cannot be shipped interstate because they contain potentially dangerous levels of an industrial chemical known as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB).

Carp is the main commercial fish on Lake Pepin, a wide spot in the Mississippi River between Red Wing, Minn. and Alma, Wis. To date, a Pepin fish wholesaler has been forced to bury some 60,000 lbs. of carp he was unable to sell because of the ruling.

The order also has brought all forms of commercial fishing on the lake to a virtual standstill.

Fish biologists are uncertain about what impact this or PCB might have on the lake's rough fish and game fish populations. They are hampered by a lack of staff and acknowledge that the lake and much of the river are not being managed to fullest potential.

Sportfishermen and resort owners on the lake are aroused and concerned. Federal, state and local government officials are beginning to react, too. Whether both states and their agencies can pull together remains to be seen.

The entire situation looms as a threat to the lake's fishery and hundreds of jobs for residents in both states.

At this point no one knows for sure what will or can be done to attack the main problem — PCBs settling in Lake Pepin and their source.

Those battle lines have not yet formed.

MONS 030974