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FDA admits contaminated eggs eaten

Washington (AP)

A month after discovering a persistent poison was leaking into fish meal destined for chicken, pig and catfish feed, the government has acknowledged an unknown quantity of contaminated eggs has been eaten by consumers.

Food and Drug Administration spokesmen say the level at which the eggs were contaminated by the DDT-like chemical — although illegal — is so low there is no health hazard. Ralph Nader says it is a hazard.

"The FDA judges the current problem with eggs to be one of undesirable food adulteration not associated with any health hazard," said an FDA spokesman Wednesday. Earlier, a Washington egg distributor said he had no idea 5,000 dozen eggs he received were contaminated and the eggs slipped through the agency's enforcement net a week and a half ago.

The eggs were tainted with PCBs, or polychorinated bihenyls, a family of compounds implicated in skin disease, liver damage and birth defects in Japan in 1968 when people spent a month or more eating rice oil laced with PCB's at a level of 200 parts per million.

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