

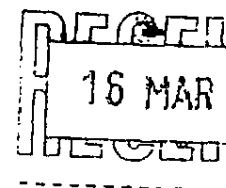
Dr R. Hinden

HMC



Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

Ergon House, c/o Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR
Telephone: 01-238 3000 Direct Line: 01-238- 6374 GTN: 238
Telex: 21271 Fax: ext. 6591 or 6382/6338



To Interested Industry
Parties

11 March 1992

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to draw your attention to a variation in the list of further studies of plasticisers requested from the plastics industry by the Government's independent Committee on Toxicity of Chemicals in Food, Consumer Products and the Environment (COT). The purpose of this letter is also to seek submission as soon as possible of the data that remains outstanding.

You will recall that, following detailed monitoring of the migration of plasticisers in food contact materials, the plastics industry was asked to carry out certain further studies in areas where the toxicological data had been found to be inadequate. These were:

- for DEHA, a dominant lethal mutagenicity study using intraperitoneal administration of DEHA;
- for ATBC, studies on metabolism, sub-acute toxicity and reproductive toxicity;
- for Polymeric plasticisers, data on the presence of lower molecular weight monomeric and oligomeric species and on the absorption, metabolism, excretion and potential for tissue accumulation of representative polymeric plasticisers. Assays of gene mutation in bacterial and mammalian systems and for chromosomal damage in mammalian cells were also required;

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- for ESBO, gene mutation studies in bacterial and mammalian systems and assays for chromosomal damage in mammalian cells as well as data on teratogenicity and fertility.

These requirements were clearly set out and published in the 30th Report on the Steering Group of Food Surveillance which has the task of monitoring the chemical safety of the UK food supply on a continuous basis. The requirements have also been made clear to the plastics industry in meetings with Ministers and Government officials.

I now write to advise you that, in the light of a re-assessment of the data on DEHA, the COT has been able to establish a Tolerable Daily Intake (TDI) in the case of this one substance. This has been set at 0-0.3mg/kg bw/day. The further data stipulated in the case of this particular substance is, therefore, no longer required. In setting this one TDI, the COT has again drawn attention to their concern that substances proposed for use in food packaging materials which are likely to give rise to an appreciable intake should not be used until appropriate toxicological testing and evaluation have been carried out.

The Food Advisory Committee has endorsed the action taken by the COT and has confirmed that, in the absence of the outstanding data on the other plasticisers used in conjunction with DEHA, the setting of this one TDI does not justify any change in the advice previously issued to retailers and to consumers that, as a precautionary measure, certain uses of cling film should be avoided while the additional work is carried out.

I look forward to receiving confirmation from you that the remaining studies will be completed as quickly as possible and the data submitted, as requested, to the Secretariat of the COT.

Yours faithfully



R McKinley

HEAD, Chemical Safety of Food

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BRITISH PLASTICS FEDERATION
BRITISH CHEMICAL DISTRIBUTORS & TRADERS ASSOCIATION
CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION
FLEXIBLE PACKAGING ASSOCIATION
PACKAGING AND INDUSTRIAL FILMS ASSOCIATION
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PRW

PLASTICS & RUBBER WEEKLY

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Sepru is a leading French manufacturer of CNC robots, which are extensively used by French plastics processors. Alan Smith visited Sepru, examined the robots and the way processors in France use them to enhance production levels.....9

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No. 1431

Phillips to continue backing PPS in Europe

Phillips Petroleum has announced it is to continue the company's commitment to the polypropylene sulphide business in Europe. This follows the decision by Bayer in March to close its Tedur plant at Antwerp.

Several companies have expressed a strong interest in our PPS business; however, these companies did not place as high a value on the business as we do,' according to J VanBuskirk, senior vice-president of Plastics Worldwide. As a result Phillips will continue to manufacture, market and support the Ryton product line.

Phillips Petroleum customers can be assured of a reliable and long term supply of Ryton PPS. The company offers three types of PPS — the cross-linked, the linear and the modified type. All three grades can be used cost effectively in injection moulding, extrusion, blow moulding, film and fibres. The company produces Ryton from a plant in Texas which was previously up for sale.

Following the closure of Bayer's Antwerp plant (PRW March 26, 1992) it was certain that Phillips would reconsider the decision to sell the Borger plant. That has now been confirmed.

Currently Phillips has a market share of around 60% for PPS in Europe, but this is likely to be increased considerably following the Bayer decision. Bayer is thought to have had a marketshare of around 20-25%. The other chemical companies in the field are Solvay, Ciba-Geigy, GE Plastics and Hoechst — all of which could end up with a part share of the PPS business left by Bayer's withdrawal.

There is over-capacity of PPS production in the world at the present time, so Phillips is unlikely to want to build a PPS polymerisation plant in Europe, especially with the environmental problems that always surround these plants. If Texas has the capacity it is best produced there, especially as the company has compounding facilities in both Belgium and Germany which will continue to handle the Texas produced PPS product for Europe.

MAFF accepts DEHA case but sets problems

by John Whitehead and Simon Robinson

The Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food has backed down on its demand for more information on the effects of DEHA plasticiser use in cling film.

In a letter circulated last month, MAFF acknowledges that further studies are not required, thereby endorsing the stance taken by the industry five years ago, which is in line with European standards.

But while withdrawing its caveat on DEHA, MAFF has drawn attention to the need for further data on other substances used in cling film, namely epoxidised soybean oil and polymeric plasticisers. MAFF's move has incensed

the PVC film making industry both by accepting that its earlier recommendations were in fact sound and also by appearing to pick on the other additives.

The provision of other data will cost us a lot of money, we are being unfairly picked on', says Filmo technical manager Roger Dunlavy. Borden Packaging Group Europe technical director Rick Eaton comments on the DEHA issue: 'MAFF has been forced to admit that they have got it wrong. And he complains: 'No matter what data we provide, they always want more.'

Up to now both ESO and polymeric plasticisers, which are used to augment the DEHA component, have enjoyed a clean bill of health. ESO, for example, is on the list of Euro-

pean-approved additives for food contact. And polymeric plasticisers have been cleared in draft EEC regulations based on approval of their monomeric content.

David Cadogan, ICI technical service manager on plasticisers and a senior figure on Cefic's plasticisers committee in Brussels told PRW: 'All the evidence is that these materials are completely benign. They have been completely clear in the past but there seems to be a fetish in looking at every last detail.'

MAFF's letter, circulated to 'interested parties' says that the tolerable daily intake (TDI) on DEHA has been set at 0.3mg/kg bodyweight per day. This level, equivalent to a maximum daily figure of 18 mg, had been accepted by

Europe's Scientific Committee on Foodstuffs. It is also well above the figure of 3mg/day shown to be the realistic upper limit by recently conducted industry research.

But even with MAFF's doubts over DEHA removed, the authorities may be putting a further obstacle in the way of permitted use. This is because the required test methods and protocol based on olive oil at 40°C give migration results which are interpreted as intakes many times higher than those actually found in foodstuffs by both MAFF and industrial research. This problem may well prove to have wider implications for the plastics industry.

And the call for further research on the other components of the film, which typically account for some 15% of total plasticiser use in cling film, may well fall foul of the growing reluctance to carry out animal testing. 'The Animal Procedures Committee is looking more and more sceptically at work requiring data based on animal testing,' Cadogan warns.

Wavin acquires Von Roll

Wavin, the Dutch plastics products manufacturer, has just acquired the plastic and fittings business of the Swiss engineering group Von Roll.

The range of equipment from Von Roll will complement the Wavin Group's current range but will provide two manufacturing bases in Switzerland and one in Italy where Wavin is not currently present. There is also another manufacturing plant in Germany, as well as sales organisations in Italy, The Netherlands and Belgium.

Von Roll is involved in production of PE pressure systems for gas and water applications, PE pipe systems for sewer and domestic waste discharge, PP waste systems for domestic applications and other products such as compounds, cable ducts and insulation.

Last year Wavin had a turnover of Dutch Guilders 1.87 billion (£530 million), with profits of around NLG 74 million which was slightly down on 1990 profits, but still a great effort where so much of the turnover is derived from the recession-hit construction industry.

But it is the future which looks so bright for the Group because of investments made in acquisitions and expansion into other parts of Europe. It is noticeable that the geographic

expansions in both Southern and Eastern Europe had a positive effect on the consolidated accounts during the period when the core element in the Wavin business, the construction industry, was suffering unduly from the effects of the recession in Britain, Germany,

France and Benelux.

'As well as giving us access to important markets in Switzerland, Italy, Germany and France, we will benefit from the range of fittings manufactured and marketed by Von Roll,' claims Alfons Deleessen, Wavin's president.



London Arid Plastics is producing half litre bottles in two different blues for a variety of motoring products for Jet. The bottles are blown from high density polyethylene and reflect the company's recent expansion of its blow moulding capacity and entry into higher volume packaging markets.

This follows the take over of part of Lettergold last Spring when LAP acquired two twin-headed blow-moulding machines. The larger is a Moretti 145000 - the second machine is an Autons 300M both able to blow bottles up to 2 litres capacity at a production rate of approximately 600 per hour.

Prior acquiring the new machines LAP concentrated on engineering quality, specialised blow mouldings for the automotive industry and similar applications. Now the company is manufacturing the half litre bottles in a matching blue to complement the Jetmax range of retail oil packs. Three grades are available within the range.

Will comrade Robin hog the road?

The apparently immortal Reliant Robin three-wheeler, which is the butt of many jokes by Jasper Carrott and other comics, may soon have GRP body panels produced in Russia.

When the Reliant Car Company collapsed into receivership last year, a Russian consortium, Autokam, mounted an unsuccessful bid to buy the firm. It was eventually acquired in August by Tipton, West Midlands, motor components group Beans Engineering, which since last October has been discussing the possibility of Autokam moulding GRP body panels for the Robin.

Beans' production plans at present only call for 32 Robins per week. The labour content is comparatively high and Autokam is looking into the possibility of also manufacturing other components such as electrical switches, batteries and wheels, which they hope to produce more economically because of lower labour costs in Russia.

Beans hopes to see sample products shortly but stresses that any agreement will depend on Autokam achieving satisfactory quality.



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