

(If pushed on dioxin vs. OCP as the toxic agent)

We do know that TCDD, the production impurity found in this load of OCP, while highly toxic to man was found in quantities so small that we can just barely measure it. We found 0.037 ppm in our OCP. Another way of stating that is the total load of OCP weighed about 207,000 pounds. The trace contamination of TCDD in that load was 1/8 of 1 ounce, and spread evenly throughout the tank car contents. We feel confident that the TCDD has had absolutely nothing to do with the animal, fish losses in Sturgeon and the TCDD impurity presented no hazard to the citizens.

Q2 Have other tank cars of OCP shipped since this accident been contaminated with TCDD?

A2 Very shortly after the TCDD was discovered we started to analyze the production unit where the OCP and its chemical intermediates are made. If TCDD is found elsewhere, it would be a production impurity which we would try to eliminate. We are looking at all levels of the production unit and as part of that complicated process, we are studying other batches of OCP. We'll probably know in mid-April where the problem is in the unit.

Q3 How long will the OCP be a hazard in Sturgeon?

A3 Fortunately, OCP rapidly biodegrades. Under laboratory conditions the product in water goes from 300 ppm to essentially zero in from two days to two weeks, depending on conditions. We'd expect any OCP that is in a body of water to degrade completely in two weeks. The reason OCP is still around in the water now is evidently because it was frozen and hence, didn't have the opportunity to biodegrade.

Q4 If OCP is killing fishes, frogs, how do we know it isn't poisoning humans?

A4 OCP is detectable in taste and smell at extremely low levels. For example, you can taste OCP in water at .001 ppm. The LD₅₀ in animals is 67 ppm. So you can see our taste is a safety factor against any contamination of ground water. You get a strong medicinal taste (hospital room/mothball smell or taste) at 1/1000 of the LD₅₀ level.