FILE NAME: Union Carbide (UC)

DATE: 1972

DOC#: UC135

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: Letter from Degussa to Customers RE Termination of Distribution of Asbestos Thickening Agents

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TRANSLATION

Obtained from
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1/27/72

Letter Degussa to Customers

Asbestos Thickening Agents A 14 and A 28
Termination of Distribution by December 31, 1971

Dear Sirs,

For quite some time you belong to our circle of customers buying asbestos thickening agents and you certainly appreciate the advantages of these products.

In spite of the technical success we have decided to terminate the sale of asbestos thickening agents by December 31, 1971.

The main reason for our decision is our doubt regarding possible secondary health hazards. It was known before that inhaling asbestos fibres may cause asbestosis. This could be prevented by observing the prescribed precautions. Recent statistics, however, have shown that it is not impossible to develop lung-cancer despite complying to the safety rules.

Therefore, we feel obliged to withdraw our asbestos fibre products from the market, although not all offerers share our doubts.

We very much regret to have to confront you with the problem of changing those formulations which included A 14 and A 28. As a substitute we recommend our Aerosil types, although these do not possess all properties which are necessary to fully replace A 14 and A 28 for all applications.

Our sales force and technical service group will advise and assist you in reworking your formulations.

In case you cannot do without A 14 and A 28 despite of our objections, we are prepared to handle all orders arriving till December 31, 1971 on your own risk.

We hope that you will understand our decision.

Sincerely yours,

D E G U S S A

TRANSLATION

(Article from "defazet" January 1972)

[Deutsche Farbezeitung]

Obituary on An Irreplaceable Product

Another raw material producer became the victim of the hysteria on health hazards and this time it is a material which is nearly irreplaceable due to its exceptional properties: a special upgraded asbestos. The fibrous particles of this material are of a length up to 10 micron with an exceptionally small diameter of only 0.02 to 0.03 micron. Degussa, who have developed this material offer it as a thickening age under the name of A-28 and A-14 (longer and stronger fibre tufts). Many producers utilized the advantageous properties, f.i. in sealing compounds, artificial stone coatings, Plastisols, epoxy systems and many other applications. Beside the extraordinary thickening effect, this material has also other advantages such as high chemical resistance, no moisture pick-up, insolubility in all systems, defined particle size, easy incorporation, all-round utilization independent of polarity of the system and stability of standardized thickening ranges.

This material is said to develop cancer.

Certainly, it cannot be excluded with certainty that somebody working a long time only with this material may get a cancer one day, but an indisputable proof that this illness can be traced back to the influence of a special asbestos product is nearly impossible. In case the person is a smoker, the proof is absolutely impossi Cancer may also be developed by street dust or any other pollution, as these mater contain also particles of different shape and size the effect of which we do not k exactly.

You can see that this is only fantasy which is not understandable in this scientif age.

The question for a substitute of A-28 and A-14 cannot be answered. Similar effects will be tried by reworking the formulations.

Which will be the next product to disappear from the raw material market?

At present one is eagerly digging in dust-heaps.

HLM/km
January 12, 1972