March 18, 1971

POLYCHLORINATED BIPHENYL

HISTORICAL OUTLINE

1929 -- Monsanto Company began production of PCB. Primary use for 30 years in electrical applications.

1960 -- Monsanto publishes technical bulletin suggesting other uses in sealants, chlorinated rubber, adhesives, insecticides, printing ink, etc. Expansion into many of these markets never materialized to a significant degree. Large-volume use remained electrical equipment -- or "closed systems."

1966 -- Swedish scientists find PCB in the environment.

1967 -- Swedish scientists publish their work.

Late '67 - Early '68 -- Monsanto studies Swedish research work.

1968 -- Monsanto begins six-point program. First steps include identification and measurement of PCB in environment to determine extent of potential problem.

Methodology

1969 (Feb.) San Francisco Chronicle publishes lay report of Dr. Robert Risebrough's research work on bay area birds.

1969 (May) DDT hearings in Wisconsin. Risebrough says he was misquoted in some newspaper reports which said "PCBs were more dangerous than DDT."

1969 -- Monsanto's program continues. Manager appointed to head up the company's PCB environmental program.

1970 (Jan./Feb.) Environment magazine publishes "More Letters in the Wind" by Dr. Risebrough and Virginia Brodine.

1970 (April) Congressman William F. Ryan called a New York press conference to criticize the government and Monsanto for poor handling of the PCB problem. He called for a ban on the product.

Monsanto replied emphasizing the positive program under way for two years and steps to be taken to control future use and escape of the product.

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1970 (June) Ryan again criticizes the government and Monsanto -- "Accused of Lagging on PCB."

1970 (July) Monsanto issues status report on its PCB environmental program. Counters criticism that nothing is being done and emphasizes need for the product.

1970 (Aug.) Monsanto discontinues sales of PCB into "open systems." Introduces alternate products for some applications. Sales continue to "closed systems."

1970 (Last half of year) News reports begin to carry Monsanto's program. Occasional praises for responsible action taken.

1971 -- Monsanto's program continues. Events under way: Biodegradable studies; research to locate substitute products; long-term feeding studies; customer contacts to emphasize proper handling and disposal; further improvements in manufacturing processes; disposal incinerator on-stream by mid-year.

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