Foods Analyzed by FDA for PCB

November 1969 - Thru June 1971

Since November 1969, the FDA has analyzed all raw agricultural commodities sampled in the pesticide program for PCB's. More than 15,000 samples have been collected and analyzed for PCB's in this program. As of June 1971, a total of 479 samples of raw agricultural commodities have been reported to contain PCB's; 200 of these samples were follow-up samples of suspected lots because of previous analyses. See tables 1 and 2. PCB's were encountered most frequently in fish in approximately 300 of the 479 samples;

The FDA total diet studies for 60 market baskets representing a total of 720 composite samples during FY-70 and FY-71 show 22 composite samples to contain PCB residues ranging from a trace to 0.36 p.p.m. Seventeen of these samples represented the meat, fish, and poultry composite. Other positive findings were in the dairy and the grain and cereal composites. Table 4 (last three items) shows the amount of PCB's in individual items of the total diet and indicates the source in three cases to be the packaging material.

We have also analyzed a number of other paperboard packaging materials and the food packaged in such materials. See tables 3 and 4.

You will note in examining these tables of PCB data that no PCB's have been found in fresh fruits or vegetables. This is indeed significant because thousands of samples have been analyzed. However, PCB's have been found in a feed by-product from potato processing plants (source of the PCB's could not be identified).

During the past year, there has been a series of accidents related to fishmeal and other animal feeds, which have resulted in the contamination of food. As of August 30, 1971, 166 samples of eggs had been analyzed as a part of the follow-up investigation of the Wilmington East Coast Terminal fish meal accident. Fifty-five of these contained PCB's in excess of the action level of 0.5 p.p.m. Seizures aggregating about 75,000 eggs have been made. The FDA also seized one shipment of the fish meal and five shipments of a catfish and trout chow manufactured from the contaminated meal. It was then agreed the responsible firms would recall the fishmeal and the fish feed.

The U.S.D.A. has examined the poultry involved in that incident and our two agencies have coordinated their efforts to protect the consumer.