Monsanto

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Letter to the Editor

The Miami Herald
1 Herald Plaza
Miami, Florida 33101

Dear Sir:

Richard Pothier's July 9 article on PCB, a "DDT-Like poison" carries several inaccuracies. It states, for example, that the manufacturer, Monsanto Company, is organizing "at federal request" a campaign to reduce leaks of the chemical. This was not at government request. It was started in 1968 when we first discovered PCB might be a problem to the environment and long before many scientists or politicians knew of the issue.

Another inaccuracy in the story was reference to a major PCB fish kill in Alabama last year. There have been no major fish kills in the area of our Alabama plant since 1966, when heavy rains caused damage to our plant. Investigations showed that kill was not caused by PCB.

PCB is not a poison as the headline implied, but we are withdrawing it from sale where it is not used within a closed system. Although recommended in a 1960 catalogue as a possible ingredient in plastic bags, PCB has never been used in such applications.

Scientific instruments capable of detecting small amounts of chemicals have not been available too long. But more to the point, no one bothered to use them to examine organisms in the food chain until a couple of years ago. Since that time, Monsanto as a responsible company, has taken the initiative in solving the problem without pressure from government or organized groups. PCB cannot simply be taken out of service since it is used in nearly all electrical transformers and to do so would result in major power failures throughout the world.

Sincerely,

James E. McKee Jr.
Assistant Director of
Public Relations

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