PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

PRESS QUERY

( ) Divisional
( ) Financial
(x) Corporate

Date: Oct. 28, 1970
Time: 1:30 p.m.

QUERIED BY (Reporter and Media)

Jim Babcock, Dayton Journal Herald

To:
(X) St. Louis Bulletin Boards
(X) New York Public Relations
( ) West Coast Public Relation
(X) Lloyd R. Cole
(X) Brussels Public Relations
(X) John Mason
(X) William B. Papageorge
(X) James E. Springgate
(X) Howard S. Bergen
(X) Elmer P. Wheeler
(X) P. J. A. Marsh - BRUSSELS
(X) John J. Spano
(X) Phocion S. Park

Mr. Babcock is doing an article on a local PCB problem. I asked him to fill me in on the details of the local problem and he supplied the following information

In February, some local farmers found Aroclor 1254 in their silage and in cow's milk. The silos had been painted by Michigan Silo Co. Since the tolerance for PCB in milk is .2 parts per million, the State of Ohio took action to remove the milk from the market. Since then farmers in the area have experienced other bad luck. For example, cows and calves dying mysteriously. Some cows were having difficulty reproducing. One farmer's son broke his leg and the wound from the break would not heal. Doctors were puzzled and found the boy had an enlarged liver. All of these circumstances have prompted the farmers to generalize that their problems are caused by PCB.

Q: Can you tell me what PCB is, how it is used and some background of this environmental problem?

A: (At this point I went into a discussion of background material which we have given to other news media in the country via press queries and news releases. I explained the history of PCB, early discoveries of PCB in the environment, Monsanto's plan to control PCB, uses of PCB, etc.)

Q: How could PCB be getting into the environment?

A: There are several ways. For example, through deterioration of sealants, adhesives or specialty paints or even through some manufacturing processes which in early days were not as strictly controlled as they are today. Again, let me emphasize that the open-system uses have been the smaller segment of this market The major volume uses have always been in electrical applications.

-more-

--2 Monsanto: Press Query from Dayton Journal Herald xxx applications.

Q: How could PCBs have gotten into the paint that's used in silos?

A: First, let me emphasize that we never recommended PCB for this use. It could be that we have sold PCB to paint manufacturers who in turn were using it for silo paint or, via a distributor, it could have found it's way into silo pai

Q: If PCB has primarily been used in closed systems why would Monsanto discontir to sell it for other uses? Were you afraid it might be harmful to humans?

A: Our action was based on evidence that PCB is a persistent chemical which builds up in the environment.

Q: State of Ohio officials say that PCB can build up in the liver and kidneys and in fatty tissue, but to their knowledge it doesn't harm humans. The farmer' son had been drinking raw milk containing PCB. Could this have caused the problem?

A: We agree with Ohio officials that humans exposed to PCB via the environment would not attain levels at which it could be harmful.

Q: What if the cattle continued to take in feed containing PCB? Would it not build up into higher levels being passed on through the food chain?

A: This is a question still being decided. I am sure you are familiar with the current discussions relative to DDT in the food chain.

Q: Has Monsanto any evidence that PCBs could affect humans?

A: There is no evidence that, in an environmental exposure, PCB could harm humans. There was an incident in the late '30s where workers in a factory were accidentally exposed to excessive levels. The result was damage to their liver.

Q: Could the cow's inability to reproduce have been associated with PCB in thei diet?

A: No, we have not seen any evidence of this in cattle. This is not an uncommc phenomenon in cattle and there are several other reasons for this problem.

Q: Are you working with Ohio State officials on the problem of PCB being found in milk?

A: Yes, we have had contacts in the past. None in recent months, however.

-3 Monsanto: Press Query from Dayton Journal Herald xxx however.

Q: In summary then, Monsanto does recognize the possible hazard of PCB in the environment?

A: Monsanto recognized the problem early and took action to do something about it by controlling the uses of PCB.

Q: Will you continue to sell it for electrical uses?

A: Yes.

SOURCE:

Elmer Wheeler and Files

STAFFER:

E. V. John