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Monsanto Halting PCB Manufacturing

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Monsanto Industrial Chemicals Co. will halt production of PCB insulating fluids next year because of the public's fear of adverse effects from the chemical.

Monsanto will withdraw completely from the market no later than Oct. 31, 1977, said Earle H. Harrison Jr., general manager of the firm's specialty chemicals division.

Harrison said Tuesday the target date would have been sooner, but electrical transformer and capacitor manufacturers have said they would be unable to convert to other materials any earlier.

Monsanto is the only manufacturer of PCB (polychlorinated biphenyl), a stable, fire-resistant chemical.

The Environmental Protection Agency has found that PCBs build up in the environment and are thought to cause reproductive failures, gastric disorders and skin lesions in mammals.

About 300 million pounds of the virtually indestructible chemical have been dumped into landfills, leaked into water supplies and allowed to slip into production sites, the EPA contends.

EPA Administrator Russell E. Train praised Monsanto's decision, terming it "a significant step in dealing with the total problem of PCB contamination."

But he noted that PCBs already in the environment "will be there for years, moving into life systems, including humans. The problems still need to be addressed vigorously by government and industry."

PCB has been blamed as a major source of pollution in New York's Hudson River.

New York State officials and the General Electric Co. recently reached agreement for GE to contribute \$8 million toward the cost of cleaning PCBs from the Hudson.

The accumulation of PCBs in waterways, Harrison said, triggered the firm's decision to cease production as soon as the electrical industry could find alternate fluids and convert its equipment and components to their use.

Monsanto had earlier quit making PCBs for use in carbonless copy paper, fire resistant hydraulic fluids, heat transfer fluid and plasticizers.

The chemical is manufactured at a Monsanto plant in St. Louis, Ill. Twenty jobs will be eliminated by the decision to withdraw from the PCB market, but a company spokesman said employees working in those positions would be shifted to other work at the plant.

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Monsanto Co. to halt PCB production in 1977

ST. LOUIS (UPI) — Monsanto Co., the nation's leading supplier of polychlorinated biphenyl, used as an electric insulator, said Tuesday it would stop production of the chemical by Oct. 31, 1977, because of possible hazardous effects on humans.

Monsanto said the phasing out of production over the next year would give time for manufacturers to find substitute materials for PCB. Substitutes developed by the electrical industry are being tested, although they may not prove as effective in resisting fire as PCB.

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Monsanto Co. to stop production of PCBs

ST. LOUIS (UPI) — Monsanto Co., a producer of polychlorinated biphenyl for decades and the chief U.S. supplier of the chemical, said today it would withdraw completely from domestic production of PCBs by Oct. 31, 1977.

The halt will cause shifts to substitute materials for PCBs which have been used since about 1890 as electric insulating and fire resistant fluids but in recent years have been found to collect in the environment with potential hazardous effects for humans.

Monsanto announced last January it planned to withdraw from PCB production but a definite date was not set. The company said it would wait until firms in the electrical industry using PCBs could gear up to use substitutes in products such as capacitors

and transformers. Monsanto said conversion timetables now drawn up by the electrical industry would permit the late 1977 withdrawal of PCBs.

A Monsanto spokesman said about 20 employees were involved in the company's production of PCBs at its William G. Krummrich plant near East St. Louis. Total employment at the plant is about 1,300 and no layoffs are anticipated as a result of the PCB halt, the spokesman said.

Monsanto produced about 85 million pounds of PCBs a year before 1971 but as their environmental effects raised concerns and their uses became more restricted, company production dropped to about 27,000 pounds in 1975 for U.S. consumption, according to the spokesman.