Monsanto

Washington, D. C.

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W. B. Papageorge, St. Louis
Ed John, St. Louis

TO John Mason
St. Louis,
Missouri
JMASO

PCBs file

The following is a summary of today's Press Conference called by FDA. The persons on the dais were:

Commissioner Edwards (FDA)
Ed Berger - OST
Jim Grant-FDA
Terry Davies - CEQ
Clayton Yeutter -USDA
Dr. Worf - EPA
Rio Duggin - FDA

FDA Public Information Officer Jack Walden introduced the participants and requested questions only from the working press.

I enclose statements read by Edwards, Grant and Kolbye, together with a news release read by Dr. Yeutter. Additionally, there is enclosed a memorandum entitled, "Food Analyzed by FDA for PCB. Neither Ed Berger nor Terry Davies spoke.

Following the reading of the statements the following questions were asked and responses given:

Q-What steps is FDA taking to stop PCBs in the food chain?

A- Edwards- Monsanto no longer sells into uses where the product gets into the chain. FDA has discussed with the Paper Institute the restriction of recycled paper in connection with the food industry. FDA never approved the use of recycled paper for food containers.

Q-Is NCR carbonless carbon paper the only "bad" paper?

A-Edwards- Said - "yes, principally" and remarked that office files were filled with it.

Q-Explain why Edwards said "the alarm is greater than the facts justify" when Monsanto refuses to supply production figures.

A-Edwards - Says he was not at the meeting, but understands that Monsanto has agreed to furnish figures under certain circumstances and that FDA is getting the Japanese production figures.

Q- Understands that Monsanto will release data only on a confidential basis. Is this basis acceptable to FDA?

A-Edwards - Believes that Monsanto knows that this is a public problem and will respond accordingly.

Q-Understands Great Britain banned PCBs in March of '71. Why can't we?

A-Kolbye- Wasn't aware of ban and would be greatly surprised if Great Britain would ban its use for transformer purposes. Talks about Swedish restrictions.

Q-What about Minnesota spill? Understands rendering plant involved.

A-Yeutter - Contacts were made with rendering plant, but no evidence that it was a source.

A-Duggin - Says FDA visited plant and found no PCBs nor were they found in a suspected mixed feed plant.

Q-Can you put the Southeastern test results in perspective?

A-Yeutter - Says the number of eggs and turkeys - while they sound enormous are relatively minimal when compared with the total.

Q-What does Edwards mean by "potential" hazard?

A-Edwards - Animal data has demonstrated the possibility of a hazard, but would have to be extrapolated to extremely large doses to be hazardous to man.

Q- Can FDA by testing tell the difference between DDT and PCB?

A-Wodica - Yes.

Q- What about guidelines?

A-Kolbye - Setting tolerance levels on a case by case basis.

Q-Doesn't the finding of PCBs in recycled paper discourage EPA in its drive for use of recycled paper?

A-Worf - Yes.

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Statement - A Vice President of Paper Board Institute stated that office waste not being now used in food product containers - use discontinued for food packaging

January, 1971.

Q-What is being done about a substitute for PCBs - what is Monsanto doing in this area?

Wodica - (not responsive to question) Says PCBs are popular because of their unusual combination of good characteristics. Understands that where PCBs have been removed from heat exchange units, there have been fires already and understands further that if the use of PCBs for transformers was removed, it would entail redesign of transformers with new and large geometry and the added hazard of flammability.

You will appreciate that questions were being asked and responded to rapidly, but I believe the sense of the questioning and responses is as set forth above.