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NEWS

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

USDA INVESTIGATES POSSIBLE PCB RESIDUES IN SOUTHEAST POULTRY:

WASHINGTON, July 23 —The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced today it is investigating the extent to which some poultry produced in the Southeast may be contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and said any poultry found to be contaminated will be withheld from the market.

USDA's Consumer and Marketing Service said a commercial poultry processor became alarmed when the hatchability in its breeder flocks was sharply reduced. The company traced the cause to a fish meal ingredient sold by a Wilmington, N. C. firm. One of the systems used to process the meal was leaking a heat exchange fluid, which contained the PCBs. The fluid dripped directly into the meal, officials said. Fish meal is a common ingredient in poultry feed.

The mill closed voluntarily last Friday. The Federal Food and Drug Administration compiled a list of purchasers of the meal since April 30, and gave USDA a copy of the list. USDA is now contacting the feed mills and poultry processors who may be using this fish meal in poultry feed. Immediate corrective action will be taken where necessary. Poultry will be tested before slaughter and poultry found to be unfit for human consumption will be destroyed.

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