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$1 Million Spent by Monsanto On PCB Studies, Official Says

Monsanto Co. has spent more than $1 million on scientific studies, monitoring the use of the chemical PCB and seeking substitutes for it, a company spokesman reported Sunday.

Howard L. Minckler, Monsanto vice president and general manager of its organic chemicals division, made the statement replying to charges by U.S. Rep. William F. Ryan (Dem.), New York, Friday that the Monsanto-made chemical substance PCB is a threat to the environment perhaps as great as DDT.

Minckler said the company began a six-point program in 1968 aimed at identifying properly and measuring PCB in the environment. (PCB stands for "polychlorinated biphenyl" used as a "plasticizer" in a variety of products; it is made at the Krummrich plant just south of East St. Louis.)

STEPS ARE being taken Minckler said, "to strictly control use of the chemical and replace those grades of PCB which linger in nature."

"It is unfortunate that Congressman Ryan evidently did not have all this information at his disposal," Minckler said. "Just last month, we participated in a U.S. Department of the Interior meeting where we exchanged ideas with some 40 scientists and told them of our findings and actions."

The Monsanto official also claimed that use of PCB is misunderstood by some investigators.

"For example," he said, "we do not know of any current use of PCB in insecticides. Even so, we are asking the U.S. Department of Agriculture to reject any insecticide which has PCB as an inert carrier."

Also, Minckler said, PCB is not a household product.

"TO OUR knowledge, it is not used in plastic food wraps, house paints, cellophane, asphalt or tires," he said. "The principal market is electrical applications where the chemical performs a vital function as an insulating fluid."

In this insulating use, the chemical is completely sealed in a metal container, he added.

Research conducted by Monsanto has shown that PCB "is not a highly toxic material," Minckler said. The company has concentrated further research on the few PCB compounds which degrade slowly, he explained.

"Alternate products for these grades, which retain the functional properties of PCB and present no potential threat, will be introduced later this year," he said.

One Cab Driver Shot, 3 Robbed at Gunpoint

Three St. Louis cab drivers were robbed at gunpoint and a

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