

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

561 NORTH FIFTEENTH STREET
MILWAUKEE 3, WISCONSIN

DEPARTMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL AND
ENVIRONMENTAL MEDICINE

August 12, 1963

Mr. G. F. Hand
Mdse. Development & Test Lab.
Section 8-1
Montgomery Ward & Co.
618 West Chicago Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60607

Dear Mr. Hand:

Regarding your letter of August 6th, I suggest that you consult with Dr. Kehoe or one of his associates of the Kettering Laboratory of the University of Cincinnati.

For many years, Dr. Kehoe has made an exhaustive study of lead absorption together with safe levels of intake, so that he is probably the world authority on this matter. Though I served on the American Public Health Association Committee on Lead Poisoning some years back, Dr. Kehoe was the Chairman and guiding force of the Committee.

I am sending Dr. Kehoe a photostat of your letter, as well as a copy of this letter. I am sure he will give you authoritative satisfaction.

I am,

Sincerely yours,

Elston L. Belknap, M.D.
Professor and Chairman of the
Department.

ELE:LN

cc Dr. Kehoe ✓

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N 7455

August 12, 1963

Mr. G. F. Hand
Mdse. Development and Test Laboratory
Section 8-1
Montgomery Ward and Company
618 W. Chicago Avenue
Chicago, Illinois (60607)

Dear Mr. Hand:

I am unable at this time to give you satisfactory information as to the official and legal status of the question raised in your letter of August 6th. There are laws on the subject in certain countries, and there have been certain regulations and technical rules of thumb in this country. For reasons which I shall make clear below, we are reviewing the information on this subject for the purpose of preparing a fairly comprehensive report for the sponsors of some investigative work in which we have been engaged, from time to time, during the past two or more years i.e. The United States Potters Association and Lead Industries Association, Incorporated.

Whatever the precise facts may be (and we shall assemble them as soon as we can), this situation in the United States is poorly controlled. As you probably know, the regulatory power in this and many other matters of public health resides in the individual states, and it has not been allocated as yet to any authority concerned with interstate commerce, although this might come about. Some of the states have certain regulations, but again I cannot speak out of the detailed knowledge which I shall have shortly. At best, however, these are vague, and it appears that there has been no effective or consistent assertion of the regulatory power.

We came into an active awareness of this problem some two years ago when we encountered and documented two cases of lead poisoning (in one family) which resulted from the use of an improperly glazed set of ceramic table ware. (We had some general knowledge of this problem previously, as the result of many years of investigative experience with physiologic and hygienic problems related to lead.)

In consequence of these cases and of circumstances which grew out of them, we were consulted by responsible people in the principal industries involved, and we engaged in an investigation of glazes with the objective of establishing the general facts. Out of this investigation has come information on which a standard procedure for testing ceramic ware, in this respect, can be based, and a tentative criterion of quality for application by the industry is in the making. The objective of the sponsors, with which I fully concur, is that of

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Mr. G. F. Hand - (2) - August 12, 1963

achieving, within the pottery making industry, broad compliance with an appropriate standard, and the establishment of a means whereby the distributors of such products (and perhaps the consumer, as well) can be assured of the satisfactory quality of the products offered for sale. The use of such a specification by your Company and others would contribute greatly to compliance.

The sponsors are now waiting for a comprehensive report from this Laboratory in which the history and present technical and legal status of this matter, the pertinent information gained from our investigations, and our recommendations will be assembled. This is a difficult task which cannot be dashed off, but there is every reason to believe that it will be available before January 1st, 1964. Under the circumstances, we must first fulfill our responsibilities to the sponsors, consult further with them and undertake through their organization to provide appropriate action. Certain state health departments are aware of these developments and will be fully advised. They, of course, will take such action as they consider wise and necessary. This is one part of a general problem which this Laboratory has been investigating for many years. My views on the subject, of course, are my own, for which I accept full professional responsibility. However, in order that I may not be guilty of failing to represent or of misrepresenting the views of the group of technical and business people with whom we have been consulting, I would suggest that it might be well for you to write to the Chairman of the Research Committee of the United States Pottery Association whose name and address are indicated below, expressing your interest in this matter, and asking that you be kept advised of their action. I feel sure that there will be action, and that such action as is agreed upon will prove to be an effective means for dealing with this problem.

If I can be of any further assistance to you on any aspect of this matter, do not hesitate to let me know.

Very truly yours,

RAK:vr

Robert A. Kehoe, M.D.

Mr. B. W. Merwin, Chairman
Research Committee
The United States Potters Association
The Hall China Company
East Liverpool, Ohio

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MONTGOMERY WARD

CHICAGO 7

Dr. Robert A. Kehoe
Kettering Laboratory
College of Medicine
University of Cincinnati
Eden Avenue
Cincinnati 19, Ohio

August 6, 1963

Dear Sir:

We are trying to find out whether or not any official organization (either in the USA or England), has set up definite tolerances for the quantity of lead extractable by water, food juices or food itself, from ceramic plates, baking dishes, and/or other cookware.

Existence of a definite specification would give us a more objective basis on which to control the quality of our cookware for the benefit of our customers.

If you know that such a specification either exists, or does not exist, we should appreciate your letting us know.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,


Mr. G. F. Hand
Mdse. Development & Test Lab.
Section 8-1
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618 W. Chicago Ave.
Chicago, Illinois 60607

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