

THE ENVIRONMENT

Fertility Peril

American men are gradually losing their fertility. According to Dr. Ralph Dougherty of Florida State University, the sperm count of American males has fallen by 30 percent in the last 30 years.

The reason, he says, may be environmental pollutants such as the insecticide DDT and industrial chemicals known as PCBs. PCBs, for example, have been known to lower sperm counts in animals. Although both chemicals have been banned in this country, there's enough left in the environment and in products still in use to cause potential problems, he says.

Dougherty studied 132 college men and found that all had higher-than-normal levels of these environmental contaminants in their seminal fluid. Twenty-three percent (consistent with the national norm) had sperm counts of only 20 million cc., a level which some scientists consider "functionally sterile."

And today's men don't stack up in fertility comparisons with men in previous years, Dougherty's study showed. In 1929, the median sperm count of American men was 90 million cc.; in 1974, 65 million; and in 1979, 60 million.

"The exact cause for the decline hasn't been proven," says Dougherty. "However, we have to take seriously the distinct possibility that these toxic substances are responsible for at least part of the decline."

MONS 011492

15A-22 HOUSEHOLD AND PERSONAL PRODUCTS INDUSTRY
MONTHLY 14.500

FEB 1980 CLIPPED BY BACONS

1980

Monsanto Toxicology Fellowships

MONSANTO IS NEARING its five-year goal of training professional toxicologists. The program, begun in 1977, was established in order to fill what company chairman John W. Hanley described as "a critical shortage of qualified professional toxicologists." The $500,000 toxicology fellowship program has been available to universities for study and research in toxicology.

Since 1977, the Monsanto Fund has awarded fellowships totaling $321,730 to 16 pre- and post-doctoral students.