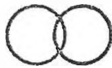


ENVIRONMENTAL
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1910 N STREET, N.W., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036/202 833-1485

December 14, 1972

Dr. Alfred Weissler
Food and Drug Administration
Division of Colors and
Cosmetics Technology
BF-430
200 C Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20204

Dear Dr. Weissler:

As you know, asbestos has been reported to occur in talc and a good many people are concerned about the possible dangers of using talc containing this known carcinogen. Specific questions which have arisen are whether the inhalation of asbestos-talc by babies and others poses a carcinogenic hazard and whether the treatment of rice with talc is contraindicated (Science 173 (1971)1141). In addition, we have received a query concerning the wisdom of the routine use of talc on contraceptive diaphragms, which exposes vaginal and neighboring tissue to any asbestos contained in the talc. In this connection, it is of interest that talc particles have been detected in the majority of both cervical and ovarian tumors which were sampled and in "normal" ovarian tissue of patients with breast cancer (J. of Obstet. & Gynec. Brit. Commonwealth 78 (1971)266).

In view of these facts and questions, it seems to us to be a matter of urgency that talcum powders should be surveyed for asbestos content, that those found to contain significant proportions of asbestos be made unavailable for uses involving tissue contact, and that studies should be required of talc producers to determine whether talc-asbestos and/or talc per se are carcinogenic.

We understand that a survey of the asbestos content of commercial talcs was commissioned by FDA but the results have not to our knowledge been published. Therefore we would like to inquire

1. Was such a survey carried out?
2. Was it acceptable?
3. If so, when will the results be available?

Phoned Dr. Olson 1/18/73 - regret. Will try to reply by Feb. 2.

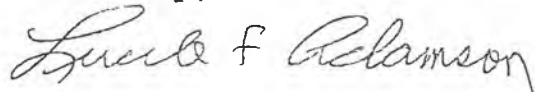
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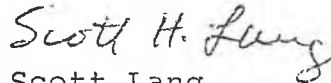
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4. If it was not acceptable, is it being repeated?
5. What action is FDA taking to evaluate or prevent potential talc carcinogenesis?

Sincerely,



Lucile Adamson, Ph.D.
Staff Scientist



Scott Lang
Washington Counsel

LA:mh