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NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN
Editorial Page
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PCB Needs To Go The Way of DDT

THE FOOD and Drug Administration says it is finding foods contaminated with PCB, a widely-used industrial chemical which is hundreds of times more toxic than DDT and one of the most dangerous synthetic chemicals now in use.

PCB, which is used in such things as plasticizers, adhesives, sealants and printing inks, can cause birth defects and liver damage if it escapes from its industrial applications and enters products to be ingested by human beings.

FDA disclosed three years ago that PCB was being found in food on grocery shelves. And now, an FDA administrator told the American Chemical Society, it is still being found. Of about 3,500 samples of fish, cheese, milk and eggs tested in the last 18 months, the administrator said, one out of five contained measurable levels of the chemical.

Other reports about PCB say it has been found in polar animals and fish thousands of miles from the nearest site of industrial usage. Analyses of water and sediment have turned it up in the streams of numerous states, and Michigan officials have warned citizens not to eat more than one meal a week of Lake Michigan coho salmon, which have been found to contain high levels of PCB.

It seems a chemical as dangerous as PCB should be under more rigid control. The government has banned DDT for most uses. It doesn't make sense that a chemical much more dangerous than DDT is still being widely used.

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