

August 18, 1945

Mr. R. E. Brown,
Products Control Department,
International Milling Company,
Minneapolis 1, Minn.

Dear Mr. Brown:

I shall not make any effort to reply in detail to your letter of August 13, but rather will make clear one point which it is necessary for you to take into account before making any use of DDT in your mills and warehouses. After you have given consideration to this point you may want further information, and if you do, we shall be very glad to give it as well as we can. You may have other questions which we shall make an effort to answer.

DDT is a poisonous material which is somewhat hazardous to use in establishments devoted to the production of food for animals and men. The actual amounts which can be mixed with food materials with safety has not been fully determined, but is well on the way to being established with reasonable assurance. However, the compound itself is a white powder, and if it were employed in your mills as a means of keeping down insects, you would always have the problem of the possible contamination of food materials to some extent, and there might be serious accidents. Accordingly if it were to be used as a powder, it would seem to me necessary, or at least advisable, to mix with it some material that would give it a distinguishing color.

I am sure that you will agree with me that there should never be any question in the mind of the public and public health officials concerning the purity of such an important item of food as flour and bread stuffs in general. Consequently I am quite sure that you would not want to make use of any dangerous material, except under the safest conditions. DDT is not as dangerous as some other materials that might be used, for the reason that it is absorbed somewhat slowly in the alimentary tract. Nevertheless, I am quite certain that you would not want to run any risk of contaminating your product with any detectable amount of this compound. Some suitable means would have to be set up whereby you could be assured against any such possibility. If I can be of any help to you in deciding whether or how this could be done, I should be glad to do so.

Very truly yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.
Director