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For Bock Speech -- Oct.

Two years ago, Monsanto Company found itself in the center of an unusual environmental problem. First, we were in the unique position of being the sole U.S. producer of a chlorinated hydrocarbon which appeared to be persisting in the environment. At the same time, we were fortunate in having had the opportunity to solve a so-called "classic" environmental problem. I refer to polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) which Monsanto has marketed for nearly 40 years under the trade name Aroclor.

PCB was first developed as a fire-resistant fluid to cool electrical equipment such as transformers and capacitors. In the early 1960s, we developed other uses -- for example, as a plasticizer in sealants, chlorinated rubber, adhesives, etc.

In 1966, two Swedish scientists, in their search for DDT in the environment, encountered "interfering substances". They were able to identify the substances as chlorinated hydrocarbons similar in construction to DDT. More important, the substance appeared to be persisting in the environment along with DDT.

We became aware of the Swedish work in 1967. I must admit our first reaction was one of disbelief. We seriously doubted the accuracy of analytical techniques available at that time. Our doubts prompted us to initiate a program, which we are proud to say will be completed this year. The program incorporates controls and restrictions over the use of PCB which will avoid further build-up in the environment. We can also assure the continued safe use of this valuable chemical where its advantages to mankind far outweigh any possible environmental hazard.

Our program began with the proper measurement and identification of PCB in nature. We made a major contribution to development of analytical techniques which have verified its presence. We tightened up our manufacturing processes, and alerted our customers to take similar precautionary steps. Our R&D people have developed new and safer formulations and are looking at ways to make PCB biodegradable.

We have also made some serious business decisions. We decided to get out of those markets where we believed the product could not be controlled and contained. We decided to remain in the "closed system" electrical uses because we believe, as does the electrical industry, that PCB is a great benefit to mankind. Its safety and reliability have saved human lives in the past. In fact, safety fluids are required by state and local laws throughout the country.

Our actions have been based strictly on the fact that PCB, in higher chlorinated forms, is a persistent chemical. It does not break down easily in the environment.

Today, this so-called "classic" environmental problem is being solved by voluntary actions taken by Monsanto. In my opinion, a responsible company must take these kinds of actions now and in the future.

In some cases, it may mean a temporary loss of business. But long range, it challenges the expertise of management to turn such problems into opportunities.

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