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Contaminated Carp Buried

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. (AP) — Disposal of an estimated 20,000 pounds of contaminated carp fillets from Lake Pepin on the Mississippi River was reported Tuesday by officials of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Officials said the fish, which belonged to a Wisconsin wholesaler, was buried because it contained concentrations of a potentially cancer-causing industrial chemical, polychlorinated biphenyls, that exceeded federal guidelines.

FDA Director Henry Roberts said the PCB concentration in the fish flesh ranged from 6 to 14 parts per million. The federal guideline for PCB in food for human consumption is five parts per million.

Roberts said animal tests have shown high PCB concentrations to be a cause of cancer.

The FDA director emphasized that a person would have to eat the carp every day for about three years before high PCB levels might be measured in his body.

He said PCB levels in game fish in Lake Pepin, a wide spot in the river between Red Wing and Wabasha and about 70 miles downriver from Minneapolis and St. Paul have not been thoroughly tested.

"We are not particularly concerned about the sport fisherman because of the low number of fish caught and eaten by an individual," Roberts said, adding that the FDA also has no controls over fish caught for personal use.

The contaminated carp had been shipped to the East Coast for sale, Roberts said. The fish were checked by FDA officials in New York and then returned to Pepin, Wis., by Rudolph Hogue, a fish wholesaler and owner of the shipment.

Hogue estimated the value of the destroyed carp at between $1,500 and $1,800.

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