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PCBs can ruin your analysis

STATE COLLEGE, PA.—Polychlorinated biphenyls are constituents of many useful products—rubber, paints, coatings for paper and fabric, waxes, electrical products, and so on. But, because PCBs are widely-employed, and decompose extremely slowly in natural environments, they present a two-fold problem.

First of all, their residues may be harmful to some forms of wildlife. They have been blamed for upsetting the life cycles of some birds, fish, and mammals. Secondly, they can interfere with the determination of organochlorine pesticides. In a GC analysis, peaks that coincide with those of common pesticides sometimes prove to be due to PCB contamination.

One of the most popular series of polychlorinated biphenyls bears the trade name of "Aroclor." There are a number of different types, most of which consist of a mixture of various PCBs. Applied Science Laboratories Inc. selected three of the most popular types and prepared quantitative solutions for use as analytical standards.

Each standard solution has a concentration of 100 ppm of PCB, and the total volume of solution is 5 ml. For further information circle 581 on the reader service card. □

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