The Evening Star
WASHINGTON, D. C.
D. 818,026 SUN. 362,408

SEP 2 1970

Monsanto Restricts Use Of Environment Poison

The sole producer of a major environmental poison said today it has cut back production and has limited sales of polychlorinated biphenyls for specific non-polluting uses.

A spokesman for the Monsanto Chemical Co. in St. Louis said that "PCBs," which has been widely indicted for their DDT-like activity and persistence when used as pesticides, are now being sold solely for "closed-system applications."

The PCBs have been under fire ever since Dr. Robert Risebrough and other chemists first determined that the substance was showing up in animals.

At first the PCBs were mistaken for DDT and other "hard" pesticides because of their chemical similarity.

Ryan Leads Fight

Once it became apparent that the PCBs were at least as ubiquitous as DDT a major outcry broke out and Rep. William Ryan, D-N.Y., made a major environmental issue out of them.

At least one result of the furor has been that Monsanto earlier this year voluntarily asked the Agriculture Department to revoke the registration of a group of PCB-based pesticides.

Today, the spokesman said, "we have now completed our effort aimed at limiting their sale for closed-system uses."

Electrical Applications

The closed-system uses are principally in electrical applications. Because of their chemical makeup, PCBs have excellent heat transfer properties and are widely used to cool transformers.

However, because of other reasons, including their dispersant capability, they have also been widely used in such products as adhesives, sealants, chlorinated rubber compounds and special paints.

The problem with these is that as these products are used and discarded, most of their components are degraded while the PCBs are not.

The latter remain in the environment and, acting much as they would when used as the base for pesticides, eventually work their way into the food chain along the same routes of concentration as DDT and the other chlorinated hydrocarbons.

MONS 032378