

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 12, 1974

SUBJECT: REPORTED INCIDENCE OF ANGIOSARCOMA AT DYNAMIT-NOBEL

TO: J. M. Quinn, Director
Environmental Services
ICD, DAB-2

cc: E. F. Booth (w/a)
A. B. Gancy (w/a)

The attached article from the current Chemical Marketing Reporter confirms suspicions about the very high incidence of angiosarcoma at Dynamit-Nobel reported in the earlier article which I transmitted to you by memorandum dated 3/6/74. It should have referred to acroosteolysis, not angiosarcoma, and the number of affected workers is also much less than indicated.

Original Signed

BEK
B. E. Karta, Manager
Technology Development
Chlorocarbons

BEK:pts

SCA-1515

To: *B. E. Kuntz*

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VCM Worker Illness in Europe Has Been Identified

Reports circulated in European labor circles that fifty-three out of 160 workers in a German polyvinyl chloride plant had contracted angiosarcoma, a rare liver cancer, were apparently exaggerated.

The illness has since been identified as acrosteolysis, a less serious affliction that was spotted in this country in the 1950's and arrested by improved work practices.

Details about the origin of the reports have been difficult to acquire, but it has been learned that there has been a recent pattern of work-related illnesses at the plant operated by Dynamit Nobel in Troisdorf, Germany.

Contacted by the European editor of

CMR for details, Dynamit Nobel officials were unavailable for comment. However, it is understood that the company's board of directors was convened last week to discuss the story (CMR, 4/11/73, p. 5) and issue a formal statement. As of the end of last week no statement had been received.

According to health officials in the US, who attempted to trace the story through European sources, the information first began to circulate following publication of a research paper last November by the Skin Clinic of the University of Bonn on illnesses suffered by workers at the Dynamit Nobel plant. The study was reportedly commissioned by Nobel officials themselves.

Apparently the company became concerned as worker illnesses (of the liver, spleen, and bones) became increasingly frequent and proceeded to introduce a series of safety measures and finally asked for the university study.

In the meantime, the company continued to improve its facilities. The Ministry of Health was informed and apparently began a still-active superintendence of the safety measures. The ministry is said to be satisfied with the progress being made.

The company has apparently met with the plant's workers' council to discuss the

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Senate Decides FED Can Judge On Oil After All

After marching up the hill again on the issue of rolling back prices of domestic crude oil, Congress last week finally decided - temporarily at least - to follow the President's wishes and allow the Federal Energy Office to be the sole judge of the fairness of petroleum prices.

In a week of confusion for chemical marketers trying to get a handle on the probable future course of crude oil prices, the Senate, which had originally insisted on rolling back "new" domestic crude prices to no higher than \$7.09 per barrel, did a flip-flop on the situation by voting to sustain the President's veto of the Emergency Energy Bill because of the rollback provision.

On the same day the Senate was supporting the President on the issue, the House unexpectedly wrote a similar rollback into a pending Federal Energy Administration bill, only to change its mind 24 hours later and vote the provision out of the bill before sending it to conference.

An amendment rolling back prices of propane gas that was included in the bill

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Phosphorus Use Cutback Is Urged In Livestock and Poultry Feed by Butz

In an effort to stretch supplies of phosphorus and meet the needs of agriculture on a more efficient basis, Secretary of Agriculture Earl L. Butz has called on the livestock and poultry feeds industry to cut back phosphorus use levels to those recommended by the National Research Council.

He made the recommendation on the basis of discussions by a seventeen-man task force on phosphorus requirements of livestock and poultry that met earlier to determine whether further reductions in phosphorus supplements can safely be made. The task force was set up by the National Research Council.

The current phosphorus shortage amounts to an estimated 300,000 tons of dicalcium phosphate equivalent, or about 20 percent of the total US need of 1.6 million tons annually, according to the secretary. The shortage is anticipated to last from six months to eighteen months and perhaps longer.

The secretary cited a number of causes for the tight phosphorus situation: - Demand for phosphorus has increased five-

fold in the past twenty-five years, and production of late has not been able to keep up.

Some of the phosphoric acid normally used to produce feed phosphates has been diverted to fertilizer production recently. Imports of Curacao phosphate rock have

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CELANESE EXECUTIVE: Blanchard L. Pritchard, who has been made director of manufacturing administration for Celanese

EPA to Allow Witnesses Scope in Hearing Record

Environmental Protection Agency has amended its rules of procedure governing public hearings on effluent standards for toxic pollutants to allow all statements offered by the public and unsworn documents to be entered into the hearing record without cross examination and to be considered by the agency in reaching its decisions.

EPA said that it became evident on the first day of the hearings last January 25 to consider proposed effluent standards for toxic pollutants that the rules of practice it had issued earlier could be construed in such a way as to exclude from the hearing record public comments that had been submitted pursuant to the notice of hearing.

The agency said that nothing is gained by admitting only those affidavits or exhibits which are subject to cross-examination. While such evidence is clearly admissible and should be given considerable weight in any final decision, it was stated, it is necessary to investigate a wide range of data in finding the "legislative facts" involved in the rule-making proceeding.

"Thus, for example, it may be necessary to consider scientific reports, articles in scholarly journals, and reports prepared by EPA or other Federal or state agencies, in arriving at the required decision. It would be arbitrary for the agency to refuse to consider such matter solely on the formalistic grounds that the author is not available for

Top Executive Depicted As Dutch Boy at Dike

"The fun has gone out of being a top executive," declares Robert T. Krempfle, chairman of Krempfle & Meade, Los Angeles-based executive recruiting firm.

"Over-regulation—and growing pressure from social action groups are gradually draining away the thrills of power and accomplishment," Mr. Krempfle says.

As an example, he notes that top executives of oil companies are now spending 80 percent of their time on the defense - trying to explain the oil shortage to the government and the public. Too bad, he says, they can't spend

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in the price of caraway seed, which was being offered at 68c. per pound for both Dutch and Polish varieties. Indian cumin seed was being quoted at 75c. to 79c. per pound, going down from 79c. per pound the week before.

Nutmegs, which have been going up steadily since the middle of January, registered their first drop in that time. The climb upwards took the price of East Indian whole products from \$1.26 in the beginning of the year to \$1.74 two weeks ago. At the beginning of last week, a 2c. drop brought that material to \$1.72 per pound.

One supplier, who had been offering East Indian reconditioned material at \$1.27 during early January eventually saw his price rise to \$1.74 a couple of weeks ago. Last week, the cost dropped slightly to \$1.72 per pound.

Alleppey turmeric took a step down again last week and was being quoted at about 41c. per pound.

Despite these decreases, the overall price levels in the market were once again higher. Contributing most significantly to this situation was the price of pepper. Although Muntok white went down a cent to about \$1.13 per pound, most other peppers took steep climbs up.

Except for a week or two since January when pepper did not go up, this commodity has also been increasing steadily during that time. Last week, prices rose anywhere from 4c. to 8c. per pound. Sarawak black, for instance, was being quoted at 83c. per pound, an increase of 8c. from the previous week. Brazilian black pepper took the next highest step up, 6c., and was being offered at 80c. per pound. Lampong and Malabar black peppers went up to 80c. from their previous respective prices of 75c. and 76c. Tellicherry pepper was being quoted by one supplier at 83c. per pound, an increase of 5c. from its previous price.

Mace, which has been holding steady at high levels over the past few weeks held its mark still but East Indian broken #2 material went up 10c. and was being offered at \$3.30 per pound.

Cinnamon and oregano costs also continued to rise, according to prices received last week. This time Ceylon cinnamon increased, going to about \$1.15 per pound, while Greek oregano advanced to \$1.40 per pound and Mexican oregano went to 95c. per pound.

PEPPER—The Malaysian government is looking into the feasibility of growing pepper on a large scale in Peninsula Malaysia and the state of Sabah as well as expanding production in Sarawak.

Research is being conducted by the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute which is currently studying fertilizer requirements and their economic application.

Of the 18,000 acres of pepper land in the country, 16,000 are found in Sarawak and the rest in Peninsula Malaysia. Sabah, a state that grows a negligible amount of the commodity at the present time has imported 50,000 pepper cuttings from Sarawak to set up nurseries throughout its regions.

ESSENTIAL OILS

Imports of the selected essential oil, on which Census Bureau reports monthly, started 1974 off at a slow pace. Compared with imports for December of last year January shipments showed drops in volume for twenty of thirty five oils, while twelve rose slightly and three remained at the same level, which was zero.

In addition to an absence of origanum,

DECEMBER'S figure. Next was eucalyptus up about 20,000 pounds, followed by camphor oil which rose approximately 14,000 pounds in January.

VCM Worker Illness

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problem. Sources said that the quoted number of fifty three sick workers was probably inflated and that the figure of twenty nine attributed to the number of incapacitated workers is probably close to the actual number of workers showing any symptoms at all.

There are said to have been no new cases uncovered since the fall of 1973 and that many of those victims suffering finger bone deterioration (acroosteolysis) had begun to show signs of bone regeneration. It is said that no angiosarcoma was ever uncovered at the facility.

CMR has been unable to confirm this story, nor to examine the University of Bonn study. However, if these events are in fact the source of the circulated cancer reports, then the Dynamit Nobel situation does not represent the significant new development that the stories implied. Regardless of the facts of the Nobel situation, however, there seems to be a growing body of evidence in Europe and more recently in the US, that VCM presents a potentially serious health threat, and may be carcinogenic.

In response to that evidence, much of it presented at hearings conducted by the Occupational Safety & Health Administration of the Department of Labor in mid-February, OSHA is expected to issue new work practice standards soon for all VCM and PVC facilities.

These standards are being designed by the National Institute of Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH) of HEW. It was not clear last week what the new standards would be.

OSHA OPTIONS

There is the possibility that OSHA will promulgate a temporary emergency standard which is the only mechanism by which the agency can put mandatory regulations into effect immediately. However, the expectation is that the agency will issue additional voluntary standards, perhaps along the lines of work practice standards issued at the end of January on fourteen other alleged carcinogenic industrial chemicals, pending completion of the regular rule-making procedure, (which could take several months).

Many people have called for the establishment of a standard of no exposure, in effect a "closed system", at all plants dealing with VCM, including Anthony Mazzochi an official of the Oil, Chemical & Atomic Workers International Union, and Dr. Irving Selikoff, Director of Environmental Sciences of the Mt. Sinai School of Medicine in New York.

Dr. Selikoff warned against "wild" reactions, last week, such as "removing plastic ashtrays from the table." But he told CMR that, while scientific evidence is still sketchy, there is enough information available to conclude that "urgent control measures are already required."

On May 10, the New York Academy of Sciences will hold a meeting of "concerned experts" in an attempt to improve the state of knowledge about VCM and pathology.

SOCMA Gets Word

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"we have two specialists in the area of for-