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'Monsanto Should Have Known of PCB Danger'

BAD AXE, Mich. (AP) — Research conducted before 1970 should have shown Monsanto Co. that PCBs were dangerous, according to an expert witness testifying in a $4.3 million lawsuit filed by an Owendale farm family.

Studies performed in the 1930s and 1940s found that PCBs, or polychlorinated biphenyls, used in industry were toxic, Dr. Larry Hansen, a professor of toxicology at the University of Illinois School of Veterinary Medicine, testified Monday.

Hansen was expected to return to the stand today in the Huron County Circuit Court lawsuit filed by Roger A. Haley against St. Louis-based Monsanto and two Michigan silo builders.

Haley and his family claim they suffered ill health and financial losses because of silage containing PCBs made by the St. Louis-based Monsanto and used in a sealant by Michigan Silo Co. and C&B Silo Co., both of Charlotte.

Monsanto, which marketed PCBs under the name ARO-CLOR 1254, "knew it was a hazard to workers and certainly had to be aware of its being widespread in the environment," Hansen told the Huron County jury.

The company has said it could not have issued warnings because it did not know until 1970 that PCBs were dangerous.

Hansen said laboratory tests conducted in 1982 confirmed the presence of ARO-CLOR 1254 in two silos on the Haley farm, located about 110 miles north of Detroit.

The top of the silos, where the sealant was used only on joints, showed a maximum PCB concentration of two parts per billion, Hansen said. The lower 10 feet of the silo, which was coated with the sealant, showed PCB levels of 430 to 750 parts per million, he said.

Those PCB levels "would have an adverse affect on any organism that consumed that concentration" of the chemical, Hansen testified.

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Farmer testifies in PCB silo case

BAD AXE (AP) — The quality of life has been diminished for a farm family because of alleged PCB contamination of its dairy farm, Roger A. Haley testified in a $4.3 million lawsuit filed against Monsanto Co. and two silo builders.

"We've lost vitality for life," the Owendale farmer told a Huron County Circuit Court jury Wednesday.

The Haleys contend they suffered ill health and financial losses because meat and milk produced on their farm was contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls that had contaminated silage fed to the Haleys' livestock.

The St. Louis-based Monsanto manufactured PCBs marketed under the name ARO-CLOR 1254 and it was used in silo sealants by Michigan Silo Co. and C&B Silo Co, both of Charlotte.

Two silos on the Haley farm, about 110 miles north of Detroit in Michigan's Thumb, were coated with a sealant containing the chemical, a toxicologist testified earlier in the trial. The family moved to the farm in 1972 and filed suit in 1977.

Haley told the nine-woman jury that he and his wife were healthy before they moved to their farm, but developed sores and persistent bronchitis.

"I have had severe sores on my neck and upper chest," Haley said. "I have had bronchitis for four or five months and can't seem to shake it."

The 34-year-old farmer added that his wife "had some sores on the back of her legs the same time I had mine and she's had a bronchitis problem for three or four years, she can't shake it."

The family has sought medical treatment, but are "looked upon as guinea pigs," Haley testified. "The doctors are just standing back just waiting for the time bomb to go off."

The alleged contamination has also affected the family's emotional well-being, Haley said.

"I don't even think I'm a good father to my children," he said. "This whole problem has occupied my life and I can't provide the time to them I want to."

They Haleys are "unable to enjoy a marital relationship any more," he continued. "I can't be the husband I should to my wife."

Under questioning by his attorney, James Woodworth, Haley also testified that he has lost 95 cows worth $73,585, 295 calves worth $32,450, 800 tons of feed worth $20,000, and milk production worth $380,000 because of PCB contamination.

Haley also said his land has been devalued by $325,000 because of the alleged contamination.

"I've watched my wife just break down and cry over the fact that she's feeding calves that just absolutely won't live and we treated them to the best of our ability," Haley said. "We did everything possible, we had veterinarians out, we just tried everything we could to keep them alive."

Monsanto has denied it covered up problems associated with PCBs, and contends Haley's losses were caused by poor management.

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