

January 29, 1982

Dear Retiree:

I'm sure most of you have seen or heard about a current article concerning Monsanto's approach to employee health in the Valley Advocate. There is always a risk of lending credibility to outrageous publicity by attempting to defend against it or to worry families of employees. Nevertheless, I cannot and will not have our organization or myself accused of insensitivity to employee health, evasion of the laws of the land, and even "getting away with murder" without a response to this so-called "journalism."

The article in the Advocate was lengthy and constitutes the latest in a long series of attacks upon this plant by its editors, reporters and behind the scene supporters. These articles have been incorrect on many important points and conclusions. For that reason, I have attached to this letter the latest in a series of bulletin board notices over the last 5 years which summarizes the facts. We have communicated with you on this subject numerous times in the past and will continue to do so every time new information becomes available. I hope you will carefully review this and further communications on the subject.

In the last analysis, however, each of us has to assess the quality of the organization for which we work and determine whether we believe we are properly protected. If I had any reservations about that with respect to Monsanto, I would have left years ago. Few corporations have even begun to approach the commitment and investment in Medical and Industrial Hygiene Departments, Environmental Health Labs, protective equipment and safety support services that we provide at Monsanto. We are not perfect in employee health or any other corporate activity. But I believe that we are years ahead of most other organizations in the effort to safeguard our employees. No amount of innuendo, biased reporting or sensationalism can change that.

I appreciate your taking the time to acquaint yourself with the facts in this matter. Please contact myself or Paul Bureau, Personnel Manager, if you have any questions relating to this subject.


J. L. Shriver
Plant Manager

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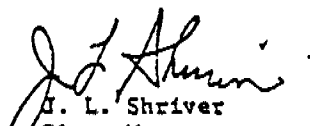
ANNOUNCEMENT

Monsanto has received a report of a mortality study of Springfield Plant workers in relation to their occupation. This most recent work was conducted by a graduate student as a Master's thesis at the University of Massachusetts under the direction of Dr. Kenneth Rosenman.

The thesis purports to find excess deaths from several cancers. In particular, it relates to employees who have worked in Resins operations and who may have been exposed to formaldehyde.

These results are not confirmed by a more comprehensive University of Pittsburgh study on formaldehyde which was the subject of our November 1980 bulletin (see attached). The University of Pittsburgh study concluded that "the results indicate no trends or patterns in proportional mortality that could be directly linked to formaldehyde exposure." Monsanto was again not consulted regarding any of the data used in the graduate student's thesis and is not aware of the details of the analysis.

The graduate's thesis has been forwarded to Monsanto's Department of Medicine and Environmental Health and has been made available to the Union.


J. L. Shriver
Plant Manager

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POLYVINYL CHLORIDE

The Springfield Plant began producing polyvinyl chloride (PVC) in the 1950s. The major raw material used in the PVC processes was vinyl chloride monomer (VCM). In 1970, the decision was made to get out of the VCM business for economic reasons. Consequently Monsanto's VCM operations was shut down at its Texas City Plant. This decision led to withdrawal from the PVC business. Monsanto announced this withdrawal in February, 1973. The VCM cancer link became known in January, 1974.

Polyvinyl chloride (PVC) is a synthetic thermoplastic polymer. Its uses include piping, conduits, siding and gutters; raincoats, toys, garden hose and electrical insulation; containers for toiletries, cosmetics and household chemicals; coating for paper and textiles.

Vinyl chloride (VCM) is a raw material used in the production of polyvinyl chloride and copolymers.

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Cancer link hunted at Monsanto

By A. DAVID GRAM
Union Staff

AMHERST — A new study of cancer deaths among former employees of the Monsanto Co. chemical plant in Springfield has found the fatalities may be linked to exposure to materials used in making plastics.

A team from the University of Massachusetts investigating the deaths of 110 men who worked at the Monsanto plant in Springfield's Indian Orchard section found 34 were caused by cancer and may have been work-related.

Dr. Kenneth Rosenman, who headed the study, said, "People who

worked there longer, who had a longer latency period, had higher risks of dying of all malignant neoplasms (abnormal tissue growths)."

The study was the fifth conducted at the company since union officials began demanding an investigation into cancer deaths of former employees in 1977.

Monsanto's epidemiology manager, William Gaffey of St. Louis, said of the new study, "I think we'll know within a couple of weeks whether there really is any connection between these excesses and any past exposures in the plant."

The study was of former employees who worked at the plant while

the chemicals vinyl chloride and polyvinyl chloride were used between 1948 and 1975.

The research team found one death due to a liver cancer associated with exposure to vinyl chloride and said several other former workers had mouth, digestive, lymphatic and lung cancers.

Older workers were found to have a greater risk of contracting cancer, even with a short exposure to the plastics studied.

Monsanto is also reviewing a similar study the company contracted with University of Pittsburgh professor Dr. Gary Marsh, who finished that study last spring. He said

cancer deaths were excessive but could not be explained because "it was virtually impossible to isolate exposure to individual chemicals."

Rosenman criticized the company-sponsored studies, however, saying they "always looked at the total work force, not at individual work sites... diluting" the studies' results, he said.

Rosenman said his study, conducted with the aid of a group of University of Massachusetts toxicology graduate students, looked at two specific work sites in the Monsanto plant.

The research team went through employees' medical records looking

for types of cancer linked in past studies with exposure to vinyl chloride and polyvinyl chloride, he said.

Another portion of the study to be released shortly will look at a possible link between exposure to chemical formaldehyde and extremely rare form of lung cancer which already has been found in a former Monsanto employee who worked with that substance, Rosenman said.

Roger Soucy, president of the local chapter of the International Union of Electrical Workers said, "The thing

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find perturbing is that everything we run into by doctors or anybody else doing research is that it may be this or may be that. It could be that or it could be this... nobody ever comes out with anything definite."

But Rosenman said, "It is very difficult in anything like this to speak in terms of absolutes. And you have to remember that many of these workers worked with up to 200 other chemicals," which makes pinpointing cause-and-effect relationships

between specific chemicals and cancer difficult, he said.

Monsanto, the nation's fourth largest chemical company, employs approximately 2,000 at its Springfield installation.

The plant manufactures a wide variety of plastics for consumer and industrial uses, including polystyrene, ABS and SANs plastics, formaldehyde resins and phenolic resins.

The Springfield plant is part of Monsanto Plastics and Resins Co.