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Additives excessive in fish from state

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. (AP) — The U.S. Food and Drug Administration says the largest fish wholesaler on Lake Pepin knew since January 1971 that carp taken from the lake contained excessive amounts of an industrial chemical.

Darryle Brown, laboratory chief for the Minneapolis office of the FDA, said the agency has periodically inspected fish being shipped by Rudolph Hogue, owner of Lake Pepin Fisheries, Pepin, Wis.

Brown said Friday that a test by the FDA in January 1971 showed 40 parts per million (ppm) of polychlorinated biphenyl in fish which Hogue had taken from Lake Pepin. The federal limit on PCB is 5 ppm.

FDA tests in mid-1973 showed 10 and 7 ppm of the chemical in the fish taken by Hogue, Brown said, and a July 1974 test showed 10 to 18 ppm.

Last month the FDA prevented the interstate shipping and sale of 30 tons of carp Hogue had taken mostly from Lake Pepin because of excessive levels of PCB.

Brown said the FDA had not acted earlier to stop the interstate sale of the fish because it had not been clear whether the agency had jurisdiction. However, he said the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in February that the FDA does have jurisdiction over such additives such as PCB, which are not intentionally added during processing of food.

Hogue in May called for an investigation by Minnesota and Wisconsin pollution officials to determine the source of the pollution in Lake Pepin, a widening of the Mississippi River bordering the two states.

Hogue refused to comment when asked why he had not pressed for action to clear up the pollution problem when he first learned of it in 1971.

Seven federal and state agencies are now trying to pinpoint the source of the pollution through water and fish monitoring.

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