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(Mo., Mississippi River states)
 Testing begins at plants along Mississippi
 SAUGET, Ill. (UPI) — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on
 Tuesday began sampling discharges into the Mississippi River from eight
 large chemical plants and two sewage-treatment plants across the river

from St. Louis.

About 30 environmental engineers and scientists will take hundreds
 of samples from the discharges this week as part of an effort to
 determine whether the industries are in compliance with federal
 clean-water laws, EPA officials said.

The samples will be taken from the discharges rather than from the
 river itself, officials said.

Representatives of the agency held a news conference Monday in
 Collinsville, about 10 miles east of St. Louis, to announce the
 investigation.

"We are deeply concerned about the pollutants being discharged
 into the Mississippi," said Anne Weinert, an environmental engineer
 with the EPA's Region V office in Chicago.

Samples will be taken from the discharges of Monsanto Co., Midwest
 Rubber and Chemical Co., Carro Copper Products, Clayton Chemical Co.,
 Trade Waste Incineration, Big River Zinc, Ethyl Petroleum Additives Inc.
 and Pfizer Pigments Inc. All of the plants are in Sauget except Pfizer,
 which is in neighboring East St. Louis.

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Tests also will be conducted on discharges from the American
 Bottoms sewage-treatment plant and the Sauget Physical Chemical Plant.
 Investigators will test the samples for the presence of nitrates,
 nitrites, ammonia, heavy metals, arsenic, mercury, polychlorinated
 biphenyls (PCBs), oil and grease, officials said.

Several weeks or perhaps months will be needed to analyze the
 samples, Weinert said.

The agency has been planning the investigation for months, partly
 because of concern about the quality of the water in the Mississippi,
 Weinert said. She denied the investigation had been prompted by a recent
 study by the international environmental group Greenpeace.

"While we are aware of the Greenpeace study, this action has been
 planned for quite some time," she said.

Greenpeace released a report earlier this month saying that 19,000
 excess deaths, the highest death rate along the river, occurred in St.
 Louis between 1988 and 1993.

The companies whose discharges are being tested were contacted
 ahead of time and have cooperated with the investigation, Weinert said.
 She said she did not believe the companies would try to lower the level
 of pollutants in their discharges before the samples could be taken.

Max McCombs, superintendent of environmental affairs at Monsanto's
 W.G. Krumrich plant in Sauget, said the plant's operations were in
 compliance with discharge standards. The plant makes chemicals used in

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the manufacture of rubber and also makes chemicals used in swimming
 pools.

Dave Adams, plant manager for Ethyl Petroleum Additives Inc.,
 admitted the EPA probably would require the company to change its
 manufacturing processes in order to clean up its discharges.

The investigation, being carried out in conjunction with the EPA's
 National Enforcement Investigation Center in Denver, will focus only on
 discharges from the Sauget area, Weinert said. She said it would not
 include other discharges along the river.

The EPA sued the American Bottoms sewage-treatment plant in May,
 charging it discharged pollutants that were the most toxic "ever
 measured in Region V," which includes Illinois, Indiana, Ohio,
 Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota. The suit is pending in federal court
 in Alton.

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