Meanwhile, both sides in the Parmesan Cheese controversy filed additional papers with Hearing Examiner William E. Brennan. Tolibia and Kraft filed a reply to the proposed findings of Universal Foods and Frigo Cheese (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, Dec. 13, Page 29). Universal and Frigo filed a reply to the proposed findings of Kraft Foods and Tolibia Cheese (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, Dec. 20, Page 20). Tolibia and Kraft favor an amendment of the food standard shortening the minimum curing time from 14 to 10 months, and Universal and Frigo oppose such an amendment.

Universal and Frigo said the Tolibia-Kraft proposed findings were a "mountain of minutiae and smoke-screen of technicalities," adding that they were "often confusing and misleading." The opponents of the amendment said that Tolibia and Kraft "have failed to show that their ten-month cheeses are actually parmesan cheese." The firms said the amendment "would virtually assure attenuation, diminution and dilution of the quality" of parmesan cheese.

Among other things, the new Kraft-Tolibia document dealt with Universal-Frigo discussion of the high salt level in Kraft parmesan cheese. The Kraft-Tolibia reply brief said that witnesses had testified that the target salt level for Universal is 3.5%, for Kraft is between 3% and 3.25%, and Tolibia's is approximately 3%. Samples, Kraft and Tolibia said, showed average salt levels of 2.10% for Universal, 2.39% for Borden, 2.78% for Tolibia, and 3.06% for Kraft. "These results indicate that Kraft achieves its target salt level; Tolibia comes very close; and Universal is way off," the document said.

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PCB PROBLEMS DISCUSSED AT NIEHS CONFERENCE

More trouble appeared to loom on the horizon for the already beleagured fish industry as a result of a review of the problems created by polychlorinated biphenyls at a special meeting held last week in Raleigh, N.C., at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.

After a look at PCB problems for two days, it appeared the primary source of human exposure through foods has probably been fish, primarily from fresh water locations.

Several dozen papers were presented on a variety of aspects of PCB problems, including new toxicology and monitoring results.

The first, very preliminary findings of a carcinogenic effect were alluded to in the wrapup session, although no paper was presented on the animal experiments conducted by Dr. Renate D. Kimbrough, Medical Officer of the Environmental Protection Agency's Atlanta (Ga.) Toxicology Branch.

Surveys for PCBs Planned for Milk, Eggs; Feeds Underway

Dr. Albert C. Kolbye, Jr., Deputy Director of the Food and Drug Administration's Bureau of Foods, disclosed that the agency will turn its attention to evaluating PCBs in milk by collecting milk for bottling and manufacturing use on a nationwide basis.

Following the milk project, he said, specific attention will be then given to PCBs in shell eggs.

He updated figures released previously on FDA's survey of 15 food commodities to determine problems of migration from packaging, particularly from re-cycled paper (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, Nov. 22, Page 39), noting that, at this time, "the significance of these findings has not been determined."

Kolbye confirmed that the present PCB effort by the agency is a survey of animal feeds to determine the extent of contamination in this area, which will be followed by the milk and egg programs.

"If the FDA finds that the frequency of PCB contamination in the nation's food supply increases," he said, "the present working guidelines for PCB residues will be substantially lowered."

Reviewing FDA's data from its market basket studies, Kolbye said PCBs were encountered most frequently in fish, noting that they were detected in 363 of 670 samples ranging from trace levels to 35.29 p.p.m. He said they were detected in fresh water fish including catfish, chubs, and smelt and also salt water species, including porgies, sea trout, bluefish, bonita, and sardines, but Kolbye added they have only been detected in shellfish at trace levels.

Kolbye Says Most States Have Taken Steps Where Fish Problems Exist

He said most states having significant problems with fish contaminated by PCBs have taken appropriate steps to restrict dietary intake by issuing public warnings and imposing other requirements.

Fredrik Berglund of Sweden's Department of Food Hygiene, National Institute of Public Health, reported his country's problems with PCB contamination of fish and other foods. PCB contamination of fish from Lake Michigan waters as well as from Wisconsin's natural waters were reported by Gilman D. Veith of the University of Wisconsin.

Adel F. Sarofim of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Ian C. T. Nisbet of the Massachusetts Audubon Society, in a joint paper, estimated total input of PCBs into the marine environment off the U.S. coast from rivers and sewage sludge in the order of several hundred tons per year, slightly greater than the estimates for DDT.

Emphasizing that the figures "are based on fragmentary evidence and are speculative," the authors concluded that only a small fraction of the total PCB production has entered the biosphere, with the remainder destroyed or in captive use with some accumulated in dumps or sediments in shallow waters from which it is leached out at unknown but probably slow rates.

Canadian scientists reported on studies of residues detected in the Bay of Fundy - Gulf of Maine area of PCBs along with polychlorinated terphenyls (PCT), chlorinated dibenzodioxins, and dibenzofurans. PCBs were detected in a number of species, including herring, mackerel, plaice, white hake, ocean perch, cod, sea raven, basking shark, white shark, and bluefin tuna.

Milk contamination from silos painted with PCB materials was also reported.

Results of the Human Monitoring Study being conducted as part of the Community Pesticides Studies in Michigan were presented by Harold A. Price of Michigan's Department of Health, who gave several examples of unusually high levels of PCBs in human tissues. One 71-year-old man had residues in fatty tissues of more than 100 p.p.m. With the method used by the Bureau of Laboratories, he said, almost 50% of human adipose samples tested contained 1.0 p.p.m. or more of PCB.

VET ANTIBIOTIC TASK FORCE REPORT MAY BE SHELVED BY EDWARDS

The report of the Food and Drug Administration's Task Force on the Use of Antibiotics in Animal Feeds, planned for release during the first week of 1972 (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, Dec. 13, Page 19), may be shelved completely because of the continuing conflict among the 15-member group.

Task Force members are now split into three camps, each with its own draft report. Unless a consensus report can be prepared, which appears doubtful (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, Nov. 15, Page 3), Food and Drugs Commissioner Edwards may consider the Task Force a "hung jury," release no report, and start an entirely new reevaluation of the use of antibiotics in feeds, presumably with outside help from the National Academy of Sciences.

Meanwhile, FDA has filed a motion to dismiss the suit of the National Defense Resources Council, which seeks to ban the use of diethylstilbestrol (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, Dec. 20, Page 13). FDA alleged that the NDRC complaint is "too long," a procedural gambit.

In a second motion filed last week, FDA also asked that the group's motions for discovery be held up pending resolution of the first issue. NRDC countered with memos of opposition saying the Government is stalling its request for documents.

Elsewhere, the Department of Agriculture finalized its mandatory certification program required for users of DES, making the program effective Jan. 8 (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, Nov. 15, Page 23). The Department also confirmed the findings of a 22nd DES positive from its monitoring program. Under the new regulation, cattle or sheep may not be slaughtered at official establishments unless the operator obtains a certificate that says that the animal did not receive feed containing DES within 7 days immediately prior to presentation for slaughter, and that DES was administered in accordance with FDA regulations. Otherwise, they are held for seven days.