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July 16, 1970

James E. McKee Jr.
Assistant Director of Public Relations
Monsanto Company
800 N. Lindbergh Blvd.
St. Lous, Mo. 63166

Dear Mr. McKee:

We have received your note charging inaccuracies in my article about PCB and we plan to run it as a letter to the editor, to which we will append a brief response. Simply FYI, I will repeat to you now what we plan to say:

PCB is in fact a poison, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It is used in eight different pesticides, and now I see in The New YorkTimes that a Monsanto spokesman admitted that it is being used alone as a pesticide. The Herald article's facts on PCB's toxicity came from federal biologists with the U.S. Bureau of Commercial Fisheries and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. If you still wish to state that it is not toxic, you might care to check with their research findings. I see also that Monsanto refuses to make public a list of allproducts now containing PCB because, according to a spokesman, the list "would serve no useful nonpolitical purpose." My account of the "fish kill" was a report from the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. Contrary to your ~~mmm~~ letter, my article did not say there had been a fish kill. The article said that a Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission scientist said there had been a fish kill. I find the misreading irritating and a classic symptom of how the press can be unfairly accused of bad reporting.

Finally, I see that there is now evidence that PCB can induce birth defects in animals--a charge I was not aware of when I wrote the article.

I realize you have your job to do. I have mine, too, and it is to report facts, not to polish the image of a chemical company.

Sincerely,
Richard J. Pothier

Richard J. Pothier
Science Writer

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