PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

PRESS QUERY

(X) Divisional
( ) Financial
( ) Corporate

Date Time

Feb. 19, 1971

TO: (X) St. Louis Bulletin Board
(X) New York Public Relations
( ) New York Textiles Public Relations
( ) West Coast Public Relations
(X) Brussels Public Relations
(X) Lloyd R. Cole
(X) John Mason
(X) [redacted]
(X) John J. Spano
(X) Pierre R. Wilkins - NEW YORK

QUERIED BY: (REPORTER AND MEDIA)

Ken Covaly, Chemical Week

QUERY: Chemical Week is doing a story on the President's message to Congress covering the suggestion that new products and highly toxic materials be more carefully analyzed before using. If Monsanto knew 40 years ago what it knows today about PCB and its effect on the environment, what would the company do differently?

ANSWER: First, let me say that PCB has never been considered to be a highly toxic material. There are many examples of common products which are more toxic than PCB. For example, iodine, lye, gasoline, insecticides, paint thinner, lighter fluid and various cleaning compounds. Therefore, it came as a surprise that PCB could be an environmental problem. The problem is not its toxicity but its persistence.

If you had asked us four years ago (in 1967) "What products do you manufacture which you think will give you environmental problems in the next five years?", such a list of products prepared in 1967 would not have included PCB.

Assuming PCB were introduced today, our testing programs would be based on the components of the product and our knowledge of the past regarding how these components affect the environment. We would try to look for similarities in this new product to products already on the market and considered safe.

Today we would do biodegradation studies. We would also do more extensive toxicity studies including not just acute toxicity, but also subacute (chronic) studies to show effects over longer exposure times at lower exposure levels.

MONS 057072

-more-

--2 PRESS QUERY -- KEN COVALY, CHEMICAL WEEK

ANSWER: (Cont'd) In other words, if the product were completely new and different, we would take a closer look at it than we might have in the past.

In considering testing programs in the future, industry needs guidance to select test methods which will be universally acceptable. The tests should be standardized and the results should provide us with practical interpretations between the animals tested and other creatures in nature.

SOURCE: W. B. Papageorge

STAFFER: E. V. John