

Monsanto

FROM
(NAME-LOCATION-PHONE)

D. R. Bishop - F3EE - (4-2891)

DATE July 1, 1983

SUBJECT

REFERENCE

cc J. F. Hussey - F3EA
J. T. Nolan - D1A
L. J. O'Neill - F3EE
M. C. Throdahl - D1D
W. H. Westendorf - F3EE

TO : R. T. Berendt - E2ND
T. M. Bistline - E2ND
A. M. Ford - E1SA
W. R. Gaffey - G2WE
G. D. Ingenthron - F3EB
W. J. McCarville - G3WG
P. S. Park - G3WB
G. Roush - G2WG

F.Y.I., attached is a July 1 Post-Dispatch editorial and my response which was messengered today.

DRB
Dan R. Bishop

encl.

nf

CONFIDENTIAL
SUBJECT TO PROTECTIVE ORDER.

C10158

Fri., July 1, 1983

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

The AMA Withdraws As Media Doctor

A spokesman for the American Medical Association, appearing before a House subcommittee in Washington, has now disavowed a part of a recent AMA resolution, sponsored by Dr. George Bohigian of St. Louis, which condemned the news media for making "dioxin the focus of a 'witch hunt' by disseminating rumors, hearsay and unconfirmed, unscientific reports ..." The media does at times engage in sensationalism. But Dr. Bohigian, as he appeared on the CBS Morning News, had virtually no substantiating examples to support his own sensationalism. About all he did was to refer to a TV reporter talking about government reports saying dioxin "won't hurt you," while in the background, he said, a man "in a white spacesuit with gloves" is shown picking up dirt at a dioxin site. The doctor didn't identify what government report said dioxin "won't hurt you." Is there one?

Who can really say that the public has been unduly alarmed by media reports?

Every day new sites of dioxin contamination are turning up, including one recently in a heavily populated area of New Jersey. A federal report has listed hundreds of sites in 33 states where dioxin may be found. At the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, a key official said most of what he had seen in the media had been "a fairly reasonable statement of caution."

What is known about dioxin is that it has proved toxic to virtually every major organ system in various laboratory animals and has caused both cancer and reproductive abnormalities in various species. It causes a skin disease in humans and is believed to cause a soft tissue cancer. Given the possibility that serious ill effects in humans may not show up for years, a warning is better than acting as if there is no danger because complete proof is not available. Sensibly the AMA, while noting the need to avoid the dissemination of possible erroneous information, is now affirming that dioxin poses a health problem.

CONFIDENTIAL
SUBJECT TO PROTECTIVE ORDER.

C10159

Monsanto

PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

Monsanto Company
800 N. Lindbergh Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri 63166
Phone: (314) 694-1000

July 1, 1983

Letters to the Editor
St. Louis Post-Dispatch
900 North Tucker Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63101

If you'd like a "substantiating" example of the dissemination of unconfirmed, unscientific reporting of dioxin by the news media, take another look at your own July 1 editorial, "The AMA Withdraws As Media Doctor," in which you state: "(dioxin) is believed to cause a soft tissue cancer."

"Believed" by whom? While it is true that a Swedish scientist has reported a possible (and highly questionable) link between exposure to dioxin and soft tissue cancer in forestry workers, four other studies of workers similarly exposed in Finland, New Zealand, Washington State and the U.S. Air Force have failed to find any evidence to support this conclusion.

So your statement on dioxin and soft tissue cancer begs several questions:

1. Why did the Post-Dispatch elect to ignore this counterbalancing evidence?
2. What is the public suppose to conclude from your statement about soft tissue cancer?
3. Is the public (especially those Missourians from Times Beach) unduly alarmed by this kind of one-sided editorializing?

CONFIDENTIAL
SUBJECT TO PROTECTIVE ORDER.

Don R. Bishop
Don R. Bishop
Director,
Environmental Communications

C10160

/mo

STURGEON LITIGATION

FROM THE FILES OF

D. Bishop

THIS FILE HAS BEEN REVIEWED BY

LINDA SHAPIRO

FOR:

- Documents describing the presence or potential presence of dioxin in Monsanto products.
- Documents referring to the toxicity of any Isomer of dioxins.
- Documents referring to the toxicity of any Chlorophenol or Chlorophenol product.
- Documents referring to health effects as they relate to the above.

DATE

4/22/85