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Monsanto to Phase Out PCB Fluid Production

By a WALL STREET JOURNAL Staff Reporter

ST. LOUIS—Monsanto Co. said it told its U.S. capacitor and transformer industry customers and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that it intends to phase out production of polychlorinated biphenyl, or PCB, dielectric insulating fluids.

The company said it hasn't set a timetable for the phaseout yet but it will "be in a planned and orderly manner." The company also said it will close its PCB manufacturing unit "as soon as we are satisfied that the electrical power supply industry's needs for usable, acceptable alternate dielectric fluids have been met."

Dielectric fluids are nonconductors of direct electrical current and are necessary in most power generating equipment.

The company said that in 1970 it began restricting use of its PCBs solely to closed electrical systems, for which a viable alternative didn't exist. That move reduced its annual PCB production more than 80%, the company said.

Monsanto also said it instituted controls in its manufacturing to minimize environmental impact.

Additionally, the company said it has been working for a number of years on non-PCB products to replace PCB fluids in capacitors and transformers. The materials are being evaluated by electrical manufacturers in the U.S.

In recent years, concern has grown over the potentially dangerous toxic effects of PCBs in the environment.

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