

PCB Packaging Presence Laid to Recycled Cardboard

The Food and Drug Administration has found the industrial chemical PCB in some shredded wheat, spaghetti dinners, corn meal, mixed baby cereal, grits, noodle dinners and pancake mix.

In one sample of shredded wheat, the PCB concentration was 40 times the safety level set by federal guidelines. In other foods the concentration ranged from less than the federal guideline to four times the level, the FDA said yesterday.

The FDA announcement came after publication of an article on the PCB threat in yesterday's editions of The Star.

The agency has seized none of the products. In the case of the shredded wheat, an FDA spokesman explained that the high con-

centration was in only one sample and the FDA didn't find enough contaminated samples to justify seizure.

The FDA said the contamination originated in containers made from recycled cardboard. The recyclers apparently used a PCB-treated carbonless duplicating paper, the FDA said.

Tolerance Level Set

PCBs, short for polychlorinated biphenyls, have caused liver damage and birth defects in laboratory rodents. Although harm to human beings has not been proved, the FDA has established a tolerance level of 5 parts per million. PCBs for edible tissue in meat, fish and poultry.

The agency said it was testing crackers, bread crumbs, maca-

roni, pretzels, potato chips, cereals, baking mixes, dried milk, dessert mixes, unflavored gelatin, cookies, rice, chocolate and cocoa products, grated cheese, dried fruits and frozen juices, all of which are boxed in recycled paperboard.

Information Scant

John T. Walden, press officer for the Food and Drug Administration said: "The truth is our scientists—and no scientists—know about PCBs or what to do about it."

"This all leads us to why we called together these five agencies of government to look at the problem."

His reference was to a recently established joint federal task force on PCBs.

"We don't know where it comes from . . . We don't know once it gets into the body what its problem might be."

PCBs have triggered an outbreak of liver and skin ailments in Japan and have killed chick embryos in laboratory experiments.