

• Monsanto

FROM
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DATE : December 1, 1983

SUBJECT :

REFERENCE :

TO : R. T. Berendt - E2ND
T. M. Bistline - E2ND
A. M. Ford - E1SA
W. J. McCarville - G3WG

cc. W. D. Carpenter - G3WG
R. W. Duesenberg - D1P
L. Fernandez - D1C
J. F. Hussey - F3EA
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J. T. Nolan - D1A
L. J. O'Neill - F3EE
M. C. Throdahl - D1D
J. D. Wilson - G3WG

Attached is our standby preparedness statement to be used to respond to press inquiries.

Eventually, it may be necessary to issue a formal statement, depending on how the press perceives this, but for now we'll merely answer questions.

DRB
Dan R. Bishop

DRB/cf.

attachment

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PREPAREDNESS STATEMENT RE DOW'S BRIEF OF DECEMBER 1
IN AGENT ORANGE LAWSUIT

Monsanto Company takes issue with certain portions of a brief filed today (December 1) by Dow Chemical Company in the Agent Orange case.

The brief, which urges in part that apportionment of liability in the trial be based on dioxin content of each manufacturer's Agent Orange, is a classic case of "putting the cart before the horse."

Included in Dow's brief is a chart which purports to show that Monsanto is responsible for a large percent of the total dioxin shipped to Vietnam.

Monsanto disputes the factual accuracy of this information. These are merely assumptions based on inadequate data. The dioxin content of each supplier's product will be a matter to be litigated at the trial.

Monsanto, Dow and indeed all the other producers of Agent Orange have consistently held that Vietnam veterans were not exposed to harmful levels of dioxin, period. There is no scientifically credible evidence to show that the levels of dioxin in any supplier's product caused any harm to anyone.

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The overwhelming evidence, gathered to date, does show that the health status of Vietnam veterans is at least as good as, if not better than any comparative group of people with no exposure history. Veterans are not suffering excessive rates of cancer or any other chronic illness. Their children are not suffering from excessive birth defects.

The hallmark or first visible symptom of human exposure to dioxin is the skin condition, chloracne. Medical examinations of Vietnam veterans, done by the Veterans' Administration to date, have failed to confirm a single case of chloracne.

These findings (i.e., the absence of any causal link between dioxin and the health effects alleged by some Vietnam veterans) are consistent with the results of a scientific evaluation of the probable toxic effects of the dioxin in Agent Orange upon veterans conducted recently by Kingsley M. Stevens of the Department of Medicine, State University of New York at Stony Brook.

In his paper, "Agent Orange Toxicity: A Quantitative Perspective," published in the scientific journal, Human Toxicol, (1981), 1,31-39, Dr. Kingsley concludes that "the dioxin sprayed with Agent Orange in Vietnam cannot have caused systemic illnesses in Vietnam veterans or birth defects in their children."

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Dr. Kingsley based this conclusion on first calculating the minimum toxic dose of dioxin for man from the monkey and human data; he then calculated the amount of dioxin which man takes in from his environment; the average concentration of dioxin present in Vietnam immediately after spraying Agent Orange and, finally, the amount (internal body concentration) the soldier, directly sprayed, would attain. He calculated this amount to be 1/1750 of the minimum toxic dose. Dr. Stevens further noted that soldiers moving through previously sprayed areas would ingest much less dioxin.

"Since it would take about five years of daily, close contact with Agent Orange to reach toxic levels of dioxin," he stated, "claims that illnesses in Vietnamese...and Americans...were due to Agent Orange are without merit."

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