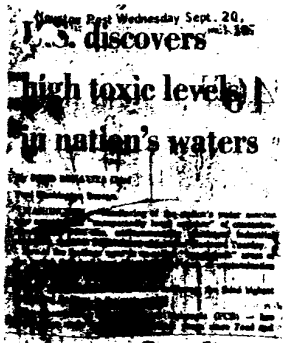
MONS 070956



Houston Post Wednesday Sept. 20, [illegible]

U.S. discovers

high toxic levels

in nation's waters

Toxic industrial chemical found in nation's water sources

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Drug (FDA) inspectors found some common foods contaminated with the highly toxic substances.

However, both the Department of Interior and FDA officials said no determination of a "safe level" of PCB per kilogram has been "generally accepted to date."

Reporting on the results of an investigation into pollutants for PCB and other chemicals, Bruce F. Cromp-Wheaton, chief chemist for the U.S. Geological Survey, said Tuesday:

"During the past two years, we have analyzed over 3,400 water and sediment samples from streams and lakes throughout the United States ...

"We expected to find traces of PCB in sampling points near industrial centers, but we were surprised to find detectable levels in samples from 37 of 38 states covered by the sampling," he said.

"We found PCB in every water, stream newly developed and remote lakes and in one U.S. Geological Survey 'benchmark' [illegible] relatively remote areas ostensibly protected by man," Cromp-Wheaton continued.

The monitoring program took 800 samples in Texas waters and turned up concentrations of PCB in eight. The concentrations varied from 0.1 of a microgram per liter to three micrograms per liter.

Two hundred thirty-one samplings in Florida yielded 15 concentrations ranging for 0.1-3.1 micrograms per liter. New York had the highest: 28 concentrations out of 86 samples with a range of 0.1-4 micrograms per liter. New York and Florida water and soil test in concentrations.

In addition to the concentrations in the water, the survey also found lake and stream sediments "to have remarkably high concentrations of PCB residues.

"One out of every five bottom sediment samples collected in 38 states contained significant concentrations of PCB," said Cromp-Wheaton.

Of the sediment samples taken in Texas, 38 had detectable levels of PCB varying from 7.3 to 200 micrograms per kilogram of sediment, said the report. Florida's ranges of 5 to 1,000 micrograms per kilogram was the nation's highest.

FDA consistently finds contamination of PCB in foods in 4,000 micrograms per kilogram (the equivalent of 8 pounds per one million pounds).

As a result of this and other studies, the Environmental Protection Agency has recommended a maximum limit of one one-hundredth of a microgram per liter of water (one pound in 10 billion quarts) or 1 ppm in soil and water.

First produced about 40 years ago, PCB compounds have become enormously useful in such industrial applications as plastics, inks, dies, dust control, electronic components and in paints.

"Although previous investigations have generally been concerned with fish contamination from accidental spills in industrial areas, this study was an attempt to document the general distribution of the compounds in our waterways," Cromp-Wheaton said.

"PCBs can enter the aquatic environment by atmospheric fallout, from low temperature vaporization of solid wastes from spills or from sewage and industrial outfalls," he said.

Where are the places in Texas where PCB was found.

In water:

Canadian River near Amarillo.
Brazos River at richmond (two samplings).
Cypress Creek at Cypress.
Guadalupe River below Victoria (two samplings).
Trinity River below Dallas.
Chocolate Bayou at Port Lavaca.
In sediment:
Guadalupe River below Victoria (two samplings).
Trinity River below Dallas (two samplings).
Medina River near San Antonio.
Neches River at Evadale.
Trinity River near Beaver (six samplings).
Canadian River near Amarillo.
San Antonio River near Elmendorf.
Mission River at Refugio.
Nueces River near Three Rivers.
Mobile Bayou at Oyster [illegible]
Hunting Bayou at [illegible]
Buffalo Bayou at [illegible]