bcc: G. R. Graham - NEW YORK

December 21, 1970

Mr. J. H. Thayer
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Dear Jim,

I reviewed the correspondence from the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station and lacking information on the analytical methodology followed or sampling techniques used, it is rather difficult to interpret the sparse information given.

I would guess that some of the peaks they are observing are due to PCB's. Apparently the analysts are not able to quantify the amount of PCB in each sample but are willing to compare one sample to another and estimate change, e.g. PCB in DV-3401 obtained November 13, 1970 is 78% of that found in AH-1 obtained September 30, 1970.

The disappearance of some of the peaks has been noted before in milk samples from other areas. Apparently, some of the polychlorinated biphenyl isomers are metabolized by the cows digestive system and therefore do not appear in her milk.

If we can assume that other materials found around a dairy farm such as lubricants, silage, bacteriacides, milking machine tubing, and the sample containers were analyzed and found to be free of PCB's, the Housatonic River looms as the PCB source.

As we discussed over the telephone, we do not have good information on the length of time required for the PCB content in the milk to drop to very low levels after the cow is removed from the PCB source. In the two cases I am familiar with, one herd was cleared in three months;

the other was still producing unacceptable milk after nine months.

I am assuming that Mr. DeVos' herd is now drinking from a different water source. It appears that a slight reduction might have occurred between the middle of June, 1970 and the middle of November, 1970. I suspect the levels of contamination are extremely low, therefore I would not expect any dramatic drop to occur.

As you can see, my comments are based on a lot of guesswork. In summary, we need much more information before we really understand what is happening.

Sincerely,

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WBP:ms

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