Regarding the LABEL proposal, the Congressman said, "I am skeptical that the FDA seriously intends to act on this matter in the near future."

RYAN INTRODUCES BILL TO BAN PCB DISTRIBUTION

Rep. Ryan (D-N.Y.) last week introduced legislation (HR 8576) to ban interstate distribution of polychlorinated biphenyls because of what he called "the unconscionable inaction of the Federal Government in meeting the hazards of PCBs."

He cited two "shocking incidents in which PCBs have entered the food chain with potentially disastrous results."

Ryan had called for action from the Department of Agriculture, the Food and Drug Administration, and other agencies last year to protect against potential hazards from PCBs (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, April 20, 1970, Page 3).

Aside from USDA's ban on the use of PCBs in pesticides (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, Nov. 23, Page 20), Ryan said, "the Federal Government has taken none of the necessary steps that I have requested over the past year to combat this very serious environmental and health hazard."

Ryan Cites Milk, Poultry Incidents as Evidence of Danger to Food

Ryan credited the Campbell Soup Company and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets with taking prompt action in dealing with the removal of some 146,000 PCB-contaminated chickens from the market (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, Feb.1, Page 2; and Feb. 8, Page 20).

He said the PCBs had apparently entered the food chain through the feed mixing plants from wafer meal, which was made from returned bakery products.

In the other incident, he complimented the Ohio State Department of Agriculture for controlling milk from two dairymen which had become contaminated with PCBs as a result of their silos being lined with a product that contained polychlorinated biphenyls (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, June 29, Page 29; and July 20, Page 2). He said the PCBs were then absorbed by the silage, which, in turn, was fed to the milk cows, resulting in PCB-contaminated milk.

"These incidents graphically illustrate why the PCB problem can no longer be ignored," he continued. "There must be a tough, comprehensive Federal program to meet this menace - now." He commented:

> "Therefore, I am calling for a full and exhaustive investigation to be commenced immediately into the extent of PCB contamination. And I am calling for an immediate temporary ban on the manufacture, shipment, and sale of all PCBs pending the results of this investigation."

Ryan explained that his bill would permanently ban all PCB distribution, except that it would permit FDA to exempt PCBs for use for a number of closed system uses where the dangers of contamination of food are unlikely. Monsanto had previously announced that it had discontinued manufacturing PCBs, except for these limited closed system uses (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, July 27, Page 2).

Ryan, in a press briefing at his office, said PCBs still remain on the market, which Monsanto has sold to other manufacturers, and, he added, "I don't think we can rely on the good faith" of one manufacturer for the control of the problem.

He told reporters that FDA has refused to establish food tolerances for PCBs, but had told him that they have advised the States that actions can be taken against PCBs in milk above 2 p.p.m. and fish and poultry PCBs above 5 p.p.m.

Ryan also complained that the Environmental Protection Agency has failed to respond to his request to determine the extent of PCBs in various products in the marketplace, and to check Monsanto's records, which they have refused to him, on distribution of the chemicals.

Meanwhile, the House May 17 by a vote of 304-to-18 approved Rep. Dingell's (D-Mich.) bill (HR 56) to establish a national environmental data system, and sent it to the Senate. The measure carries an authorization for $1 million to fund the system for the first year, $2 million for the second year, and $3 million for the following year.

On the Senate side, it appears that the FDA did not get off as easily as it seemed on the agency's visit to Chariman McGee's (D-Wyo.) Appropriations subcommittee on Agriculture - - Environment and Consumer Protection (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, May 17, Page 25).

Following the close of Commissioner Edwards' testimony, the subcommittee staff presented the agency with a list of 91 questions, covering a wide variety of topics, such as food additives, nutritional labeling, food inspections, overlap with the Department of Agriculture, trade secrets, and the like.

One series questioned FDA's requested increase of $200,000 for 18 new positions to expand the agency's Cooperative Quality Assurance Program (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, March 8, Page 4). The subcommittee asked:

"How would these additional personnel be utilized?

"Is this program basically one of self-certification by the industry itself?

"Has the industry had any past experience with a self-certification process? (If so, with what companies and with what results?)

"Is there any possibility that the public might be misled or have a false sense of security under a program in which industry representatives would be in a position to verify the quality of its products?"