

CONFIDENTIAL.

INTERNAL MEMO

FROM D.M. Jonas

Date 10th September 1971

TO (for action) Mr.B.Hasler (For information) Mr.Adams, Mr.Gatfield, Mr.Jennings
Mr.Lowe. MJP

SUBJECT Free V.C.M. in Food Products packaged in P.V.C.

On the 5th September I attended a meeting called by the Food Science Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Fisheries (M.A.F.F.) - who have the responsibility for setting food standards in this country - to discuss the implications in the U.K. of the proposed ban introduced by F & D.A. on the packaging of alcoholic beverages in P.V.C. containers, followed by the banning by British Airways of P.V.C. "miniatures".

The meeting was attended by representatives from Shell, I.C.I., B.P., and B.X.L. together with representatives from M.A.F.F. and the Laboratories of the Government Chemist. It was chaired by Mr.T.J.Coomes, Head of Food Chemistry and Atomic Energy.

Mr.Coomes explained the Ministry's concern that if the U.S.A.'s ban is upheld (16th October is the date we shall know) this might lead to action towards banning of packaging of other foodstuffs in both rigid and flexible P.V.C., "scares" leading to questions in the House etc. He was anxious that leading producers of P.V.C. should co-operate and produce facts on the V.C.M. content of foodstuffs. These facts could then be considered by the appropriate toxicologists, these would be from the Department of Health (in a later discussion Katan, Shell's toxicologist, informed me that he will be endeavouring to persuade Biora to get 90 day feeding trials started with V.C.M. as soon as possible). The facts produced by the P.V.C. Producers could also be sent to F & D.A.

At this stage it was agreed not to invite the "Packagers" to participate in these discussions, in fact Mr.Coomes requested strict confidentiality to prevent undue "scares" in the industry.

The meeting then considered analytical methods for determining V.C.M. in liquid foodstuffs. I.C.I.'s method was generally accepted (this in principal is the method devised by B.P.F. Polymers Committee for determining V.C.M. in Polymers and which has been used by B.S.C. at Corby).

I.C.I. also presented a summary of their findings to date with Gin, Vodka, Whiskey and fruit squashes packed in P.V.C. These tests had been done somewhat hurriedly for the meeting but in general terms even after two years ageing results were of the order of 1 ppm. V.C.M. or less comparing with 20 ppm. reported in the F & D.A. Register dated 17th May.

M.A.F.F. then asked other companies to confirm I.C.I. findings and expand investigation to other foodstuffs. A sharing of workload was agreed. Vinatex will examine cooking oils and squashes and possibly other foodstuffs. It was also agreed that the V.C.M. content of the package in addition to the contents would be examined. This method is not yet perfected but will be circulated shortly by I.C.I.

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Continuation.....

The meeting then considered types of containers other than bottles, particularly vacuum formed rigid film and flexible films and the types of foodstuffs packed in them. I.C.I. and B.P. will be doing further analytical work with such systems.

M.A.F.F. are hoping for results on bottles by the 12th October so that results can be sent to F. & D.A. If through their contacts with F. & D.A. the M.A.F.F. can get any prior information an emergency meeting will be called on the 1st October. In any case there will be a further meeting on the 7th November.

I am aware of the tests organised by M.C.A. in the U.S.A. in which CONOCO are participating, these are animal tests with V.C.M. and an epidemiological study - see copy of attached letter from Flynt Kennedy. I am sending copies of this Memorandum to Flynt Kennedy and Wayne Sorenson to keep them up to date with the U.K.situation.



D.M. JONAS.