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# PCB Problem

With apologies to composer Woody Guthrie, here's a new line for one of the country's best-known folk songs: "From the redwood forests to the Gulf Stream waters, this land is loaded with PCB."

PCBs are polychlorinated biphenyls, a family of toxic, highly persistent industrial chemicals that have caused liver damage and birth defects in laboratory animals.

The redwood forests span the southern coast of Oregon, where a commercial bakery recently discovered that it had purchased—and now must destroy, at an estimated cost of $50,000—a batch of PCB-contaminated eggs.

The Gulf Stream waters wash the east coast of Florida, where a chemist recently found a marked decline in the potential fertility of young men that appeared to be related in part to PCB traces found in the subjects' sperm.

This month's reports of PCB contamination aren't limited to those two states. In Franklin, Idaho, a poultry company is in the process of destroying more than 1 million potentially PCB-contaminated eggs. In Clinton, Iowa, a packaging company, also destroying more than 1 million pounds of chickens and meat from Idaho firms, found 75,000 pounds of the meat contaminated with PCB.

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