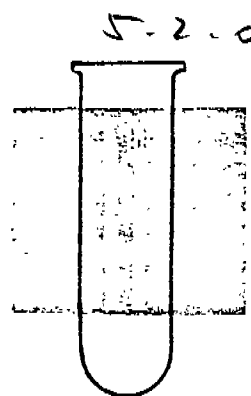


FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS

Editor: Louis Rothschild, Jr.
Managing Editor: Raymond Galant
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CANADA PROPOSES BAN ON FOOD PACKAGES YIELDING ANY VINYL CHLORIDE

Canada's Health Protection Branch has announced its intention to prohibit the sale of any food in a package from which "any amount" of vinyl chloride may be detected.

In a May 9 information letter (I.L. 439), Dr. A. B. Morrison, Assistant Deputy Minister, invited comments on the proposal to amend HPB's food packaging regulations to "Prohibit the sale of any food in a package that may yield to its contents any amount of vinyl chloride, as determined by the official method for that food."

Canadian officials recently reported uptake of vinyl chloride by the gastrointestinal tract (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, March 17, Page 48). The report from Canada came at the same time Prof. Cesare Maltoni of Italy reported producing carcinomas in rats fed vinyl chloride monomer.

The Food and Drug Administration has also been considering abandoning a proposal which would have permitted use of PVC food packages as long as VCM did not proceed 50 p.p.b. (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, Jan. 20, Page 33). No final decision has been reached by FDA, but there seems to be increasing concern that Maltoni's experiments will confirm the carcinogenicity of VCM from feeding, and the agency is preparing to meet this contingency.

In his letter, Morrison noted that since vinyl chloride is a gas at normal temperatures, it was generally accepted prior to 1973 that any unpolymerized monomer remaining in PVC resin after polymerization "would dissipate from the resin when subjected to subsequent manufacturing processes." He added:

"It has been recognized recently that residual vinyl chloride can in fact persist in fabricated articles such as food packaging materials, and there is evidence that it may thence be transferred to foods."

Noting that Canada's regulation prohibits sale of any food in a package that may yield substances injurious to health, Morrison said that "there is considerable scientific and medical evidence which suggests that vinyl chloride, when inhaled, is harmful to man."

"The oral toxicity data which are presently available are insufficient to allow the establishment of a safe level of this monomer in foods," he continued, adding:

"Therefore, it has been concluded, in the interests of protecting the health of the consumer, that the quality of polyvinylchloride based materials used for packaging

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foods should be such that there will be no migration of vinyl chloride from these materials to foods packaged therein."

Morrison set a June 9 deadline for comments, which are to be directed to the Assistant Director General, Food Directorate, Health Protection Branch, Department of National Health and Welfare, Carlingwood Plaza, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0L2.

ACTION LEVELS MAY BE PROPOSED FOR LEAD IN BABY FOODS

Food and Drugs Commissioner Schmidt last week said his agency is "fairly certain to propose tentative action levels for lead in baby foods and for certain canned foods which are largely consumed by children."

At a May 13 meeting of the National Canners Association's Board of Directors in Williamsburg, Va., the Commissioner said FDA has completed its surveillance programs for lead in baby foods and adult canned foods, and that the results "will be made public during the next two or three months." He revealed that "the report will show that canned foods as a category account for about 30% of the dietary intake of lead."

"I know that your industry is working on this problem," Schmidt said, "but the efforts of industry in general must be accelerated."

Noting the FDA proposal to limit lead in evaporated milk to 0.3 p.p.m., the Commissioner said, "We intend to publish a final order before the year is over" (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, March 24, Page 40).

Although most of his speech dealt with the possible economic impact of FDA actions, Schmidt declined to "discuss the problem of heavy metals in foods in an economic context," since it "is primarily a public health problem (and) economics ... will have to take second place."

NCA Urged to Submit Cost Estimates on New Drained Weight Proposal

The Commissioner said his agency's new drained weight proposal "will be more specific" than the proposal advanced by Consumers Union (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, April 21, Page 2), and that "it should be easier for industry to respond with concrete cost estimates."

Asking NCA to submit such concrete cost estimates, Schmidt said that "only in this way can you have a voice in helping decide whether the cost of drained weight labeling can be offset by economic benefit to the shopper."

NCA may submit a "fill-in" weight proposal as an alternative to "drained weight."

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only for (i) use in termite control (as specified in the Administrator's Determination and Order of December 7, 1972, (ii) dipping of roots or tops of non-food plants, or (iii) use in moth proofing in a closed system.

Explaining the Administrator's suspension order, the regulations said that all products subject to the registrations requirement of this section shall be subject to the determination contained in the Administrator's suspension order of Oct. 1, 1974 effective March 19. It elaborated:

"The further production for use of all products subject to the registration requirements of this regulation is prohibited. Any stocks of technical grade aldrin or dieldrin or any aldrin or dieldrin products formulated or reformulated into products after March 19, 1975 may not be placed in commerce, sold or used for any purposes except those exempted from this regulation... Under the authority of Section 15(b)(2) of the amended FIFRA, existing stocks of State registered products containing aldrin or dieldrin which were formulated in the State of registration prior to March 19, 1975 may continue to be sold and used in the State of registration."

The remaining sections of the new implementing regulation stated:

Failure to apply for registration. Any product subject to the registration requirement of this regulation for which an application for registration has not been submitted on or before April 18, 1975 may not hereafter be sold, distributed or used in any manner.

State authority to register products containing aldrin or dieldrin. No State may issue an intrastate registration for any product containing aldrin or dieldrin subject to this regulation after March 19, 1975; provided however, that a State may renew a registration for a product (1) with a valid State registration on March 19, 1975 and (2) for which an application for registration has been filed with EPA pursuant to this section."

VINYL CHLORIDE TERATOGENICITY STUDY SHOWS NO SIGNIFICANT RESPONSE, SOT TOLD

An initial study of vinyl chloride teratogenicity in mice, rats and rabbits has shown that exposure of the three species to 500 p.p.m. VCM during organogenesis did not result in a teratogenic response. The research was explained in a paper called "Results of a Vinyl Chloride Teratology Study in Mice, Rats, and Rabbits" presented at a recent meeting of the Society of Toxicology SOT in Williamsburg, Va. (See March 19, Page 2).

The study, which was conducted by Dow Chemical Company scientists, noted that mice were slightly more susceptible to the toxic effects of VCM (See March 19, Page 9) than either rats or rabbits. The research also indicated that simultaneous exposure of mice to VCM by inhalation and EtOH in the drinking water resulted in a toxic effect greater than that observed among mice exposed to either one alone.

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Another vinyl chloride study reported at the meeting tended to confirm that short term exposure to the substance was not necessarily associated with acute liver damage. The study involved normal male rats exposed to 100,000 p.p.m. of VCM for 6 hr. and killed 24 hr. later.

Another study on the chemical involved a preliminary look at the effect of vinyl chloride ingestion through various routes on rats. One method involved taking rats who had been surgically prepared with an indwelling jugular canula and dosed by intragastric intubation with solutions containing up to 2 mg/ml of aqueous vinyl chloride. The paper noted that sequential samples of blood allowed time concentration curves to be obtained. The study found that the uptake of vinyl chloride by this route was extremely rapid, peak concentrations being achieved less than 10 minutes after administration of the dose. The paper noted that elimination from the blood compartment appeared to be bioexponential, the slower terminal phase having a half-life of about 6 min. The abstract of the paper explained the other study saying:

"Studies with the same animal model, in a single resistant cage, exposed to concentrations of vinyl chloride of up to 2000 p.p.m. in the gas phase have shown a similar rapid uptake followed by a plateau blood concentration during several hours of exposure. On removal from the vinyl chloride atmosphere, blood concentrations fall rapidly to barely detectable concentrations after 30 min."

LOUISIANA ASKS FOR HEARING ON DDT REQUEST AND RECONSIDERATION OF DENIAL

Louisiana has petitioned Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Train to reconsider his order denying the State's Section 18 request for the use of DDT on cotton. At the same time, the State asked for an expedited public hearing on the DDT request (See March 19, Page 26).

The State wanted Train's response to the petition March 25. The Administrator was not expected to reply by that date. The petition was delivered to EPA March 21. Louisiana's petition was submitted by Robert L. Ackerly and Charles A. O'Connor, III, Sellers, Conner & Cuneo, Washington, D.C., law firm.

The petition relied almost exclusively on a March 19 report filed with EPA's Hazardous Materials Advisory Committee of the Science Advisory Board (SAB). The report was from a five-man group referred to variously as the "Ad Hoc Study Group on the Environmental Implications of the Proposed Emergency Use of DDT on Cotton in the State of Louisiana," and "the Ad Hoc Study Group to consider certain issues raised by the proposed emergency use of DDT on cotton in the State of Louisiana," and the Deck Committee. The Group's Chairman was Errett Deck, Washington Agriculture Department.

Information in the report was given to Train before he denied the DDT request, an EPA official noted. The report was apparently rejected by the agency.