53-10 FEEDSTUFFS
WEEKLY 38,000

FEB 20 1971

CLIPPED BY BACONS

USDA Detains Hens With Excess PCB in Tissues

By JACK KIESNER
Feedstuffs Washington Editor

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Consumer and Marketing Service has detained 155,000 lb. of spent hens because of high levels of polychorinated biphenyls (PCB) found in the edible tissues. PCB is a chemical compound used in electrical-mechanical applications which is similar to DDT in structure.

The PCB residues were discovered by Campbell Soup Co., which purchases fowl from a processor who obtained the chickens from a three-county area of southern New York, eastern Pennsylvania and northern New Jersey. PCB residues found in the chickens varied from 0.6 ppm. to 30 ppm. The Food and Drug Administration established a temporary "action ... tolerance of 5 ppm. in the case ... in the detainment with 5 ppm. or more PCB in fat can go to "salvage," however, where fat is removed and the PCB level is reduced. Birds can then be sold and further processed. New York state officials said they found chickens with up to 14 ppm. PCB residues and as high as 12 ppm. in feeds and 4 ppm. in eggs.

The Chicago Tribune, in a page 1 story, said the FDA may set a tolerance of 5 ppm. for PCB (presumably in poultry) before summer. An FDA spokesman, however, said that more toxicology studies will be needed before a tolerance for PCB can be established. Monsanto Co., St. Louis, is the only U.S. manufacture of PCB, which is widely used in industrial compounds.

After Campbell reported finding the PCB residues, C&MS began a nationwide check of poultry, but failed to turn up high levels of PCB residues in any other area. Of 135 samples drawn, C&MS found only four with PCB residues. They ranged from 0.6 ppm. to 3 ppm., well within FDA's "action level". Dr. Kenneth M. McEnroe, Deputy C&MS administrator in charge of consumer protection said he thought the New York instance was an isolated case and that poultry on the market was probably not contaminated by PCB.

A C&MS official said there was no evidence that the PCB originated in the feed. The Chicago Tribune had reported that government scientists said the incident could have been caused by exposure of chicken feed to paint containing PCB.

FDA is continuing a study of PCB's to determine how toxic they are and whether they play a part in chromosome separations.

The *Tribune* story said scientists have found PCB has been mistaken for DDT and that data on DDT residues is being reviewed.

Other studies are underway by the government and private industry into toxic effects of PCB.

The Monsanto Co. told FEEDSTUFFS it thought FDA's "action level" in the New York case of 5 ppm. was well within thin safe levels for humans. Interim progress reports on a two-year toxicity study done by an independent laboratory, Monsanto noted, reveal PCB is no more toxic, and is probably less toxic, than DDT, which has presented no hazards to animals or man despite its presence in the environment, according to the company.

Until a year ago, some insecticide manufacturers used PCB as a carrier, but Monsanto asked the USDA to halt registrations of pesticides containing PCB, and this has been done. A Monsanto spokesmen said his company has discontinued sales of PCB in "open systems". He said the product is now used only in closed systems, such as for lubricating electric transformers.

MONS 032438