

Monsanto Backgrounder

AGENT ORANGE

MONSANTO COMPANY / ST. LOUIS, MO.

We genuinely sympathize with the plight of our Vietnam Veterans. But we believe that the preponderance of scientific and medical evidence available today clearly indicates that there is no link between Agent Orange and human health problems of the magnitude claimed by the veterans.

Monsanto was one of the companies asked to produce this herbicide mixture for the government during the Vietnam War. Now, much to our regret, we find that we are both an object of the veterans' frustrations and a target of a class action suit filed by thousands of veterans against the producers.

Agent Orange, used during the Vietnam War, was supplied at the government's request, formulated to government specifications, applied by military personnel under the orders of the government, and used in war situations ... utterly beyond the control of the manufacturers.

The controversy surrounding Agent Orange continues despite the lack of virtually any scientific evidence that this herbicide posed a danger to the veterans. To the contrary, there is a growing and substantial amount of scientific/medical evidence on the record (attached) indicating that there is no link between Agent Orange and the chronic health problems claimed by some veterans.

Obviously, this conflict is not of our making. However, having been drawn into it, we have no alternative but to defend ourselves. We are confident that good science will ultimately prevail over the emotions of the moment and exonerate the producers of Agent Orange. At the same time, we sincerely hope that good science will also provide many of the answers the veterans now seek regarding possible service-related health problems.

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PARTIAL LIST OF SIGNIFICANT SCIENTIFIC
INVESTIGATIONS WHICH HAVE FOUND NO
ASSOCIATION BETWEEN DIOXIN EXPOSURE
AND LONG-TERM HEALTH PROBLEMS

1. A review of the medical evidence regarding the long-term health effects of Agent Orange and dioxin contaminants, conducted by the American Medical Association's Council on Scientific Affairs and published in the October 15, 1982 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA).
2. A report on "The Toxicity, Environmental Fate and Human Risk of Herbicide Orange and its Associated Dioxin," issued by the USAF Occupational and Environmental Health Laboratory, Brooks AFB, TX. Report No. USAF OEHL-78-92, October, 1978.
3. An investigation of health effects in U.S. Air Force Personnel ("Ranch Hand Study") following exposure to Herbicide Orange: A Baseline Mortality Assessment, USAF School of Aerospace Medicine, San Antonio, TX., July, 1983.
4. World Health Organization studies done to date on the human population exposed to high levels of dioxin during an industrial accident in Seveso, Italy in 1976.
5. Special review of the latest evidence on the safety of phenoxy herbicides, including 2,4,5-T, by R. Kilpatrick, et al., the Advisory Committee on Pesticides, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, United Kingdom, December, 1982.
6. A study of long-term health effects of occupational exposure to 2,4,5-T and its dioxin contaminants, conducted by Raymond A. Suskind, M.D., University of Cincinnati. The study examined the current health status of 254 present and former Monsanto employees who had worked in the 2,4,5-T production unit at the company's Nitro, W.VA., plant between 1948 and 1969 compared to the status of a control group of 163 employees who worked in other areas of the plant during the same time frame. The results were presented at the "Third International Symposium on Chlorinated Dioxins and Related Compounds," at Salzburg, Austria, October 14, 1982.
7. Two recently completed mortality (cause of death) studies on groups of former Monsanto employees who had worked with 2,4,5-T since 1948. One group experienced high peak exposure over 30 years ago.
8. A survey of 126 workers, 10 years after exposure to dioxin following a 1968 explosion at the Coalite Oil and Chemicals' 2,4,5-T manufacturing plant at Bolsover, Derbyshire, U.K. Survey presented at the "Third International Symposium on Chlorinated Dioxins and Related Compounds" at Salzburg, Austria, October 14, 1982.
9. A Dow Chemical study of health effects to the offspring of production workers exposed to 2,4,5-T and its dioxin contaminants, and the pregnancy risk to their wives, reported in Chemical & Engineering News, January 5, 1981.
10. A 1974 Report by the National Academy of Sciences on the effects of herbicides in South Vietnam.

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July 18, 1983