

WESTERN MAIL, MONDAY, JUNE 4, 1973

Farmers start legal action for compensation against waste disposal firm

A HIGHLY toxic chemical which can build up in the body like DDT is leaking on to farmland in South Wales from two former chemical dumps.

The dumps, at Maendy Quarry, Llanerwt Fardre, and Broshkin Quarry, Gwent, were featured in a Western Mail investigation in January 1971, which first revealed the leakage of chemicals.

Now one of the chemicals has been identified as one of the polychlorinated biphenyl group.

The chemical, manufactured by Monsanto Chemicals at Newport and dumped in the quarries between 1960 and 1970, degrades very slowly and can build up in animal tissue until dangerous or possibly lethal concentrations are reached.

The American Environmental Protection Agency has set a maximum guideline of two parts per billion PCB for unfiltered water and 50 PCB in animal tissues.

Farmers whose land adjoins both quarries, Mr. Gwilm Miles at Broshkin and Mr. Bill Maidment at Maendy, have both lost stock and believe PCB contributed to the deaths.

Analysis

The chemical was dumped at the site before one was aware of its dangerous properties by Industrial Waste Disposal (South Wales) Limited, now part of the Redland Pore Group.

A Welsh Office spokesman said last night the Government had been examining the situation at the dumps for some time and had arranged for an analysis of the water in the area.

It is stressed that there is no danger to public health in the situation as no public water supplies are affected.

Both farmers are beginning legal action against Red and Fire (the parent company of Industrial Waste Disposal) in Cardiff Circuit.

Mr. Gwilm Miles said he had lost 100 sheep and 100 pigs from a 120-acre farm and at Broshkin, Mr. Maidment said he had lost 100 sheep and 100 pigs from a 120-acre farm.

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Farmland being poisoned by chemical

some other substance, normally not dangerous, could be fatal.

"In Mr. Maidment's case all the land on the side of the road which includes the quarry is either directly or indirectly affected by pollution."

The chemicals have polluted the land and a stream making a wide band of unusable land through that part of the farm. This means that cattle cannot be grazed near the stream and they cannot be taken across to the other part of the land in case they drink the water as they go.

Mr. Maidment said last night 46 acres of his 60-acre farm which he rents from Giamorgan County Council were directly or indirectly affected by the leakage.

"As well as PCB, I am told the levels of lead and cadmium are much higher than normal there," he said.

"This business is taking away my livelihood. It has got to be settled soon."

The law relating to the disposal of toxic waste was tightened up last year with the introduction of the Disposal of Business Waste Act 1972.

At the same time a notice was issued requiring all owners of land in Wales to register the land with the local authority and to submit a statement of the nature of the business carried on there.

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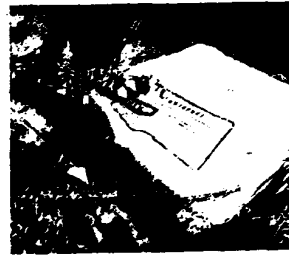
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Decaying drums of chemicals leak their contents into pools of discoloured water on the tip.



Farmer Bill Maidment on his Upper Church Village farm, 17 acres of which have been declared unfit.



Rotting drums of a chemical called Montepore among the rubble.

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