COMMERCE URGES FDA TO ALLOW PHASE OUT FOR PCB PROBLEM

The Commerce Department's Bureau of Domestic Commerce has asked the Food and Drug Administration to delay its implementation of regulations governing product contamination from polychlorinated biphenyls to "accommodate the recycling of existing stocks" of food packaging (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, May 29, Page 9).

"In light of the serious impact on an industry involved in the essential process of converting wastes to usable materials," the Bureau urged FDA to give consideration to the following recommendations:

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- - A reassessment of the allowable contamination level to reduce the serious problem of achieving 100% compliance by measurement;

- - Standard testing procedures which do not have "inordinate economic impact" be devised;

- - Some form of averaging be allowed to "accommodate the industry practice of continuous processing as opposed to batch processing.

The Bureau asked a review of these recommendations, and suggested that "some alternatives to rule-making be promulgated in order to maintain a viable recycled paper industry."

In a reply to the Bureau, Sam Fine, FDA's Associate Commissioner for Compliance noted that FDA had considered many alternative courses of action," and, in all cases, these alternatives would probably have the result of prohibiting the use of recycled paper for food packaging use." However, Fine also stated: "It is not the intent of FDA to implement regulations that will be detrimental to the concept, purpose and practice of recycling waste programs."

Sonoco Products Co., saying that they were "creators of markets for (recycled) paperboard," asked that FDA further consider "the barrier effects of inner-wraps, the PCB transfer rates from packaging materials to food, and the implications of the proposed regulation on the orderly delivery of packaged food to the market." The company stated that "With these considerations in mind, we believe a PCB limit that is more compatible with the practicalities of the situation will be forthcoming."

Rep. Powell (R-Ohio) asked that FDA reconsider the proposal, saying that he had been contacted by several constituents, and that "such a regulation would be very damaging and impracticable to the paper industry at this time."

Dawe's Laboratories, Honeggers & Co., and Zip Feed Mills wrote to support the American Feed Manufacturers Association's comments (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, May 29, Page 9).

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RECONSIDERATION AND WITHDRAWAL OF ANTIBIOTICS PROPOSAL SUGGESTED

The National Broiler Council has suggested that the Food and Drug Administration proposed regulation on sub-therapeutic use of antibiotics in animal feed "be reconsidered and withdrawn," saying that "further research should be conducted prior to the establishment of standards which would severely impede the economic advances made by the broiler industry through the use of antibiotic drugs in feed in the past two decades" (See FOOD CHEMICAL NEWS, April 24, Page 50).

Commenting on the proposal under a 30-day extension of time "granted informally by FDA," NBC stated that "scientific data and industry experience establish that low levels of antibiotic drugs enhance growth and efficient production," attributing