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REPORT FAILS TO FIND
LINK BETWEEN 2,4,5-T
EXPOSURE AND HUMAN
HEALTH PROBLEMS

ST. LOUIS, NOV. 10 -- A study on the long-term health effects of worker exposure to the herbicide 2,4,5-T and its contaminants found no link between exposure and cancer, cardiovascular disease and reproductive abnormalities.

The study was conducted by Raymond A. Suskind, M.D., and his medical team at the University of Cincinnati's Department of Environmental Health. Dr. Suskind is widely regarded as one of the leading authorities on the human health effects of exposure to dioxin and other toxic impurities.

2,4,5-T, used in the United States for nearly 40 years, was a component in Agent Orange, a defoliant employed by U.S. military forces during the Vietnam War. The dioxin TCDD has been identified as a trace contaminant in 2,4,5-T. The human health effects of exposure to TCDD is a central issue in the current Agent Orange litigation.

Dr. Suskind found no evidence of adverse long-term effects on the cardiovascular system (including hypertension

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or coronary artery disease), the liver, or peripheral nerve function, attributable to exposure in the persons studied. There was also no indication of greater risks for miscarriages, stillbirths or birth defects among the families in which the male parent was exposed. Additionally, Dr. Suskind found no excess of cancer among the study participants.

However, Dr. Suskind did conclude that, for employees exposed to TCDD, there was a long-term skin effect known as chloracne, the principal indicator of TCDD exposure. He also observed a loss of skin elasticity around the areas affected by chloracne in some employees.

Dr. Suskind examined 418 current and former employees of Monsanto Company which produced the herbicide 2,4,5-T at its West Virginia plant between 1948 and 1969. The employees who participated in the study included workers exposed during a 1949 manufacturing accident in the 2,4,5-T unit as well as those who worked in the production of the herbicide over the years. A control group of employees who worked in other areas of the plant during that time frame was also studied for comparative purposes.

This group of workers, involved in the production of 2,4,5-T, represented the best opportunity to study the long-term effects, if any, of dioxin exposure.

This health effects study is the second major investigation conducted by Dr. Suskind in recent years on Monsanto's West Virginia employees. In 1980, he co-authored a report on the mortality (cause of death) of employees who were involved in the 2,4,5-T accident in 1949 and have since died from any and all causes. The results of that investigation showed no excess in total deaths or in deaths from cancer or cardiovascular disease.

Dr. Suskind recently reviewed the results of his study both with the participants and with attendees at the "Third International Symposium on Chlorinated Dioxins and Related Compounds," in Salzburg, Austria. He further plans to submit his work to peer review through publication in an appropriate scientific journal.

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