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Author

Corporate Author

Report/Article Title Memorandum: From Walter W. Melvin, Jr.,
Commander, USAF, regarding dioxin contamination in
St. Louis, Missouri area

Journal/Book Title

Year 1974

Month/Day September 13

Color



Number of Images 2

Description Notes

MEMO FOR THE RECORD

13 September 1974

SUBJECT: Illnesses and Deaths from Exposure to Dioxin, St. Louis, MO.,
Area in 1971

1. On 13 September 1974, I again talked, by telephone, with Mr. William F. Barthel, Chief, Toxicology Branch, Center for Disease Control, 1600 Clifton Road, N.E., Atlanta, GA., 30333. He again stated that there had been no recent cases - illnesses or deaths - in man, domestic animals or wildlife in the St. Louis, MO. area due to dioxin exposure. Contrary to the implications contained in the newspaper article (National Observer, 14 September 1974, page 4), all cases occurred in the weeks or within a few months following the application of heavy petroleum "oil" at the Shenandoah Stables, Moscow Mills, MO. in July-August 1971. What has occurred is that the etiology of the problem has emerged in recent weeks when the original soil samples collected in 1971 were reanalyzed using more modern analytical methods. These soil samples now have an "average" dioxin content of about 50 ppm. Apparently, values range from 10 to 60 ppm.
2. In 1971 on the recommendation of CDC the top 2-3 inches of soil were removed from the arena, paddock and track at the Shenandoah Stables, Moscow Mills, MO. and buried. Subsequently, this soil was used as fill for the expressway system in the St. Louis, MO. area. Its exact, present location probably is not known and, even if known, efforts to obtain additional new samples would be very uncertain, difficult and costly.
3. There has been no reapplication of "oil" at the Shenandoah Stables, Moscow Mills, MO. At least, there has been no additional application of "oil" from the original (1971) source.
4. Following the incident in 1971, a large quantity of the sludge was transported by truck to Baton Rouge, LA., where it was incinerated by the Rollins-Purle Company. This company is now known as Rollins Environmental Services, Inc., a division of Rollins International Companies. Some of the original sludge is reported to be still in storage and CDC is attempting to obtain samples for analysis.
5. From the medical point of view, the events can be summarized as follows. Four persons who resided at or frequented the Shenandoah Stables became ill. Two sisters (ages unknown) became quite ill and one was hospitalized because of hemorrhagic cystitis. (The causation of hemorrhagic cystitis as a result of TCDD exposure is open to question.) The mother, an auctioneer and both children complained of severe, "migraine-like" headaches which persisted for several weeks. Apparently, all recovered without sequelae.
6. It is known that the waste chemicals product was not obtained from the Monsanto Chemical Company, Inc. The Krummrich Plant, Monsanto Chemical Company, Sauget (East St. Louis) IL., produced herbicide Orange until 1970.

To the best of my knowledge, no other company which produced herbicide Orange for use by the Department of Defense was involved in this incident.

7. CDC is attempting to verify the belief that the chemical waste originated at a small chemical plant located in central Missouri.

Walter W. Melvin, Jr.
WALTER W. MELVIN, JR., Col, USAF, MC
Commander