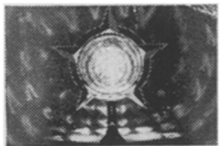


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SCIENCE NEWSBRIEFS

A new nonprogram

The discovery of mercury exceeding lawful limits in fish in Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair in March (SN: 4/18, p. 388) led Interior Secretary Walter Hickel to announce widescale monitoring of water all over the United States.

Last week the Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife announced it would seek funds to begin testing fish and wildlife for heavy metals, including mercury. But plans for more monitoring of water itself, according to an Interior Department official, will largely involve compiling of already existing information. □

2,4,5-T ban

The herbicide 2,4,5-trichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4,5-T) has been widely used in agriculture in the United States and in defoliation by United States forces in Vietnam.

In December, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare's commission on pesticides asked that its use be restricted because mammalian tests showed it to have teratogenic effects.

Late last month, agreement was reached between HEW and the Departments of Interior and Agriculture that the Agriculture Department should immediately suspend registrations of 2,4,5-T for home use and use on ponds, lakes and ditch banks. This week the ban was extended to all uses on food crops intended for human consumption.

The Agriculture Department order is subject to lengthy appeal procedures. □

Phosphates measured

The detergent industry is under fire because the phosphate content of its products is blamed for eutrophication of lakes and streams (SN: 4/25, p. 408). In an effort to determine how much phosphate is actually in detergents, various measurements have been made by different sources, but the results have been inconsistent. To clear them up, the Federal Water Quality Administration has run a series of its own laboratory tests, the results of which were announced last week.

Among detergents, the pre-soaks contained the highest phosphate content, going as high as 74 percent. In laundry detergents the range was a high of 57 percent to a low of 14 percent. Automatic dishwasher detergents ranged from 54 to 35 percent.

A full list of phosphate contents of specific brands can be obtained from the Federal Water Quality Administration of the Interior Department, Washington, D.C. □

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