

PBB Contamination Timeline

Lasting impact in Michigan

In the 1970's, Velsicol made over 250 chemicals at the St. Louis, Michigan Facility. One of these chemicals was polybrominated biphenyl (PBB), a fire retardant chemical used in the manufacture of electrical appliances, and another one was magnesium oxide, a nutritional supplement for livestock feed.

1973



PBB mistakenly shipped to Michigan Farm Bureau by Velsicol Chemical, mixed into animal feed, and delivered to farms across Michigan.

1974



Farmers report problems in animals ranging from decreased milk production to malformations. Animals tested for infectious diseases.



Farmer, Rick Halbert, feeds some of his farm animals suspect feed while withholding it from others. Only animals fed the suspect feed get sick.



Mr. Halbert sends samples to multiple labs across the country, resulting in discovery of PBB in feed.



State of Michigan tests animals for PBB, high levels found. The state quarantines 30 farms and announces that PBB only affects these "very few farms."

People across the state of Michigan were exposed to PBB by eating contaminated food. This includes children born years later who may have been exposed in the womb and through breastfeeding.

1975-1980



State legislature urges the Michigan Department of Agriculture to remove all contaminated food products from stores.



State quarantines over 500 additional farms and condemns 28,000 cattle, 5,900 pigs, 1.5 million chickens.



Federal agencies fund the Michigan Department of Community Health to study long-term health effects of PBB (now the Michigan PBB Registry).

All study participants in the original long-term PBB study and their children and grandchildren are considered to be members of the registry.

1980-Today



Velsicol Chemical estimates they spent \$38.5 million for clean-up. Clean-up continues today with tax dollars, totaling \$480 million to-date.



The PBB Registry begins to be transferred to Dr. Michele Marcus at Emory University who continues to study the long-term health effects of PBB exposure.



The PBB Registry team collaborates with local partners and hosts meetings to share health findings with the PBB community and partner on new research questions.



PBB Registry continues to be used to benefit Michigan residents.