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ENVIRONMENT

DuPont, EPA Settle

Company to pay \$16.5 million to settle PFOA allegations

Cheryl Hogue

DuPont will spend \$16.5 million to settle allegations that it withheld information about perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) from EPA, the agency said.

Granta Y. Nakayama, EPA assistant administrator for enforcement, says the most serious allegation involved failure to report for more than 20 years that PFOA was found in the umbilical cord blood of a baby of a woman working at DuPont's plant outside of Parkersburg, W.Va. That facility uses PFOA to manufacture DuPont's Teflon brand of polytetrafluoroethylene.

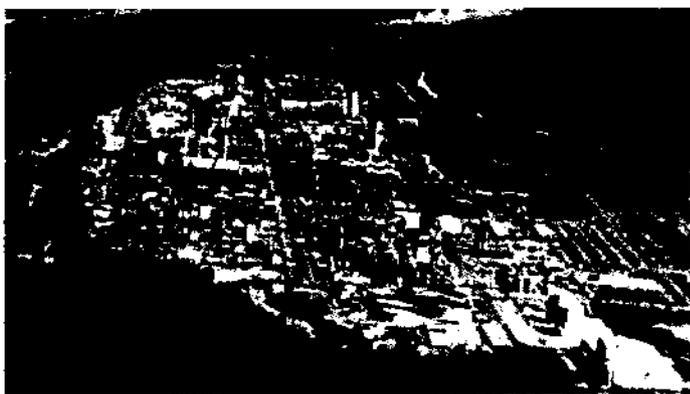
The information demonstrating that PFOA moves across the placenta "should have been reported immediately to EPA," Nakayama says.

DuPont also allegedly failed to report the results of blood tests, done at the company's request, of plaintiffs in a class-action lawsuit who live near the West Virginia plant. Those people drank water drawn from wells near the plant and had blood levels of PFOA that were significantly higher than that of the U.S. population.

Other data DuPont allegedly did not turn over to EPA as promptly as required by law include three studies showing that an unidentified perfluorochemical was "significantly lethal" when inhaled by laboratory rats.

DuPont denied the allegations. Stacey J. Mobley, DuPont senior vice president and general counsel, says the company's interpretation of reporting requirements differed from EPA's. "The settlement allows us to put this matter behind us," Mobley says. DuPont had earlier set aside \$15 million to cover the suit.

The company will pay a \$10.25 million fine and spend \$6.25 million for two additional projects. One is \$5 million in research evaluating the potential for nine DuPont fluorotelomers to break down into PFOA. The remaining \$1.25 million will fund microscale chemistry and green chemistry programs in schools near the West Virginia plant.



DUPONT PHOTO

Information, Please EPA alleged that DuPont did not report data about human exposure to PFOA released from the company's plant outside of Parkersburg, W.Va., as required under the Toxic Substances Control Act.

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