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NEWSPAPER ARTICLE "BANNED HERBICIDE ORANGE STOCK AT SEABEE CENTER TO
BE TESTED" NCBC GULFPORT MS
11/5/1975
SOUTH MISSISSIPPI SUN

Banned Herbicide Orange stock at Seabee Center to be tested

By TIMOTHY KRIEHN

A Houston, Tex., chemical firm will reprocess stocks of the banned Herbicide Orange at the Naval Construction Battalion Center in Gulfport later this week in a test program which could lead to the defoliant's marketing, the Air Force announced Tuesday.

Agent Chemical Company, which has been constructing a pilot plant during the past 10 days, will attempt to isolate a contaminant from the herbicide to produce a defoliant for

legal and safe use.

Herbicide Orange, known as Agent Orange during its controversial use in the undeclared Vietnam war, was banned in 1970 by two federal agencies and the Department of Defense when the contaminant produced in the herbicide's manufacture was linked to birth defects.

A spokesman said Air Force and Environmental Protection Agency officials would strictly monitor the "environment at the pilot plant and

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Firm to attempt reprocessing of controversial Herbicide Orange

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in the immediate NCBC area during the tests to insure safety of the reprocessing operation."

Agent Chemical, whose construction and operation of the pilot plant was granted a permit by the Mississippi Air and Water Pollution Control Commission, will reprocess up to 5,500 gallons of Herbicide Orange to determine if the impurity, known as dioxin, can be removed to produce a chemical for resale and commercial use.

The Air Force owns about 800,000 gallons of the defoliant at the Seabee facilities in Gulfport while another 1.5 million gallons is stored on Johnston Island in the Pacific. The Orange is composed of two basic and widely used herbicides, 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T.

The spokesman said Agent Chemical is testing the economic and technical feasibility of its proposal at its cost. However, if the tests prove successful, the Air Force will transfer its stock of Herbicide Orange to the Defense Property Disposal Service for sale and Agent Chemical apparently would be in a position to

make a purchase.

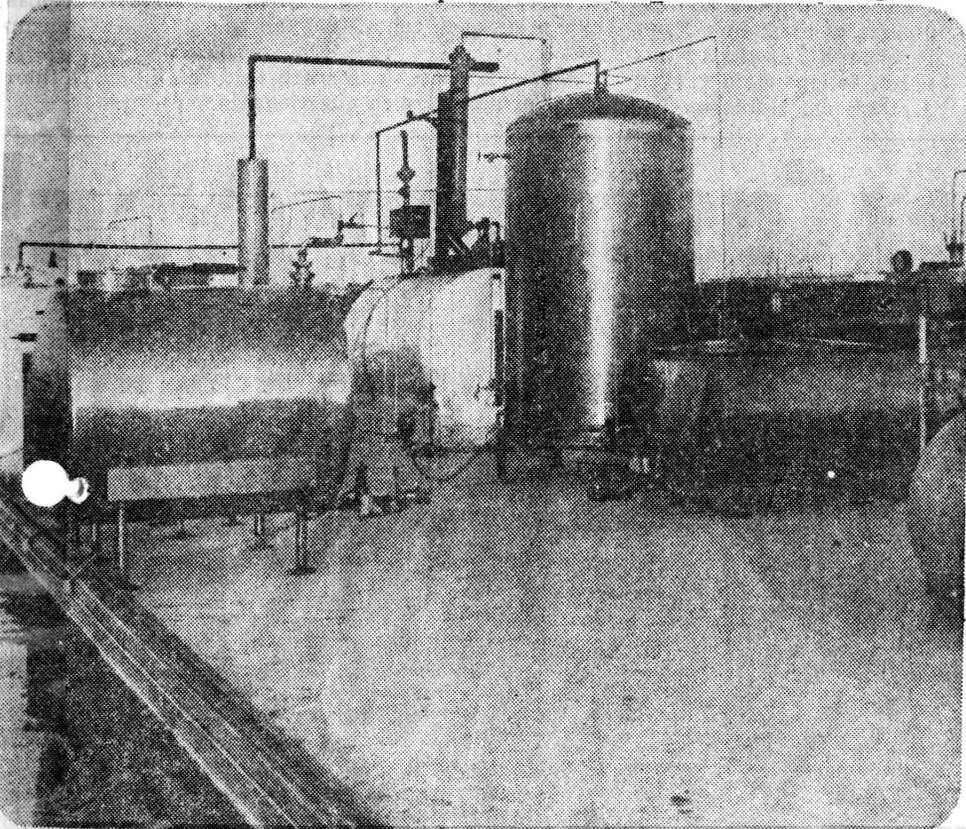
More than 20 company, federal and state officials will conduct constant sampling of air, water and plant life in the area during the testing which could take several days, a spokesman said.

The plan to conduct a test into the feasibility of reprocessing the toxic herbicide came after the EPA said it would prefer the Air Force investigate an alternative use method instead of incinerating the stock at sea.

After about three years of study, the Air Force proposed in 1974 to burn the herbicide at an isolated location in the Pacific on the Dutch-owned incinerator ship Vulcanus.

But the proposal came under fire from some scientists because of a lack of monitoring and the EPA cited its policies favoring recycling over destruction.

The stock of Herbicide Orange at the Seabee Center, stored in 55-gallon olive drab and orange drums, was en route to Southeast Asia through the State Port at Gulfport when its use was banned.



SOUTH MISSISSIPPI SUN BY JACKIE BERG

Agent Chemical Co.'s pilot reprocessing plant