



37 Square de Meeûs
B-1000 Brussels Belgium
T: 0032 2 733 93 70 • F: 0032 2 789 67 00
E-mail: mail@bsef.com • Website: www.bsef.com

12 February 2010

BSEF COMMENTS ON RECENT STUDY LINKING PENTA-BDE IN THE HUMAN BODY AND FERTILITY

A new study[1] reports a possible association between the presence of specific types of PBDE flame retardants in the human body and fertility. There are different types of PBDE flame retardants and the ones found in this study were those of the legacy commercial product Penta-BDE (Tetra and Penta-BDEs). Penta-BDE has been subject to bans in both North America and Europe[2], following a scientific assessment and it has been voluntarily phased out globally by the industry.

The finding in the human body of a manmade chemical, even at levels of a few parts per billion, requires careful attention. As concluded in the paper, and reported by independent experts [3][4], additional studies are needed to verify the observed association, in particular due to the limited population of the study. It is regrettable, however, that several media reports[5] have not made this clear.

Scientific and rigorous research have been at the heart of BSEF's commitment to ensuring the safety of brominated compounds used as flame retardants; at the same time we aim at providing the best life-saving technologies for high fire safety performance around the home, in transportation and high occupancy buildings. BSEF companies and their downstream customers actively work to reduce emissions[6] and ensure that these products are thoroughly tested and evaluated in accordance with global chemicals legislation such as EU's REACH and other global scientific risk assessment processes.

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[1] PBDE Concentrations in Women's Serum and Fecundability University of Berkeley, 26 January 2010
<http://ehp03.niehs.nih.gov/article/fechArticle.action?articleURI=info%3Adoi%2F10.1289%2Fehp.0901450>

[2] 24th amendment to the marketing and use Directive 76/769/EEC

[3] "But more work will be needed to confirm the result, says Tony Dayan, an emeritus professor of toxicology, because the study was based on a small, distinctive group", Flame wars, The Economist, 28 January 2010,
http://www.economist.com/sciencetechnology/PrinterFriendly.cfm?story_id=15391226 .

[4] American Council of Science and Health, Brominated Flame Retardants: A Burning Issues, William P. Kucewicz http://www.acsh.org/publications/pubID.1374/pub_detail.asp

[5] For example: <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=flame-retardant-fertility-pregnancy-pbde>;
http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/35220377/ns/health-womens_health/

[6] 2009 Voluntary Emissions Control Action Programme (VECAP) Annual Progress Report
http://www.vecap.info/uploads/VECAP_report_22%2001.pdf