

28 June 2004

## Findings in the Arctic extremely low and posing no health risk

BSEF regrets the inaccurate media coverage of a recent study from the Norwegian National Veterinary Institute and the Norwegian Polar Institute on the findings of the flame retardant Deca-BDE in the Arctic. This coverage inaccurately assumes a lack of scientific data regarding the flame retardant Deca-BDE and does not mention that after 10 years of scientific analysis and more than 100 studies, an EU scientific assessment was recently completed<sup>1</sup> with the conclusion that there is no identified risk to child or adult health nor to the environment in the use of DecaBDE.

Deca-BDE has “a very low potential to reach remote areas” (Wania, 2003)<sup>2</sup>. Although the data from the new study has not been fully published yet, both the Norwegian National Veterinary Institute and the Norwegian Polar Institute recognize that the levels found “are low”<sup>3</sup>. Indeed, previous data have shown typical levels of Deca-BDE in the same region in the order of +/- 0.000000005 grams per gram of sample. These levels do not pose any environmental or health risks.

This said, industry has initiated a specific programme with user industries of Deca-BDE in conjunction with EU regulators aimed at best practice in industrial emissions control for the use of Deca-BDE.

Deca-BDE is widely used in plastics and textiles to meet public safety standards in high fire risk environments such as trains, cinemas and retirement homes. Considering that Deca-BDE is by far the most studied flame retardant and that it has been approved for use in the EU, it is regrettable that the presence of extremely low and risk-free levels of Deca-BDE in the environment is being used to question the use of a chemical which makes a major contribution to fire safety, saving hundreds of lives every year.

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<sup>1</sup> EU Competent Authorities meeting of 26 May 2004, Ireland. Press coverage of the meeting from ENDS Daily and Chemical Week can be found on the BSEF website <http://www.bsef.org>

<sup>2</sup> Wania, Frank, Dugani, Chandrasagar B. 2003: “Assessing the long-range transport potential of polybrominated polybrominated diphenyl ethers: a comparison of four multimedia models”. *Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry*: Vol. 22, No. 6, pp. 1252–1261.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.sft.no/english/news/dbafile11556.html>

[http://www.vetinst.no/inet\\_eng/index.asp?strUrl=1001110i&topExpand=&subExpand=](http://www.vetinst.no/inet_eng/index.asp?strUrl=1001110i&topExpand=&subExpand=)