

Endocrine Disrupter Issue

Firm: AZ. Worldcom Japan – Tokyo

Client: Japan Chemical Industry Association

Specialty Area: Issues Management

Date: 12/1998 – Current

Situation Analysis:

In 1998, then Japan's Agency of Environment published a list of 65 chemicals as being suspected as endocrine disrupters. Based on the list, Japan's media fiercely attacked Japan's cup noodle industry saying styrene monomer and dimer or endocrine disrupters leak from its containers, which seriously affected the sales of cup noodle not only in Japan but also in Korea. Under these circumstances, the Environment Agency was organizing its first International Symposium on Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals in Kyoto in December that year, where many US and European activists/activist researchers had been invited to speak.

Goal:

To balance the media reports to avoid one-sided coverage of the presentations of activists.

Method:

In cooperation with American Chemistry Council (then Chemical Manufacturers Association and Federation of European Chemical Industry Associations (CEFIC), two toxicologists from the US attended the symposium together with scientists of Japan Chemical Industry Association. During the symposium, those toxicologists and scientists held press briefings prior to the morning sessions and afternoon sessions every day to inform the reporters the background of each presentation, where over sixty reporters including those of major TV stations attended. In addition, those toxicologists and scientists made available for interviews to tell the positions of industry side.

Results:

While many articles and TV news had resulted from the symposium, most of them were well balanced to also report the opinions of the industry side.

Since then, although the Ministry of Environment has held the international symposium every year, the ministry has revised its strategy in 2005 by abolishing the list of endocrine disruption-suspected chemicals and downgrading the disruption as one of the possible effects of chemicals.