

Agricultural Giant Monsanto's Products Cause Tumors, Organ Damage In Rats

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A new study out today may hurt efforts by America's largest biotechnology company, Monsanto, to defeat a California ballot initiative that would require labels on genetically modified foods (GMOs). The French study found that rats who were either fed a lifetime diet of Monsanto's genetically modified corn or exposed to the company's popular herbicide, Roundup, developed tumors and organ damage.

Reuters [reports](#) that the group of rats who were exposed to Monsanto products experienced an increase in premature deaths due to their health complications:

Gilles-Eric Seralini of the University of Caen and colleagues said rats fed on a diet containing NK603 — a seed variety made tolerant to dousings of Roundup — or given water containing Roundup at levels permitted in the United States died earlier than those on a standard diet.

The animals on the GM diet suffered mammary tumours, as well as severe liver and kidney damage.

The researchers said 50 percent of males and 70 percent of females died prematurely, compared with only 30 percent and 20 percent in the control group.

The lead researcher has been a vocal critic of Monsanto, which holds most of the patents for America's staple crops and herbicides. This study, more extensive than the group's past research that found similar health risks associated with the company's products, may weaken the biotech industry's claim that eating GMOs is harmless. Monsanto has poured \$7 million into a campaign to defeat California's [Proposition 37](#), which will ask voters to require labels on any products containing genetically modified ingredients — essentially, all processed foods. Europe, Japan, China and Australia already have this requirement, and 91 percent of Americans support GMO labeling.

Setting aside possible health issues, the pervasive use of herbicide-resistant crops in the [US is perpetuating](#) a rapidly escalating arms race with insects and weeds that develop a resistance to the industry's potent poisons as they become more common. Monsanto's herbicides are spreading quickly; Mother Jones [reported](#) this week that Roundup is the most heavily used liquid herbicide in New York City, even though it has been linked to neurological diseases and reproductive disorders.

But Monsanto is [lobbying hard](#) to prevent the USDA from considering studies like Seralini's

when approving new products. France currently bans GMO crops in spite of enormous pressure from Monsanto and the EU.

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